

THE CHANGING FACE OF  
EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS IN  
LATIN AMERICA

Robert G. Myers

May, 1981

A paper prepared for presentation at the  
Pre-school/Primary School meeting, Bogotá, Colombia

May 26-29, 1981

This paper has three purposes: 1) to provide an overview of early childhood interventions in Latin America; 2) to raise some thorny questions about the pre-school/primary-school relationship; and 3) to set that main topic in broader perspective. Following a brief summarizing of the current state of affairs, I will discuss several shifts that seem to me to be occurring in early childhood projects and programs in Latin America, raising questions as I go about the transition from pre-school years to primary schooling.

#### A Brief Overview

Providing an overview of early intervention programs in Latin America should be an easy task, given the spate of excellent reviews appearing in the last two or three years. Indeed, it is tempting simply to refer the reader to the works listed in Appendix I and let it go at that. But an overview seems needed to provide a general background for discussion of the Latin American research being presented in this workshop.

Major efforts to provide early education and other services for children ages 0-6 were found only rarely in Latin America before 1970.

Previously, governments had taken little interest, leaving the field to private organizations. Pre-schooling was a formal upper-class affair. But pressures for expanded and reformed programs have grown steadily during the last 25 years, resulting in a new expression, post 1970, of interest by national governments.

Today, almost one-fifth of the population of Latin America is under six years of age, more than one half of whom (or at least 40 million children) live through no fault of their own in conditions of abject poverty. With birth rates remaining high among the poor while survival rates improve only slowly, the number of children occupying the ante-room of poverty continues to grow. At the same time, poverty and inequality are thought to be on the increase, pushed by the rising costs of survival associated with world wide inflation, and by the merging in several locations of regressive liberal economic policies with repressive politics. By the year 2,000, the number of poor children in Latin America is expected to increase to 60 million. Simply keeping pace with growing numbers provides a challenge.

Other changes have increased the pressure for child care, pre-schooling, and other services for disadvantaged children. Poor women have had no choice but to join the labor force and have been doing so in unprecedented numbers. A shift away from the extended family toward the

nuclear family has meant that fewer family members are immediately available as caretakers. No longer can mothers count on grandmothers or aunts, who may themselves be working. Heavy migration has exacerbated the isolation of the family and has meant in many cases that women must take over as heads of households. Nor is it as acceptable as in the past for older siblings to drop out of school to watch over younger brothers and sisters. Finally, attitudes toward women working are changing, but very slowly, in the machista Latin American society.

Pre-school programs throughout Latin America reach less than 10 per cent of the population, and most of the children reached are from the middle class. The limited coverage is illustrated also by a recent study in Colombia where, despite important national initiatives to extend coverage only 4 per cent of the pre-school children in rural areas had been reached by assistance programs of nutrition or health or stimulation. Those who had participated did so over a period of one year or less.

Governments of almost every country within the Latin American region have shown interest in early child development and, to a lesser degree, in programs of child care. That recent interest is evident in policy pronouncements, in laws, and in government-supported experimentation with a variety of approaches to child care and attendant problems of health and nutrition.

Several examples will suffice:

- In Colombia, through the passage of Law 27 in 1974, a huge fund has been collected by taxing payrolls, for support of integrated day-care programs for children of working parents. The main use of these funds has been to create Centers for Integrated Attention to Pre-schoolers, (CAIPS). The government, through the Family Welfare Institute, is experimenting with other models as well.
- In Venezuela, the Fundación del Niño has created a system of Hogares de Cuidado Diario, paying mothers in poor areas to care for children of others in their neighborhood who are working outside the home. Similar experiments are underway in Ecuador and Colombia. More recently, the new Ministry for the Development of Intelligence has undertaken a wide range of activities designed to improve the development of pre-schoolers, including filming of a television series about child development and care.
- In Perú, the educational reform of 1972 officially made the Ministry of Education responsible for the education of children from ages 0-5. The Ministry has responded by establishing pre-schools (Centros de Educación Inicial), by experimenting with programs providing parental education, and occasionally, by assisting local initiatives involving center-based child care using community volunteers.
- In Panamá, the Instituto Panameño de Rehabilitación Especial carries a broad range of early childhood program activities which have had a goal to cover all Panamanian children at risk of mental retardation.
- In Chile, the military government has favored the continuation and extension of massive pre-school efforts instituted by the Frei and Allende governments and seeks coverage of all children from low-income families in some type of institutional day-care and nutrition program.
- Cuba has for many years had in operation a national program of childcare centers.
- The new Nicaraguan government is moving ahead on programs of child care through both its Ministries of Education and of Social Welfare.

