

ELIZABETH ANNE MEADE

AN ORGANISATIONAL STUDY  
OF THE  
FREE KINDERGARTEN AND PLAYCENTRE  
MOVEMENTS  
IN  
NEW ZEALAND

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## ABSTRACT

The free kindergarten and playcentre organisations were subjects of case studies for an examination of strategic choice processes in voluntary organisations, using an open-systems theoretical framework. The patterns of strategic choices in each movement, over time, were described; then four recent decision processes and their consequences analysed. The data about the strategic choice processes gathered by participant observation were validated by three small surveys: one of 138 parents of pre-school children, one of 62 free kindergarten and playcentre staff, and one of 162 playcentre and kindergarten volunteers.

General conclusions are that the patterns of strategic choice processes both reflect and influence each organisation's structure and functioning. Both voluntary organisations are constrained from making strategic choices which would satisfy the demands of prospective clientele who desire new forms of early childhood education services - the playcentre movement is constrained by its ideology and its method of delivering pre-school education via parent participation in all aspects of the organisation; and the kindergarten movement is constrained by the accumulation of many rules which inhibit the organisation's ability to adapt to changing social conditions. The playcentre organisation's pattern of decision-making has been ahead of its time in the extent of members' participation, and so also has it been with its dual education programme - children and parents learning together; but the kindergarten organisation's children's programme is better matched with the dominant child-rearing philosophy in New Zealand, which is associated with the greater demand for kindergarten pre-school education.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

PC Journal	Playcentre Journal
NZPCF Ann. Rpt.	N.Z. Playcentre Federation Annual Report
NZPCF Ann. Conf. Mins.	N.Z. Playcentre Federation Annual Conference Minutes
NZPCF Nat. Exec. Mins.	N.Z. Playcentre Federation National Executive Minutes
Dom. Advisor's Rpt.	Dominion Advisor's Report
WPCA Ann. Rpt.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Annual Report
WPCA Council Mins.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Council Minutes
WPCA Exec. Mins.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Executive Minutes
WPCA Educ. Comm. Mins.	Wellington Playcentre Association's Education Committee Minutes
NZFKU Ann. Mtg. Mins.	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union Annual Meeting Minutes
NZFKU Conf. Rpt.	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union Conference Report
NZFKU Exec. Mins.	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union's Executive Minutes
NZFKU Submissions	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union's Submissions to the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education in New Zealand
WFKA Ann. Mtg. Rpt.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Annual Meeting Report
WFKA Ann. Mtg. Mins.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Annual Meeting Minutes
WFKA Council Mins.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Council Minutes
WFKA Exec. Mins.	Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Executive Minutes
Bailey Report	Report of the Consultative Committee on Pre-school Educational Services (1947)
Currie Report	Report of the Commission on Education in New Zealand (1962)
Hill Report	Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education (1971)
NACPSE	National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education

## PREFACE

When I enumerate the different activities in my adult life related to early childhood, it sounds as though I have eaten, slept and worked early childhood since I first began work. I have taught new entrant children; convened and supervised at a shoppers' creche; tutored playcentre trainees; tutored and lectured to university students on early childhood education; my daughter is almost at the upper limit of her early childhood years and has been a client of three different early childhood services; and my present job with the Research and Statistics Unit of the Department of Education is researching all early childhood services in New Zealand for a report to be tabled at the NZ/OECD Conference on Early Childhood Care and Education, 1978.

The process of establishing rapport with playcentre and free kindergarten personnel, collecting data about the organisations and their clients, analyzing the data and writing this dissertation has been going on concurrently with many of the above mentioned activities since 1973. My involvement in early childhood activities has, I believe, greatly enhanced the "feel" I have for the subjects of this study; and I am grateful for the experiences (which have occurred often by "happenstance") that have broadened my understanding of this complex field.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Because of a personal involvement in early childhood education, my primary interest was to do some research in the area - obtaining a Ph.D. was a secondary interest. I would like to thank the late Dr A Robinson and my former husband John for encouraging me to enrol for this qualification.

Many friends and relatives, too numerous to mention, have been marvellous help during the last five years - they have helped with child care,

accepted my periods of hibernation to write and my accompanying tiredness with tolerance, and listened while I have formulated ideas.

Students in my classes made learning a two-way process; and I hope discussions with colleagues have also been an exchange process. I would like to thank several colleagues in particular: Dr A Levett for stimulating my interest in voluntary organisations; Dr Geraldine McDonald and Dr D Barney for the hours of stimulating discussion; and Professor J Robb and Dr J Barrington for their advice, support and constructive criticisms.

The University Grants Committee via a Post-graduate Scholarship and the Sarah Ann Rhodes Fellowship Trust gave me financial assistance; and Heather Hutton, Helen Norman, David Gilbert, Claire Hadfield and Marjolane Ball provided technical assistance. To them I say, many thanks.

Lastly, I would like to express warm and sincere thanks to hundreds of playcentre and free kindergarten members who welcomed a researcher into their midst and gave me friendship and encouragement as well as the information I asked for. The national officers and people in the Wellington associations of both organisations deserve special mention for their assistance with this study.

*E. Anne Meade*

PART I

SETTING THE SCENE



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*Children are not only the best neighbours in the community but they lead their parents to neighbourhood community participation and orientation.*

Janowitz; 1952, p.124

I came into the field of early childhood education to do research at a time when interest in New Zealand and around the world in this field was at an all-time high. Such interest probably made those involved in early childhood services more tolerant of a researcher 'hanging around', but it has also made my task more complex because of the vast number of changes in the field which have occurred in the last few years. There was a sudden spurt in the growth rate in the mid-1960s of the two main pre-school organisations - the subjects of my research - the free kindergarten and playcentre organisations. The Government's need for more factual information and for policy suggestions, resulted in the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education being set up. Their Report, commonly known as the Hill Report, was published in 1971 and when the Labour Government came into power in 1972 it proceeded to implement the majority of the recommendations made in the Report. The resulting changes have, on the whole, largely benefitted the two major movements. Detailed discussion of three important changes is presented later in this thesis. Government and general public interest also prompted the New Zealand Council for Educational Research to commission David Barney to undertake research culminating in the publication of *Who Gets to Pre-School?* (1975), and I regard this present study as a complement to Barney's book.

### THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

The decision-making processes involved in the provision of pre-school education services, by two voluntary movements in New Zealand - the playcentre and the free kindergarten movements - are under study in this thesis. In order to help fulfil the need for early childhood education

in New Zealand, the service and the means of delivery of the service given by the two organisations should be:

1. readily available to young families, and
2. acceptable to parents with young children.

In this study I have analyzed organisational features of both movements and their environments, and I have also investigated membership (client, staff and administrators) characteristics in order to describe how each organisation's key strategies have a bearing on availability and acceptability of the pre-school education services in this country.

I will return to the research problem after describing the early childhood education constituency in New Zealand to place the two subject organisations in their context, and after describing the structure of the playcentre and kindergarten organisations.

#### SCOPE

The field of early childhood education is large and complex, and in New Zealand the complexity is compounded by the number of voluntary organisations involved in the provision of services, usually with some degree of Government assistance. By way of illustration, a list of services and key organisations providing educational services to families with children aged 0 - 8 years is given below. This list should not be regarded as definitive, and if a list of workers were to be added, the picture would become far more complex, as many services employ more than one type of worker.

Figure 1: Early Childhood Education Services

<u>Services</u>	<u>Organisations</u>
A. Under Department of Education Oversight	
- free kindergartens	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Union (NZFKU)
	N.Z. Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association (NZFKTA)
- playcentres	N.Z. Playcentre Federation (NZPCF)
- pre-school classes in primary schools	State
- individual enrolments of pre-schoolers in primary schools	State
- Correspondence School pre-school programme	State

<u>Services</u>	<u>Organisations</u>
- pre-school classes in special schools	State (sometimes in partnership; e.g., with the Royal Foundation for the Blind)
- junior classes in primary schools	State
- junior classes in special schools	State
And to support these services are two main advisory groups:	
- Psychological Services	State
- Pre-school Advisory Service	State
B. Under Department of Social Welfare Oversight	
- child care centre: primarily education	A wide range - some affiliated to the N.Z. Association of Child Care Centres
- child care centres: primarily care (Includes Teachers' College creches etc.)	As above
- special pre-school centres	N.Z. Society for the Intellectually Handicapped Crippled Childrens' Society
C. Other	
- playgroups	Most are unaffiliated. Others have a wide range of affiliations
- Maori pre-schools	Maori Family Education Association
- hospital pre-school classes	Hospital Boards (sometimes in association with play-centre associations)
- independent pre-schools	Usually attached to a private school
- junior classes in private schools	Independent groups Church groups
- mobile kindergartens	YWCA in association with NZFKU

This study is concerned only with the first two services in the above list. An organisational study of these two voluntary movements was a very large study for one Ph.D. student, so discussion of other early childhood services has been avoided. Mention of other services, workers and organisations in the field of early childhood education is only made when they directly impinge on the strategic choice processes of the play-centre and free kindergarten organisations (The latter organisation is

also described hereafter as the kindergarten movement).

It should also be noted that this study is not concerned with evaluating the socio-emotional, cognitive and/or physical effects of the children's programme offered by both organisations, or of the adults' programme offered by the playcentre organisation.

#### THE TERM 'PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION'

The playcentre and the free kindergarten voluntary movements provide, in the main, pre-school sessions - that is, services for children over 2½ years of age and who are not yet attending school. Therefore I shall continue to use the term 'pre-school education' which the Education Act (1964) defines as "education for children under the age of 5", when I refer to the children's programmes, rather than the more recent phrase: 'early childhood education'. The latter term covers a much wider age group. Most educationists use it to encompass children from birth to about 8 years of age, and as yet there have only been tentative efforts by the playcentre and kindergarten movements to take an interest in children not in the 2½ to 5 pre-school age-group. The Playcentre Federation dropped their previous policy of having a 2½ years lower age limit at its 1975 conference, but the legality of having under-2½ year olds on the roll is still under question. Because the playcentre movement is a co-operative one with parents involved in administration and in parent education courses, there appear to be 'vertical diffusion effects' (Gray and Klaus; 1970) with a positive spin-off to siblings younger and older than the pre-school child attending playcentre, and thus indirectly, early childhood education may be achieved. Free kindergarten training programmes are taking the first steps towards the possibility that teachers may in future be trained to teach 3 to 8 year olds, by kindergarten trainees sharing some courses with primary teacher trainees. Both movements, and particularly the playcentre organisation have also been linked to the informal playgroups springing up for children in the pre pre-school age group. Despite these trends, I feel it is still more appropriate to designate these organisations as providers of 'pre-school education', while remembering that the playcentre movement is also a provider of adult education - 304 adults attained playcentre association supervisor's certificates in 1974.