- Brazil has many experiments underway through its Ministry of Social Welfare, the National Institute for Nutritional Assistance, and other agencies. These include pre-school, creche, and food supplementation programs, at national, state and municipal levels.

Privately-funded experiments have also blossomed. Again, a few examples, in addition to these research-related experiments reported on in this workshop, will indicate the variety:

- Along Colombia's poverty-stricken Pacific coast, a Ven Leer-funded project built around providing a healthy environment for the development of children includes nutrition, health, income-generating, and parental education components.
- Feminist groups in Peru, Brazil, Colombia, and elsewhere are establishing child care centers and training programs for poor working women.
- A novel approach for the problem of space is being tried out in Brazil when discotecs are used during off hours to house pre-school programs.
- Experiments focussing on youth caregivers are underway in Jamaica, Colombia and Chile.
- In Mexico, Peru and Chile, projects to care for children have grown up around community kitchens.
- The "Parents and Children" project in Chile helps community volunteers organize parents to discuss problems related to the healthy growth of their children, and provides some materials to help them with the task. The method and program are being experimented within Argentina and Bolivia.

Many other examples could be added, from both the public and private sides, of more traditional programs, and of health or nutrition-related

programs directed toward children in their earliest years. In brief, the apparent interest and action is impressive, at least in the surface.

Although interest has grown, and experiments have proliferated, few systematic evaluations of these experiments exist and we do not yet have a good idea which intervention strategies work best when, and for whom. We know even less about long term impacts. Even without evaluations it is clear that there is no magic formula. And it is clear that programs, in addition to covering only a small portion of the pre-school population, are generally of low quality, and usually cost much more than most governments can afford. Moreover, pre-school interventions are seldom directed toward those for whom the need is greatest, rhetoric to the contrary. Usually, governmental programs lack integration and flexibility, and tend to be imposed, despite sometimes valient efforts to correct these failings. Thus, despite evident interest and initiative, programs generally lack breadth, depth, and impact.

Meanwhile, the knowledge base on which programs might be constructed is growing slowly. (I say "might be" because policies have not been informed by research). There is now little doubt that intervention programs can make statistically significant, even dramatic, differences in physical and mental development. Both home-based and center-based programs can

produce results. How long and under what circumstances these gains occur and can be maintained, is not so clear.

Research has begun to yield tentative and provocative conclusions about the difficult and complex relationships between poverty, multiple deprivation in the early years, cognitive disabilities, and later behaviours. In contrast to the simplistic explanations offered at one stage, it is now evident that health, nutrition, and stimulation interact and all are important. For instance, a poor diet affects the activity and responsiveness of a child but less active children are also less apt to be properly fed. Research studies have now documented the very high degree of plasticity children exhibit, a fact that cuts two ways. On one hand, much more impressive physical and mental recuperation can occur than was previously thought possible - even for severely malnourished children. But back-sliding also occurs frequently. Thus programs built around "one shot" efforts will not be particularly successful and the importance of continuity is ever more obvious, including continuity between pre-school and primary school programs.

Research results from Latin America also suggest that, even with prolonged multiple interventions, the poor and multiply deprived are unlikely to close completely the gap between themselves and upper class children. An obvious explanation has been that the poor simply cannot take full advantage of the opportunities improved development affords, including opportunities



for schooling. Seemingly obvious also is a finding that, in general, the earlier the multiple interventions occur, the better.

From this research we see that improvements are possible to obtain, but the apparent need for multiple interventions and for continuity makes the task mammoth and costly. There is a need, therefore, for low-cost models, for identifying those most "at risk", and for sorting out what is the most appropriate strategy for which groups.

Although the above provides a general idea of the state of the art regarding early childhood programs in Latin America, the field is undergoing changes constantly. In the following pages I will discuss briefly ten shifts (some very slight but potentially important) that seem to be occurring.

1. A shifting rationale: From welfare toward development.

Until recently, arguments for pre-school programs in Latin America were phrased largely in welfare terms. The continuing welfare bias of today stems from a history of remedial programs sponsored by religious or philanthropic organizations, upper-class do-gooders and governments. Although the target of this frequently paternalistic, patronizing, and restricted approach has broadened in recent years — from abandoned or neglected children, to poor children in general—the bias has remained, institutionalized in family welfare institutes, foundations for child welfare, and social

promotion ministries. It is symbolized by the common practice in Latin America of assigning responsibility for early childhood programs to the President's wife.

During the 1970s, however, social and economic development objectives have slowly become more prominent in discussions of early childhood programs, with several variations on the theme. In some cases the main orientation is toward economic development, in others toward alleviating poverty, and in others toward overcoming discrimination and correcting social injustices. When the focus is on economic development, pre-school interventions are rationalized as an investment in human resources which will increase productivity and reduce "wastage" of human talent and potential. It is argued that healthy, mentally alert children will not only be able to work harder, and learn more easily, but they will also be more likely to remain in school longer, a circumstance that is thought to affect future productivity in several ways. While increasing human potential for learning, pre-school investments, are presumed also to have a pay-off by reducing drop-out, repetition, and the need for special attention to meet minimum standards. A parallel argument is made for reducing post-primary costs and for reductions in other social costs such as those related to delinquency.

The investment rationale has not yet been widely accepted in Latin

America, with the notable exception of Chile and perhaps Venezuela. In part the resistance is ideological. Beyond that, however, it has been hard to "prove" that early interventions are a good investment. Although a number of studies link nutrition and health improvements to improvements in abilities crucial for future learning, the evidence is not as strong or as consistent as it should be to be convincing. Some longitudinal work in Latin America and elsewhere suggests that early improvements in IQs wash out. That conclusion is extrapolated to other effects, but without evidence. Moreover, the link between improved school performance and subsequent productivity is still questioned. Longitudinal data on access to and performance in primary school, until this workshop, has not been brought together. Longer term assessments of economic effects have not been made.

The hope that early interventions will help modify the cycle of poverty has had greater appeal in Latin America than the investment approach to early childhood programs. There are two main variants. In one, emphasis is placed on child development under the assumption that improvements in the early years will not only increase the chances that poor children will realize their potential as productive members of society, but also that they will be more likely to keep up with advantaged peers as they learn and earn in later life. A second variant places more attention

on family earnings and on associated child care which will free family members, particularly women, for work outside the home.

When social justice is put at the center, the arguments mentioned above can be applied but will be given a social justice twist related to reducing inequalities and/or to overcoming discrimination -- against women in the working world, for instance. When that is done without simultaneously pointing to the need for social reorganization, these arguments seem empty, however. Thus, those who are seriously concerned about social justice are likely to emphasize the value of child development and child care seen in terms of its potential for facilitating organization needed to bring about broader social changes.

Programs of child development and child care are beginning to appear which build on the established fact that concern for children can mobilize community groups to action on many fronts in conjunction with providing a healthy environment for the development of their children. This organizational dimension to programs is still rare, however. The political threat inherent in the viewpoint makes it unpalatable to many and unlikely that it will be widespread -- even though it is increasingly recognized that "community participation" in pre-school programs is essential to their success. Participation does not necessarily lead to organization.

Whether or not one emphasizes economic, social, or human justice ends when considering early childhood programs will make a difference in the way programs are evaluated. So will the relative importance accorded to needs of the child, needs of the family, and broader social needs -- of the community or of society writ large.

During this workshop we should be alert to the built in bias it has toward viewing pre-school interventions as investments and toward emphasis on individual child development with relatively little regard for effects on the family or on the community. The bias leads us naturally to focus on reductions in "wastage" in primary schools associated with the extension of pre-school education. But <sup>in</sup> doing so, will we miss more important effects? It may be that the type of pre-school program most likely to cut down repetition and wastage is one in which children have been taught to be more docile, to adjust better to authoritarian teachers, and to accept an irrelevant curriculum presented in unimaginative ways. Will an investment bias lead us to seek out the ways children with early education adjust better to primary schools when the reverse should be done? Will an emphasis on individual development and subsequent performance in schools lead to overlook important effects of early programs on the family and the community which, in the longer term, may be more important for bringing about changes -- in the primary school as well as in other areas of life?

## 2. Shifting scope and coverage

As implied in the introduction and in my previous discussion, the coverage of child development and child care programs is low but increasing slowly. No longer is the field an upper-class monopoly, providing enrichment for their own and extending beneficent care to a few selected poor - a salve to the conscience. The ten per cent figure quoted is probably out of date. But even a 15 per cent figure is not much to brag about if, as is the case, most of the 15 per cent are middle class and urban children.

As pre-school programs expand, they may or may not have a democratizing effect. As indicated earlier, poor children exposed to intensive programs of stimulation and care do not catch up completely with richer peers. Moreover, preschools can easily become another, and earlier, social tracking device, with richer children going to private, costly, well-equipped, high quality pre-schools, while poor children enter public, low quality programs of custodial care. Where there is competition for admission to primary schools, pre-school attendance could become the not-too-rational basic for deciding who, from among the poor, gets to enter which schools, and how soon they can enter. As the workshop discusses the pre-school/primary relationship this selection function of pre-schools which is already evident in many Latin American settings, should be kept firmly in mind.