Before I outline the hypotheses underlying this thesis, it would be

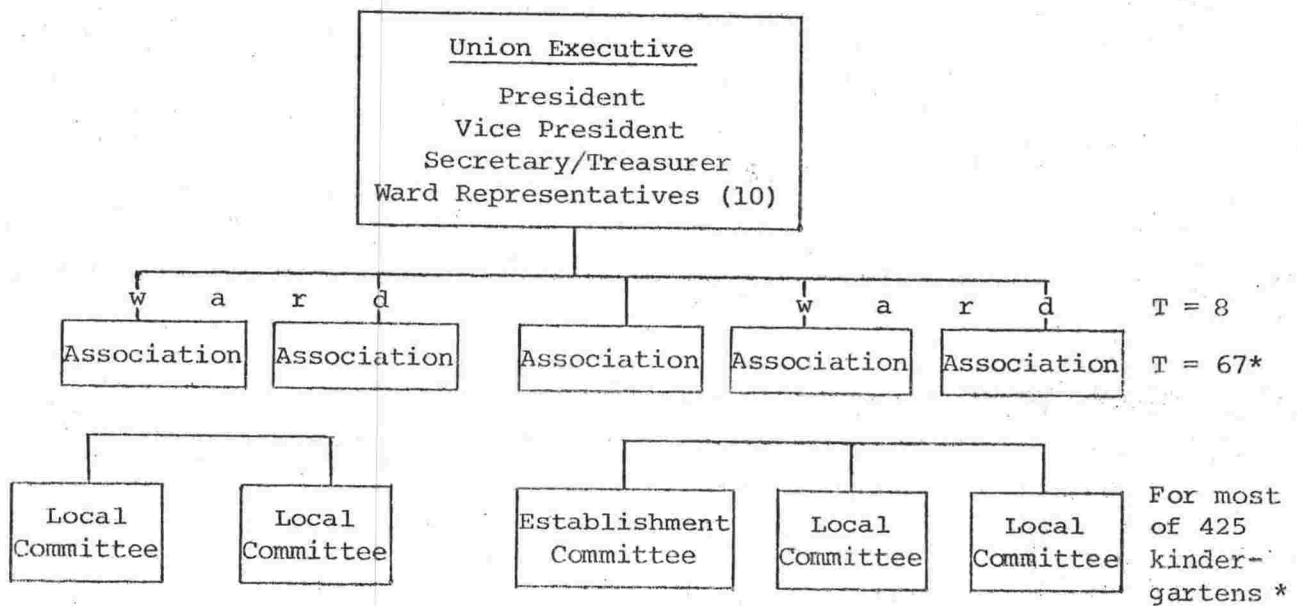
useful to describe the structure of the kindergarten movement and the playcentre movement.

# THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW ZEALAND FREE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT

The free kindergarten social system consists of four fairly distinct sub-systems:

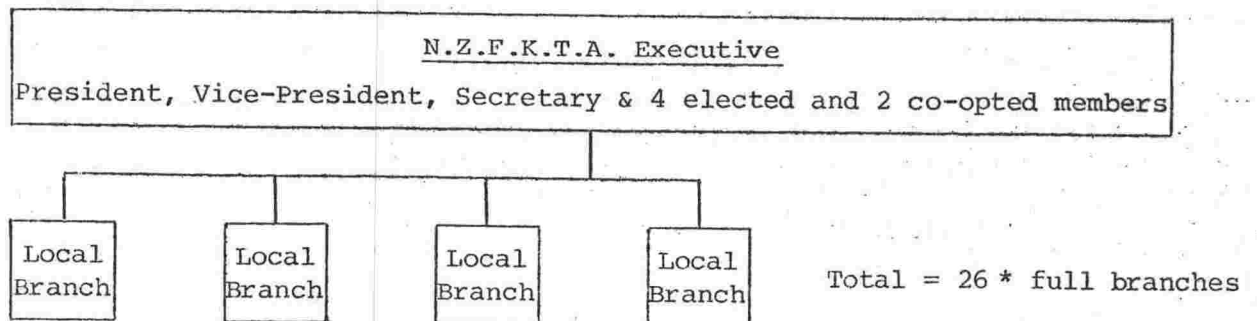
1. The voluntary organisation, New Zealand Free Kindergarten Union, concerned with establishing new kindergartens and administering existing kindergartens, has a 4-level hierarchy.

Figure 2: The Structure of the Kindergarten Voluntary Movement



2. The teachers' union, N.Z. Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association, has a 2-level hierarchy.

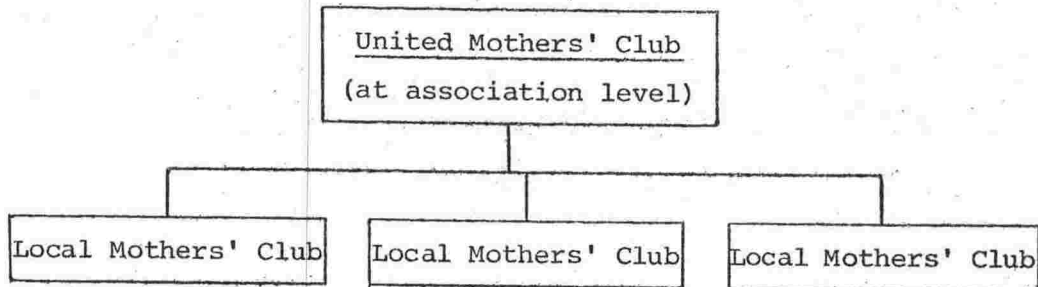
Figure 3: The Structure of the Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association



\* These numbers pertain to 1976.

3. The kindergarten teacher training sub-system has now been integrated into the seven Teachers' Colleges in New Zealand.
4. The Mothers' Club sub-system is declining. It has two levels:

Figure 4: The Structure of the Kindergarten Mothers' Club Sub-System

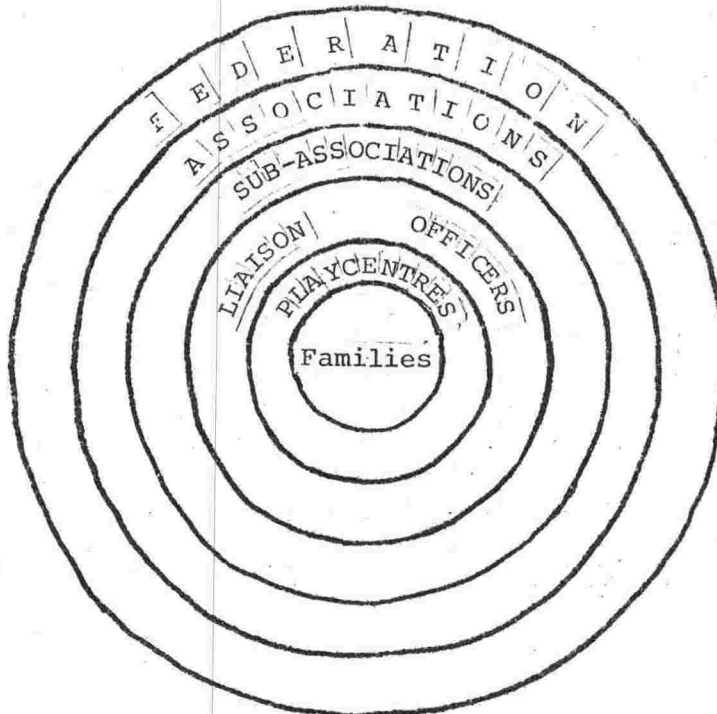


These four sub-systems have come about through increasing differentiation of function over the years. There is now little overlap in membership and activities in the sub-systems.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE NEW ZEALAND PLAYCENTRE MOVEMENT

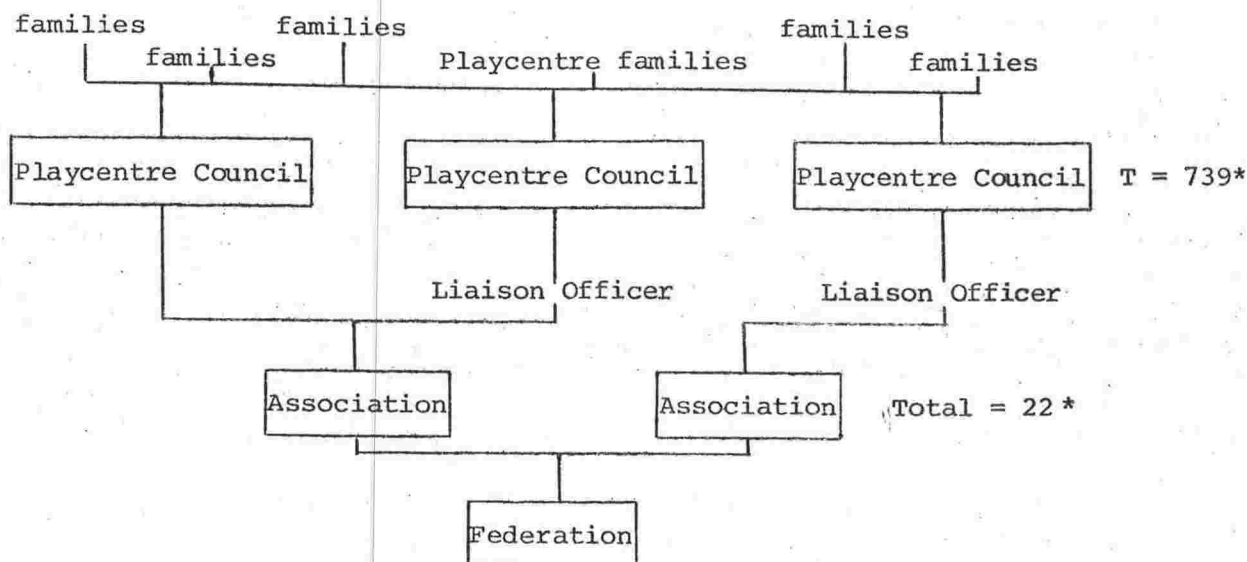
Whenever playcentre personnel draw a diagram to depict the organisation's structure, they put playcentre families as the core,

Figure 5a: The Structure of the Playcentre Movement



or at the top of the hierarchy.

Figure 5b: The Structure of the Playcentre Movement



There is some differentiation of function in the playcentre social system but it is not particularly clear-cut. Decisions at Federation level on all types of activities - educational or administrative - are made by the whole Federation conference, although important recommendations are forwarded to conference by the two main Federation sub-committees (Education Sub-committee and National Executive). Other sub-committees concentrate on more specialized activities: buildings, equipment, publicity and publications, and also make recommendations to conferences. The apparent specialization of function is less clear-cut than in the kindergarten social system however, because many individual members are involved in several activities at the same time and/or during the course of several years.

For the organisational analysis the focus will be on the Wellington association of each voluntary organisation, and to a lesser extent on the national bodies, the Playcentre Federation and the Free Kindergarten Union.

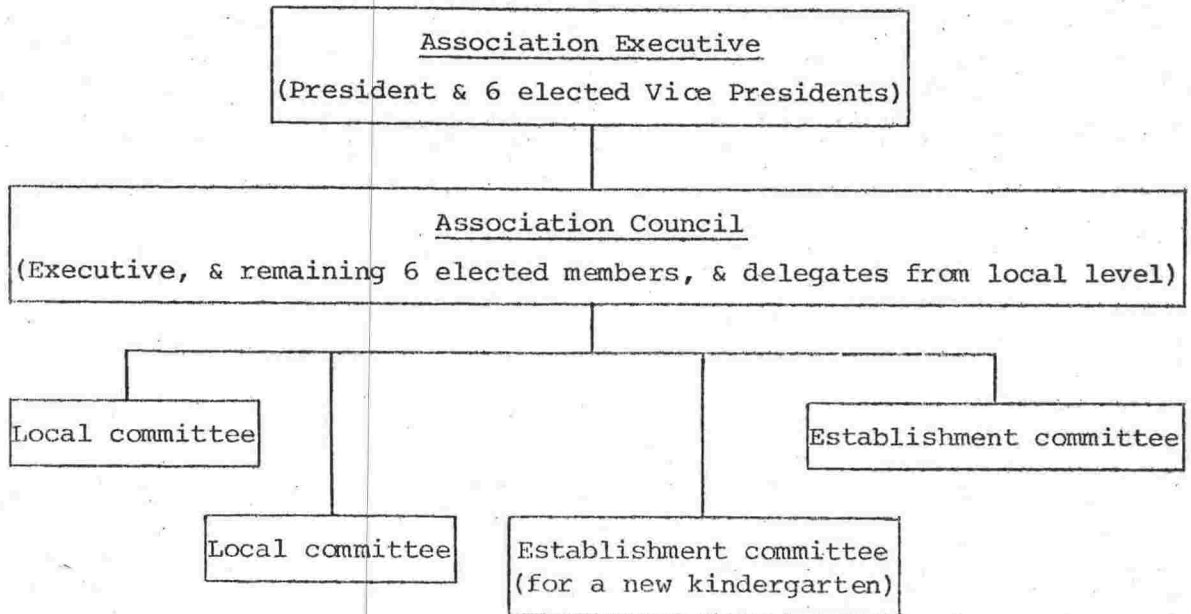
#### THE WELLINGTON FREE KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION

The composition of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association Council is a mixture of twelve elected members voted in by the outgoing Council at each Annual General Meeting, and a delegate from each local committee

\* These numbers are 1976 statistics.

and establishment committee in the Association, in addition to the President. The President and those six elected members who, in a second ballot, are elected as Vice Presidents constitute the Association Executive.