As expansion has occurred there has been little effort to adjust the content of pre-school programs in Latin America from their upper and middle class and main line cultural biases taking into account possible differences in child rearing practices and in needs. Systematically identifying these differences is a task still to be undertaken in Latin America. The poor parents whose children are increasingly being incorporated into pre-school programs are likely to insist that their children learn to read and write, much to the consternation of their progressive middle class teachers who wish to emphasize pre-reading skills, the development of basic concepts, and to promote an active inquiring spirit. But should poor parents and their children be denied their request when richer children are being thought at home by parents? To what extent does rigid adherence to one set of child development principles undercut results by isolating parents from the programs, and with what effect on later performance,?

3. Toward a combination of custodial and developmental care

Programs of child development and of child care seem to have moved along two separate tracks despite their obvious overlap. Child development programs are oriented almost exclusively to the child's physical, mental, and social growth, with little or no thought to effects on caretakers or on the community. That is true of most pre-school

nutritional supplementation, and health programs. Child care programs have a custodial bias often originating in the need or desire of family members to work. Whether child development occurs in programs of child care is a minor consideration, particularly in those programs serving the poor. These separate, short-sighted approaches continue, but increasingly, efforts are being made to bring the two together.

Programs which are set up to respond to family needs are much more likely to emphasize the custodial dimension of care. Family needs affecting programs for children will of course depend very much on the economic circumstance and composition of the family. Whether rich or poor, however, families frequently express a need for their children to be "enriched" or more intelligent. Whether rich or poor, one-parent families or those in which both parents work, require custodial care for their young children. The rich can meet these needs on their own, by hiring a servant or paying for their children to attend a private pre-school.

Poor families have difficulty meeting both the developmental needs of the child and their custodial needs. They not only lack resources but often the knowledge and ability to take advantage of resources made available by others. They are forced to make unfortunate compromises in the quality of the development and care they can provide. Sometimes the



compromise is to abandon a child in the hope someone else will be willing and able to provide the proper care they cannot. Too often the solution is to lock the child in the home, unattended, while parents work. Generally, however, the solution involves leaving children in the care of an older sibling, a relative or a neighbor who, unless exceptionally loving and motivated does little for the development of the child. Thus, most child care among the poor in Latin America is, de facto, custodial, rather than developmental, responding first to the family need and only second, and perhaps not at all, to the needs of the child. Most governmental programs of child care for poor families are also primarily custodial, despite professions of developmental goals. Guarderías (a word that instantly conjures up a custodial image) are notorious for their lack of developmental attention to children and have been shown in some instances to have had a negative effect on the development of the children parked there.

By way of contrast, programs established for children of poor working parents and energetically directed <sup>toward</sup> /developing children, seldom do a good job of meeting the custodial needs of the families they serve. The hours during which care is provided, do not correspond to times when child care is most needed. Or, access to the caretaking centers is difficult; working mothers with access to a program in the workplace, for instance, must take small children with them on crowded bus trips of over an hour to reach a

work-based program.

One cannot argue with the desire to add developmental elements to custodial pre-school programs. At the same time there is a challenge associated with a shift toward child-centered developmental programs; to make that shift without disregarding the "child care" needs of poor families. When we look at the relationship between pre-school and primary school programs, we should not forget that most primary schools in Latin America (and elsewhere as well) are essentially custodial institutions, overlaid with a tiny bit of developmental help for children. That fact raises an interesting problem for primary schools when pre-school programs are truly developmental. Most schools are not ready to receive active, exploring children who have already mastered the few concepts they are supposed to learn while being baby sat. Can primary schools make that adjustment?

4. From recuperation toward preventive intervention

Labeling this as a shift may be more wishful thinking than fact, but an increase in attention to parental education and "ecological" approaches to early attention suggests there is a change. The need for preventive actions, though seemingly obvious has been slow to emerge. The shift has been helped by evidence that children treated in and released

from nutrition recuperation centers are likely to be repeaters. It has been helped by the stir created over reductions in the practice of breast-feeding and the earlier appearance of malnutrition. It has been aided by studies showing that full recuperation is difficult. And it is common sense.

Most pre-school interventions which have an explicitly educational purpose are directed toward children in the 3-6 year age range. This workshop will deal with pre-school programs for children 0-2 as well as 3-6 but the workshop emphasis on the transition to primary school favors discussion of programs at the older age? In so doing, will we reinforce a recuperative bias and overlook more important, and earlier interventions affecting school performance and later behavior? Can we, instead, use the information at hand to compare long term results from earlier rather than later interventions - or is that a task that must await future studies?

In conjunction with the shift toward a preventive posture, some work has been done on ways to identify families whose new-borns and infants will be "at risk". Sorting and verifying of these indicators (a general index of socio-economic conditions, a "crowding" index, nutritional and health measurements for the mother, the presence of one or more

malnourished or otherwise retarded child, et.) remains to be done, and the real effect of children from acting in a preventive way based on such determination remain to be reestablished.