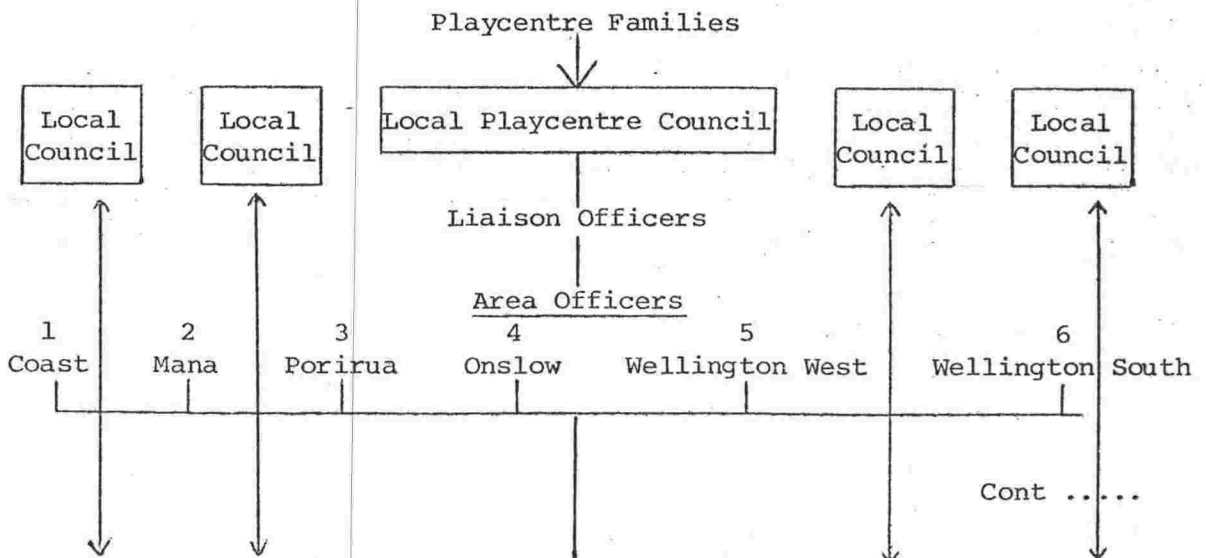
Figure 6: The Structure of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association



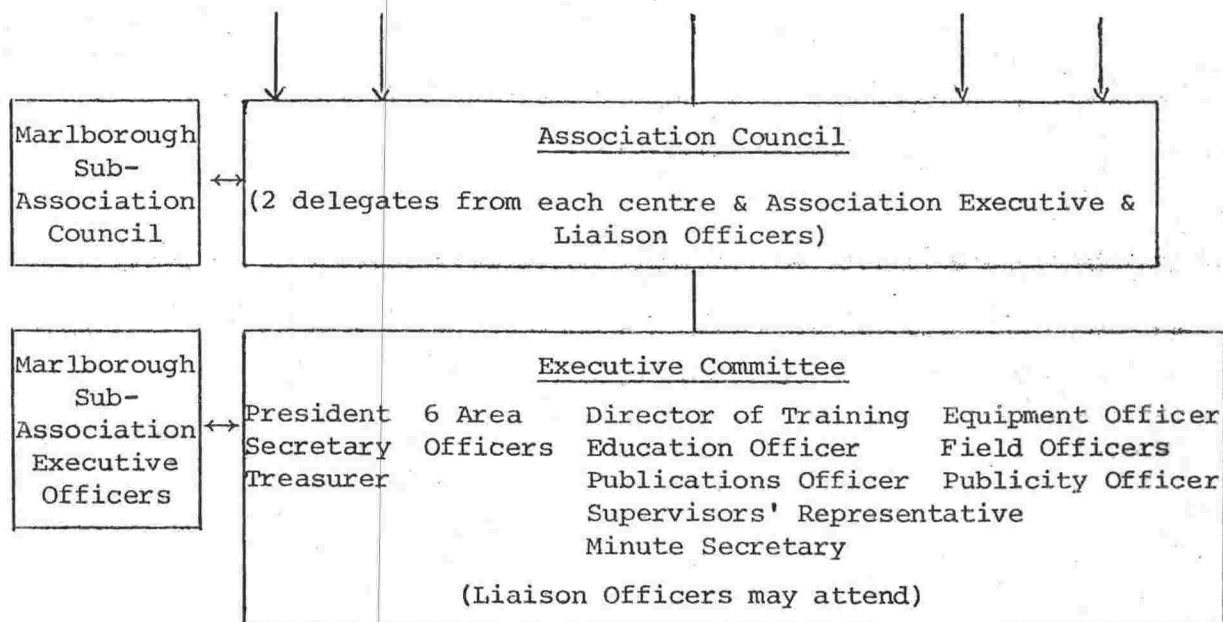
THE WELLINGTON PLAYCENTRE ASSOCIATION

The Playcentre Council has a similar federated structure with local councils sending representatives to Council meetings. However, there are far more officers with specialized functions who are also on the Wellington Playcentre Association Council. The Association depicts its structure thus:

Figure 7: The Structure of the Wellington Playcentre Association







Playcentres and kindergartens in three suburbs, selected as representing a cross-section of Wellington suburbs (McGee, 1969) have been used for closer observations of local activities and for surveying pre-school families' and committee members' characteristics at the individual level of analysis. It was fortunate that a small survey of 27 families, who used neither of the services provided by the voluntary organisations being studied was able to be incorporated, as the only data about such families up until that date is the inferential data given by Barney (1975).

Because of the focus on the Wellington pre-school scene, much of the information contained in this thesis, cannot be generalised to the whole of New Zealand. The main urban centres may have considerable similarities to Wellington, but I know the rural area (under 2000 population) and towns (2000-20,000 population) have greatly different characteristics and problems from those of young families and pre-school centres in city suburbs. As 68.4 per cent of all playcentres in New Zealand in 1973 (Barney, 1975) were in rural or town areas, it could be said that much of this thesis has little relevance to the majority of playcentres. However 69.4 per cent of free kindergartens in New Zealand in 1973 were in city areas, so much of my data about Wellington free kindergarten families and volunteers should be pertinent to the majority of kindergarten families.

Let me now turn to discussing matters related to the research problem.

### VALUE POSITION

At the beginning of this chapter I said that the analysis of the kindergarten and playcentre movements was done to describe how each organisation's key strategic choices have a bearing on the availability and acceptability of pre-school education services in this country. When I started this research I hoped that the data would lead to some simple recommendations for change to the nature and the means of delivery of pre-school education which would achieve a more equitable distribution of services in all districts and to all social groups in New Zealand. Four years in the field have brought with them the realisation that achieving equitable distribution to all social groups is a far more complex issue than I had first imagined.

There have to be decisions made on basic moral questions such as: Have middle-class Pakeha professionals who are concerned about so-called 'disadvantaged children' the right to try and persuade other social and cultural groups to take part in programmes that seem designed to mould them to a middle-class Pakeha pattern?

Within the two movements, there may be a need for greater flexibility in the type of service provided to appeal to a wider range of social groups, but are the decision-makers in the movements prepared to make such changes? And if they are prepared to do so have they the resources available to enable such changes to take place? And if they are not prepared to, are Government personnel willing to channel resources into other organisations? If so, where will these resources come from in times of economic recession?

These questions and others will be pursued in a little more detail in the last chapters of this thesis, but it is necessary to raise them before listing the objectives and some possible findings of this study because I had hoped answers would be revealed in the data, and no clear cut ones were.

### RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Broadly, this thesis aims to analyse the playcentre and kindergarten movements in order to evaluate the decision-making functioning of its leaders in terms of making pre-school education services widely available and acceptable to the personnel involved with the organisations - the parents of pre-school children, the staff and the volunteers who administer

the organisations.

More specifically, my objectives are:

- To describe the key factors influencing strategic choices regarding the nature and delivery of pre-school education services in New Zealand.
- To show that implementing new strategic choices is not a quick and straightforward event, particularly when a voluntary organisation and a government body are both parties to the action.
- To describe how these strategic choices affect who gets involved in pre-school organisations - which families attend, who teaches or leads, and who administers.

The concept of 'strategic choice' has been adopted from John Child (1972). It describes the decision-making process regarding long term goals and the adoption of courses of action, and is a concept which meets the need for the analysis to be dynamic in order to show how events are inter-related. What did I expect to find by doing an analysis through time of decision-making processes in the pre-school movements?

#### ANTICIPATED FINDINGS

Because I had some prior personal knowledge and experience of the pre-school organisations I began to develop some tentative ideas about the kind of findings which might emerge as I read the organisational studies before I actually began to do field work. While these are listed below in the form of hypotheses, it should be noted that the list does not constitute a set of developing propositions to formulate a theory, as the case study approach adopted for this research fits exploratory research rather than systematic testing of hypotheses. These statements of anticipated findings exist as a framework to guide my observations, research on the organisations' written material and development of questionnaires. I remained open to pursuing any tentative hypotheses ('hunches') not listed below which came to me during the field work as well as checking out those on the list. As the study progressed, the amount of support from my data as to the validity of these hypotheses varied, and this will be described in more detail at the beginning of Chapter 12.

The anticipated findings were:

1. That the process of decision-making would be similar for both pre-school voluntary movements, but ways of implementing decisions may differ.

2. That older organisations with a larger legacy of earlier strategic choices and with leaders who are reluctant to dispose of strategic choices no longer appropriate, are less able to adapt than are younger organisations. Thus, it is hypothesized that the playcentre movement is more able to adapt its approach to the delivery of its services to families because it has made fewer strategic choices as regards delivery of service in the past.
3. That the nature of the service is strongly influenced by the ideology of each organisation.
4. "That members tend to participate most when the association does not have a large salaried staff; when members have considerable power relative to officers; when the association is not large; when it is not highly specialised internally; when membership is homogeneous in character and has few competing attractions." (Berelson and Steiner, 1964, chapter 9.)
5. That a decentralised structure will be more able to adapt than a pyramidal, centralised, functionally specialised, bureaucracy relying predominantly on formal interpersonal relationships.
6. That the funding situation will considerably influence organisational adaptability.

This study is an exploratory one. Therefore, the last chapters raise as many questions as does this Introduction, some of which will require a political decision to start some action. The basic argument of the thesis is that strategic choices intervene between different organisational and environmental variables, and that previous strategic choices, conditions and the ideology of both the country and the organisations are the key factors influencing further strategic choices pertaining to the nature of the service and the delivery of the service given by the playcentre and the kindergarten organisations to young families. I hope to show this by:

1. an examination of the historical development of each movement to show the consequences of earlier strategic choices on later options, and,
2. an examination of four strategic choice processes which occurred in 1974-75.

#### OUTLINE OF THE THESIS

A review of the literature is set out in Chapter 2, and the third chapter focusses in more detail on the conceptual framework, adopted from John Child (1972), used in the analysis of strategic choice processes.

Chapter 4 contains a discussion of the methodology. The reasons for the choice of methodological triangulation with an emphasis on participant observation are described.