Evidence establishing an effect of parental education on the development of children is hard to come by. Programs can be shown to bring changes in knowledge and attitudes, and occasionally practices, but the real effect on the child, and the duration of that effect is not well documented. How do parental education efforts help the transition to primary school?

5. From an "innoculation mentally" toward continuous intervention.
6. From single toward multiple "integrated" interventions.
7. From a one-model approach toward "planned diversity".

These three shifts have been alluded to in discussion of previous points. All three are seen increasingly as important, but they run up against problems of cost. The latter two create administrative headaches and problems of bureaucratic coordination as well. They also tend to put an overload on systems which are short of trained talent.

In order for "planned diversity" to be effective, much more information is needed about what works when, and for whom. Under what circumstances is it best to establish neighborhood centers, work-based centers, home-based or school-related programs of early care? What "spontaneous" forms of child care exist that could be built upon to help diversify care - from the ground up? What combinations of materials, methods, and forms of organization can be put together that are applicable in enough setting to provide general help within a diversified system?

8. From "directed" toward participative programs.
9. From certified professionals or parents to working with many caregivers.

The thrust of these two trends is to open myriad options for programs of child care and child development - options seldom considered seriously in the past. These new models hold promise for being closer to reality and lower cost than more traditional programs, but the question of quality is ever present.

Participation takes many forms: at the center of an activity or on the margin; as an individual or as part of a family or community unit; by donating money or materials or by acting directly; as part of a learning process or not, etc. In the pre-school program in Puno, Peru, participation by parents and community members occurs through the choice of the volunteer "animator", through the construction of a locale for the program, and in the daily preparation of lunches (with most, but not all, of the food provided by outside sources) for the pre-schoolers. However, the community does not participate in the running of the program, in decisions about its content, or by helping inside the pre-school. Parental education through the program is minimal, and there is relatively little participation generated by the program, directed toward improving the general conditions in the home or community which affect child development. The "Portage" model also in use in Peru, requires active participation by parents in child development, but there is no element of group participation and the program is set.

In 1979, a meeting in Cali, Colombia concluded that to be effective, pre-school interventions needed to go beyond activity involving individual parents or families to involvement of communities. Only then would one begin to get at the environmental and social conditions affecting negatively the early life of children. More than one experiment has been designed

to do exactly that - the Colombian projects in Cartagena and along the Pacific coast, for instance. From these and other projects the value of community involvement is evident, but so is the difficulty of building and maintaining participation where none existed before and where strong community institutions are not in place.

The primary school is part of the community environment affecting children. It is not a "participatory" institution, controlled by the state, with content beyond the control of a particular community and often with a teacher the community has not chosen. <sup>and is</sup> If community participation is felt to be so necessary for the success of pre-school interventions, why not for schooling as well? What does it mean for the long-term impact of early childhood programs if participation stops at the primary school door? Can community participation in early childhood programs lead through community pressures to changes in primary schools?

Closely related to the question of participation is the experimentation in early childhood programs with involvement of many caregivers or "education agents". In Latin America, projects or programs are underway built around community volunteers, siblings, youth groups (such as the scouts or recreation clubs), the aged, unemployed poor women, para-professional health workers, high school or college students, and social workers, none of whom have been "certified" for child care. We know very little about the impact of these various programs on the development

of participating children, or for that matter, on the caregivers. Among the many possible caregivers, and within the context of this workshop, it seems worthwhile to single out primary school students. In Latin America, as in many other parts of the third world, most children who pass the age of 7 or 8 are already in a sense adults. "Childhood" is a product of recent development and still reserved for the wealthy. Whereas children from 8 to 12 are considered part of the child care problem in the United States, their counterparts in poor families in Latin America are often part of the child care solution. Because the poor tend to have larger families, the probability that siblings will have a child care (and therefore child development?) role in poor homes is greater than in middle class families. In some places, children seem to have a major role in the child care process in others they do not because they are in school, because they have other family-related tasks they must carry out, or because families are young. The possibility that siblings can serve as caretakers is conditioned, then by family structure, by the pressure on youth to work, and by the extension and organization of schools (whether or not they function on a shift system, for instance).



Involvement of older children in the care and development of younger children carries potential benefits well beyond the obvious one of forcing parents to work. In some places, youth cannot find employment, and, because they are at loose ends when school is out, get into trouble. Youth care giving could not only keep older children busy but also lead to a career line for some and, if accompanied by some education, provide them at an early age with knowledge and skills related to parenting.

Despite its seeming importance, we know relatively little about the frequency with which youth act as caregivers, how often their role is a main one, or under what circumstances that is most likely to occur. Nor do we know how frequently these demands are responsible for primary school (or later) drop out. Nor do we know whether programs of education for children 8-12 performing care giving roles will make them better care givers (and, not incidentally in the long run, better parents). It is possible to imagine, for instance, that programs directed at older children would reinforce negative feelings toward a job in the home that is unwanted or resented. It is possible that attempts to build upon something that occurs naturally could take away the spontaneity elements in care for younger children by older ones--with a negative rather than positive effect on development of younger children. The expectation is however, that results of "child-to-child" programs will be positive, and there is ample evidence from the health field to support that. Still, one must look on new ideas--the potential next fad--with a critical eye.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, programs involving older children in care for younger ones are not widespread, but examples can be found in Chile, Peru, Ecuador, Brazil, Colombia, and Jamaica, for instance. In most cases, these programs are directed toward high school youth. Almost nothing has been done to involve or educate primary school children with respect to child development and care.

In a few places, nursery schools or kindergartens are located next to, or even in, rooms of a primary school. And yet there is virtually no coordination between the pre-school and primary school programs. Hours are different affecting the possibility for older siblings to bring younger ones to their pre-school and take them home. Teachers have no contact. The primary school curriculum takes no note of the presence of pre-schoolers. The seeming inability of primary schools to adapt themselves is again apparent.

It is interesting that the neighborhood and the workplace and even churches, have figured much more prominently as locations for pre-school programs than the school yard. As we discuss pre-school, primary school relationships, we should give a place to discussing the potential advantages and disadvantages, short term and long, of associating early intervention programs with primary schooling and of involving older children more permanently in the care of younger children. Could such arrangements foster participation

of parents and other members of the community, in matters related to primary school as well as pre-schooling? Could programs benefit, at relatively low-cost and with reasonable quality, other younger and older children? Could the association provide greater continuity during transition?

10. From more expensive toward lower cost programs

Costs must be part of any discussion of pre-school interventions.

Unfortunately, we are working from a weak base. There are very few good (and public) evaluations of the costs of pre-school programs. And the traditional accounting methods used are seldom adapted when evaluating less formal, community-based early interventions. We need better methods as well as better information.

From the existing studies of costs, we can divine some obvious conclusions: that government run, professionally-staffed programs are generally more expensive than local community-based programs in involving volunteers; that most pilot projects are too expensive to replicate; and that hidden costs associated with foreign donations of food or services, or even with the time of "volunteers" can be high and hard to sustain. In the move toward lower costs, there may be a trade-off with quality, affecting the impact that can be expected from programs--in primary school and beyond. On the other hand, the need to seek lower costs has helped break away from an imported, upper class, tradition which demands fancy conditions, too beautiful materials, and overly trained personnel. The challenge of providing quality care at low cost has been joined, but the results are not in.

What is much harder to divine is how costs, however calculated, should

stack up against benefits--to children, care givers, families, the immediate community, and society at large. The ability of traditional evaluation to capture such benefits is limited (but not to be discarded). Long term impact of programs must be considered on physical growth, IQ, school "readiness" (in terms of social skills, language ability, conceptualization), access to primary schooling, progress through the system (how far, how fast, with what repetition, and with what special attention), school achievement, and educational motivation and aspirations. And they should probably be related to costs. But it is important to include also less obvious benefits to families and to the community. For this, we need to apply more open, qualitative evaluation methods, as is being done, for example, in the on-going evaluation of The Parents and Children project in Osorno, Chile. In that evaluation, primary school access and performance are among many criteria for program success.

#### Some concluding comments

In the foregoing I have tried to capture something of the exciting, fluid state of early childhood thinking and programming in Latin America. New objectives, organization, content, and modes of participating are emerging; many variants are being tried; interest is high. But progress is slow. Major problems remain: of coverage, quality, cost, flexibility, prevention, continuity, cooperation and integration (among different parts of the bureaucracy,

and among different levels of any system), and family and community participation. The custodial and developmental lines of early childhood programs need to be brought closer together. And, articulation with primary schooling is obviously inadequate.

As suggested throughout this paper, much more research and evaluation needs to be done and in some crucial areas. However, much of the information to be derived from research and evaluation that is needed to provide guidance for improving early childhood programs is already in hand. Adding up what we have learned, putting it in a form that can be used by decision-makers, and making that information available must receive as much attention as carrying out more research. While avoiding the simple answer, I hope we can advance that task in this workshop.

## A P P E N D I X I

A Selected Bibliography: Early Childhood Programs in Latin AmericaGeneral Reviews

1. Bernard Van Leer Foundation, "Participación de los Padres y de la Comunidad en la Educación Infantil Temprana, Síntesis y Conclusiones del Tercer Seminario del Hemisferio Occidental, Cali, Colombia, Marzo, 28-31, 1979.