Using the strategic choice concept, but not in any detailed way, the history of the playcentre movement is described in Chapter 5 and the history of the free kindergarten movement is described in Chapter 6. To provide some background data about the personnel involved, a summary of the pre-school families, staff and volunteer surveys is provided in Chapter 7. Four chapters (Chapters 8-11) contain detailed analysis of four selected strategic choice processes based on the conceptual framework described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 8 looks at the Wellington Playcentre Association's leaders' decision to improve the monitoring of standards of those wanting to supervise, while the strategic choice process focussed upon in Chapter 9 is one that affected the whole playcentre movement. It is Government's decision to fund playcentre sites and buildings on a basis similar to that granted to the kindergarten movement years earlier. Chapters 10 and 11 are concerned with strategic choices affecting the kindergarten movement. Chapter 10 examines Government's decision to give local kindergartens and associations a grant to help them with running costs. The chapter concerned with integration of kindergarten teacher training into Teachers Colleges, Chapter 11, is by far the longest chapter in this analysis section of the thesis because of the complexity of the strategic choice process and its consequences.

The first chapter in Part III (Chapter 12), examines the characteristics of both organisations and their partnerships with Government, before discussing the themes which emerged from the analysis of strategic choice processes. Conclusions about the conceptual framework and the major concept of strategic choice process are drawn in Chapter 13 and, in addition, I have made some recommendations for future research. The Epilogue, addressed primarily to New Zealand readers who are involved in the field of early childhood care and education, discusses possible future action for the provision of early childhood services in this country.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### INTRODUCTION

The literature relevant to this study ranges from studies regarding the social conditions of New Zealand society from the end of the last century when the kindergarten movement was established to the present day; through organisational studies and, in particular, studies of voluntary organisations; to studies and reports of an official nature on early childhood education.

Some comment about the social conditions of New Zealand society is necessary because the changes that have and are occurring point to the need for the playcentre and kindergarten movements to re-consider their means of delivering pre-school education, or begin sharing the resources that this country has available for early childhood care and education with a wider range of organisations. Until recently, there has been a match between the demands for pre-school education and the type of service that the playcentre and kindergarten movement provided - the problem was to meet those demands. The falling birthrate and the changing role of women in New Zealand society is putting pressure on the movements to focus not on growth, but on diversification; a process which some people have already claimed is necessary because of other factors such as our multi-cultural society and the large number of rural communities.

Organisational sociology is a vast field, and the organisational literature discussed in this chapter is, therefore of necessity, very selective, being based on an examination of those concepts which are fundamental to the conceptual framework discussed in the next chapter. The intent is to convey my reasons for choosing to focus on that particular framework. Most of the literature concerned with voluntary organisations deals with the social characteristics of people who join voluntary associations, and this literature is examined to provide a background to later discussion, in Chapter 7, of those people who were volunteers in the kindergarten and playcentre movements and, in particular, those people who make the decisions.

Some publications dealing with early childhood education programmes are also discussed, largely to enable the reader who is unfamiliar with the

philosophy and current issues in the field of early childhood education to grasp the fundamental concerns now prevailing.

#### SOCIAL CONDITIONS

Sutch's *Poverty and Progress* (1969) provides a general overview of social conditions in New Zealand at the time when the two movements were established. The free kindergarten movement was founded in 1889 towards the end of the long depression of the late 1800s, when many families were destitute and during which time the Neglected and Criminal Children Act was brought in to give police "power 'to apprehend without warrant' neglected children and bring them to the justices", (Ibid, p.84). Play-centres were first established during World War II when men were either in the armed forces away from home, or doing much overtime to help the war effort because "by regulation, workers were required to work longer hours than the law had allowed", (Ibid, p.253).

When examining social conditions existing today in western industrialised societies, books such as Touraine's *Post Industrial Society* (1971) and Toffler's *Future Shock* (1970) were useful. Both paint pictures of today's society as rapidly changing and diverse. This means that individuals, social groups and societies are faced with considerable uncertainty - it is no longer possible to predict that the future will be like the present. For individuals, this means that each may have a series of careers during one life time which will complicate life greatly, at a time when the context of life will also be changing. In New Zealand, for example, the effects of equal pay, combined with changes in women's attitudes are causing conflicts between marriage partners as to their roles and this in turn affects child rearing patterns.

The effects of such changing social conditions on voluntary organisations concerned with early childhood education is two-fold:

- educational organisations need to consider what characteristics are desirable in tomorrow's citizens when they formulate their goals, and also to remember that tomorrow's citizens will be constantly exposed to change; and
- the organisations are forced to operate in an environment which is increasingly uncertain, even though they may believe in a stable state (Schon, 1971).

Sociologists such as Touraine (1971) perceive that growth in post-industrial societies depends not just on the accumulation of capital, but also



greatly on knowledge and its application. Macro-theorists agree that because complex, 'turbulent' conditions (Emery and Trist, 1965) surround many organisations, and because of the increased use of technology in society, people are compelled to look for new forms of organisations; bureaucratic organisations are not capable of adapting themselves rapidly enough to solve the increasingly complex problems facing organisations. Schon (1970, p.80 ff) suggests the need for new forms of organisations modelled on what he calls 'learning systems' which have shifting centres, ad hoc leadership and communication flowing through a systems network; while Galbraith (1967, p.77) suggests that power has moved away from managers to a techno-structure: "an apparatus for group decisions - for pooling and testing the information provided by numerous individuals to reach decisions that are beyond the reach of any one individual". The groups make decisions that were formerly made by upper management. The sharing of decision-making by national executive or conference members in the pre-school movements has meant wider participation in decision-making has existed in this field for years before group decision-making became the popular mode.

#### ORGANISATIONAL LITERATURE

In this section of the chapter, I will discuss the literature which was most influential in my deciding to adopt an open-systems theoretical framework, and then review some publications concerned with the key concepts used in this study.

James Thompson (1967) suggests that there is a major division in organisational theory between:

- the rational, closed-system approach, and
- the natural system approach which accepts the uncertainty of organisational functioning.

This study uses a framework and methods that fits into the latter category. Decision-making processes were studied in their natural settings.

#### OPEN-SYSTEMS APPROACH

Open-systems theory is the theoretical perspective which I have selected to use because it acknowledges that environment can have considerable effects on organisational scale, resources and structure. The effects of the environment is one of the main variables used in this study, because I was conscious of the influence of Government funding (an environmental



variable) on the choices available to the voluntary organisations' decision-makers even before I began collecting data. Discussing open-systems theory, Katz and Kahn (1970, pp.150-151) describe social organisations as "flagrantly open systems in that the input of energies and the conversion of the output into further energetic inputs consists of transaction between the organisation and its environment". The operation of the two pre-school movements in New Zealand gives support to this argument. They have become so large that they require energy from external sources; the kindergarten movement more so than the playcentre movement to the extent that it would probably collapse if external resources were withdrawn.