The seminar presents a strong argument for programs that include and foster community participation.

2. Josef Brozek, D. B. Cousin, and M. S. Read, "Longitudinal Studies on the Effect of Malnutrition, Nutritional Supplementation, and Behavioral Stimulation", PaHO Bulletin, Vol. XI, No. 3 (1977)

This article reports on a conference held at Cali, Colombia, October 20-24, 1975, in which data were compared from six longitudinal studies in Latin America that concern the behavioural results of childhood malnutrition.

3. Patricia Engle, "The Intersecting Needs of Working Women and Their Young Children: A Report to the Ford Foundation," August, 1980, Mimeograph.

The review analyzes evidence from surveys of child care methods in Latin America to arrive at a set of conclusions about: The compatibility of work and child care, changes in care taking associated with labor force participation, forms of child care used and desired by working women, existing patterns of care, different "delivery" strategies, and gaps in our knowledge.

4. Robert Halpern, "Early Childhood Programs in Latin America!", Harvard Education Review, Vol. 50, No. 4 (November 1980), pp 481-95.

Halpern presents a brief historical over view of early childhood education programs in Latin America, and then discusses the impact

of several types of programs now in operation - in Colombia, Perú, Chile, and Venezuela. He outlines some of the political and policy issues that underlie early childhood education, and offers recommendations for improving its effectiveness as a vehicle for development. Bibliography.

5. Robert Halpern and David Fisk, "Pre-school Education in Latin America: A report from the Andean Region, Ypsilanti, Michigan: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1978.

This excellent review is based on country studies carried out in Chile, Bolivia, Peru, Colombia, and Venezuela, each of which is published as a separate volume. The document summarizes information about coverage, objectives, administration, curricula, training, planning and evaluation of pre-school programs. Several key issues and a set of "key variables" are identified.

6. Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, "Educación de la Infancia y Comunidad Local. Bogotá: UNICEF/ICBF, Abril, 1979

Excellent descriptions are provided of 10 innovative projects, 3 originating in "the community" 3 promoted by governmental agencies, 3 stimulated by research groups, and one "integrated" program.

7. "La Educación de la Primera Infancia", Educación Hoy: Año VII, No. 42 (Nov. - Dic. 1947).

This issue of Educación Hoy contains articles reporting on seven major experiments in Latin America, and attempts to assess what has been learned from them.

8. María Isabel Lira, "Textos Latinoamericanos Para la Estimulación del Desarrollo Psíquico de Menores de Dos Años: Revisión, Descripción y Comentarios". A report prepared for the Ford Foundation. Santiago, Chile, Centro de Estudios de Desarrollo y Estimulación Psicosocial, Diciembre 1980.

Lira examines critically materials existing in Spanish that are designed to aid the development of children ages 0-2.

9. Marta Maurás y Josefina Ossandon, "La Situación de la Mujer en América Latina y el Caribe y su Impacto en la Infancia", Documento de Trabajo - UNICEF/TARO/PM/80/11, Santiago, UNICEF, Marzo, 1980.

This document not only presents the general situation of poor women and children in Latin America but also discusses the special circumstances of women and children in indigenous communities,



plantation economies, small farming, agro-industry, and the informal urban sector.

10. Marta Maurás, Carmen Luz Latorre, and Johanna Filp, "Alternativas de Atención al Pre-escolar en América Latina y el Caribe", Santiago de Chile: UNICEF, 1979.

This document provides a brief history of pre-school attention in Latin América, adds a profile of children 0-6, discusses factors to be considered in designing an integrated pre-school program, and describes 17 experiences, classified according to whether the principal focus is on the child, the child and the family; or the child and the community. Includes a good bibliography.

11. Ernesto Pollitt, Robert Halpern, and Patricia Eskenasy, "Early Childhood Intervention Programs in Latin America, A Selective Review." A Report presented to the office of Latin America and the Caribbean, The Ford Foundation, New York, January, 1979.

The review treats the relationships among malnutrition, socio-cultural settings, mental development and behaviour, and intervention strategies. It includes studies of programs in Colombia, Perú and Venezuela. Contains an excellent bibliography.

12. Juan Pablo Terra (ed.) "Situación de la Infancia en América Latina y el Caribe". Santiago, de Chile: UNICEF, 1979.

This 630-page edited volume is divided into four major parts:  
 1. dominant social conditions and their impact in childhood;  
 2. policies and services; 3. Experiences and innovations favoring young children, and 4. a recapitulation. The edition covers urban and rural, formal and non formal, education, health, nutritional and programs.

13. UNESCO, Oficina Regional de Educación Para América Latina y el Caribe, "Alternativas para la Educación Pre-Primaria".

UNESCO has published four case studies: 1. of the PRONOEL program in Perú, 2. the HERF experiment in Cali, Colombia, 3. Escuelas de banco en Cartagena, Colombia, and 4.

Others are in progress.

14. UNESCO, Oficina Regional de Educación para América Latina y el Caribe, Boletín de Educación, No. 26. (Enero-Junio, 1979).

The Boletín de Educación includes articles dealing with pre-school programs in Panamá, Perú, Central América, Colombia, Honduras, and Venezuela. In addition, statistics and a bibliography of over 200 references are provided.

15. UNICEF, "Experiencias de Educación Inicial No-Escolarizada en América Latina. Lima, Perú: UNICEF, 1979,

Fifteen "experiencias" are described and their characteristics summarized.

### Specific Studies

1. Jeanine Anderson, Blanca Figueroa, and Ana Mariñez, "Child Care in Urban and Rural Peru", A report presented to the Overseas Education Fund of the League of Women Voters, Washington, D.C. The League of Women Voters, 1979.

The Peruvian Study draws upon anthropological work done in one rural community in the Peruvian Sierra and one squatter settlement in Lima. It is part of a six-country study of child care needs of low income mothers.

2. Susana Checa, Virginia Guzman, y Virginia Vargas, "Impacto de Programas de Servicios Integrados en la Situación de la Mujer - casos: Puno y Pueblos Jovenes del Cono Sur de Lima Metropolitana", UNICEF, Lima, Perú 1981.

Two programs of integrated services built around early childhood interventions are examined specifically for their impact (or lack of impact) on women.

3. Fundación del Niño, "Evaluation Report on the Day Care Homes Program" 9 valumes. Caracas; Fundación del Niño, 1978.

This extraordinary evaluation, which includes an ethnographic survey is also summarized in a 40 page report presenting conclusions about the program of community-based family-home care using para-professionals under the supervision of a technical team.

4. Fundación para la Educación Permanente en Colombia (FEPEC), "Educación no-Formal y Desarrollo Infantil a través de un Programa de Educación No-Formal con énfasis en Nutrición, Salud, y Estimulación Psicológica". Bogotá, 1979.

An innovative program of parental education in a poor part of Bogotá is described and evaluated in terms of the impact on mothers beliefs and habits and on the mental development of the participating children.

5. George Jesien, et. al. "Informe Final del Proyecto 'Validación del Modelo Portage', Programa no-escolarizado de Educación Inicial con Base en el Hogar", Lima, Ministerio de Educación, Instituto Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo de la Educación (INIDE), 1979.

The 589 page document looks at a home-based program to foster child development for children 3-5 adapted from Portage Wisconsin, for use in urban and rural Peru. The model involves "animators" chosen from the community and includes a set of activity cards for use in diagnosis and stimulating pre-school children. A study of costs is included.

6. Vera Kardonsky - Titelman, et. al. "Evaluación del Impacto de los Programas de complementación alimentaria, en los infantes, pre-escolares y escolares beneficiarios del proyecto Col, 549", Bogotá, Colombia, The World Food Programme and the Colombian Institute for Family Welfare, 1981, A Preliminary Version.

The field study in four Colombian states evaluates results of the 10-year, more than 70 million dollar, program of food supplementation in Colombia.

7. Carmen Luz Latorre and Salomón Magendzo, "Evaluación de Programas no-regulares de Atención al Pre-escolar Marginal en Chile y Proposición de Elementos Esenciales a ser Considerados en Eventuales Programas alternativos", Santiago, Chile, UNICEF, in press.

Three Chilean programs are evaluated: Plaza Prescolar, the Program of Early Stimulation, and the Parents and Children Project.

8. Harrison McKay, et. al. "Improving Cognitive Ability in Chronically Deprived Children", Science, Vol. 200 (April 21, 1978), pp. 270-78.

The article provides a summary of results after 4 years in this on-going longitudinal study of 3 year olds from a poor barrio of Cali, Colombia who were exposed to a program of treatment combining nutritional, health care, and educational stimulation.

9. Hernán Montenegro, et. at. "Programa Piloto de Estimulación precoz para niños de nivel socio-económico bajo, entre 0 y 2 años: informe final", Santiago, Chile, Servicio Nacional de Salud, 1977.
10. José Obdulio Mora, et. al. "Evaluation of a Food Supplementation Program for Pregnant Women of Bogotá, Colombia," a paper presented to the Conference on the Effects of Maternal Nutrition in Infant Health; Implications for Action", Panajachel, Guatemala, March 11-16, 1979. mimeo.