Like all other organisations, voluntary organisations are dependent on the process of feed-back, and not just from within their own organisation. The leaders of voluntary organisations need to be informed about environmental conditions and, ideally, ought to monitor how their organisation is functioning in relation to its environment. For example, both organisations are facing demographic changes in New Zealand society to which they need to be sensitive. The falling birth rate will affect the demand for pre-school education, as well as the need for a supply of adults to staff and administer the services.

Other theoretical perspectives used for organisational studies were also considered. However, in my view, only the open-systems approach seemed able to explicitly handle the influence of environmental variables on organisational change and the reverse situation.

In one of the best known studies of a voluntary organisation, Sill's *The Volunteers* (1957), a goal model is adopted, drawing from decision-making theory. This appeared to be a fruitful model for my own research until I read a critical paper contrasting the goal model and the open-systems model. In it, Etzioni (1960) demonstrates that the goal model provides an inadequate, potentially biased framework for sociologists to examine organisational effectiveness. He sees little point in taking a goal approach which, because of the nature of the theoretical approach and because it compares the ideal with the real, will inevitably show that "the organisation does not realise its goals effectively, and/or that the organisation has different goals from those it claims to have" (Ibid, p.258). Etzioni advocates a systems approach, where the central question is "Under the given conditions, how close does the organisational allocation of resources approach an optimum distribution?" (Ibid, p.217).

Concern for optimum allocation of resources has been a dominant factor in pre-school decision-making over the years as will be illustrated in the historical chapters, and very clearly in Part II of this study. However, there is a danger that too great an emphasis on resources for the organisation itself can mean neglect of other groups in the environment. I will return to this point in Part III.

Child (1972) takes the open-systems theoretical framework a step further, showing that a relationship exists between "dimensions of organisation structure and 'contextual' (that is, situational) factors such as environment, technology or scale of operation" (Ibid, p.2), by introducing the variable of strategic choice which is the course of strategic action decided upon by power-holders within organisations. He argues that other open-systems models "explain organisations at one remove by ignoring (this) essentially political process" (Ibid, p.1). It is child's dynamic framework that has been adopted for this study, because it has the potential to indicate the process by which the changes in the environment are translated into changes in features of the organisation and how features of the organisation can influence resources for outside organisations and conditions in the environment.

#### ORGANISATIONAL CONCEPTS

Child's paper (1972) focusses closely on the variables usually found in the open-systems framework to develop his argument regarding the critical importance of the strategic choice process for organisational change. However, in this chapter, I wish to develop a wider discussion of some key concepts for this study, opening up some areas which have been treated too lightly for my purposes, by Child. Organisational literature more closely allied to Child's conceptualisation is discussed in Chapter 3.

#### Power

The value of the concept of power is promoted by Pettigrew (1973). He argues that the decision-making theoretical perspective needs to be complemented by a processual explanation of "the relationship between strategies pursued by the various interested parties and the final decision outcome, ... the political component requires an analysis of the mobilisation of support for demands" (Ibid, p.229). It has been proposed that any analysis of the mobilisation of support for demands needs to take into consideration communication of knowledge between the parties concerned. For example, Stinchcombe (1968, p.165) argues that the "amount of power of a man over someone's behaviour can be no greater than the amount of information that can be transmitted between them". However, information is

not the only factor to be considered. Broadfoot (1974), after studying one teachers' organisation in Australia, concluded that political strategies are based on the premise "That the men who form governments are subject to many demands and they naturally tend to listen to those made with most vigour" (Ibid, p.171), particularly if the case has considerable back-up information.

Political factors enter into the decision-making process because the decision-makers try to please as many people as possible. In a study of a gypsum firm Gouldner (1954, p.154) saw that the power holders' ability to implement bureaucratic rules could only be explained in "terms of a balance of power, of the relative strengths of opposing groups".

#### Decision-making

There is a great deal of literature about organisational decision-making but it is not possible nor practical to review it all here, particularly as many of the studies are inappropriate for voluntary organisation analysis, and/or for the theoretical framework adopted. The general theme of the studies reviewed here seems to be that a social-psychological approach gives the best naturalistic view of decision-making because it is people and not structures who make the decisions.

Cahill and Goldstein (1964, p.376) propose that "group participants' actions in one process may affect the alternatives and the consequences of later processes". This was very apparent in two of the strategic choice processes discussed in Part II of this study. The earlier process of restructuring the Wellington Playcentre Association's Training Manual affected the alternatives about what might be acceptable standards for personnel to reach before they could become Supervisors or Assistant Supervisors. Similarly, the decision to integrate kindergarten and primary teacher training had several consequences for lecturers and trainees which have made necessary further decisions related to careers, course content, recruitment and so on. Cahill and Goldstein went on to say, "The decision-maker will have memories of similar past acts to estimate how much power he is seen to have and to anticipate the demands of others". It is possible that the atypical example of authoritarian behaviour displayed by the playcentre Field Officer (see p.165) in the strategic choice process to raise the Association's standards of supervision occurred because she was new and did not know how much power to wield to obtain agreement to the Training Team's choice and timetable for implementation.

Sofer (1973) asks that organisations be viewed as 'flow systems'. He, like Child, emphasizes that decisions "are not made by organisations but by persons and groups who are members of the organisations" (Ibid, p.225). This is also one of the reasons why Argyris (1972) argues that it is not sensible to restrict organisational theory to either a sociological or psychological perspective. Both are necessary. Lindblom (1959) takes to task those sociologists from the scientific management school who use models of rational decision-making that do not approximate real life because they forget that PEOPLE make decisions. He suggests instead a model of 'muddling through' whereby the person or group making decisions endlessly make and re-make policy based on their main values and only a few of the possible alternatives. In Chapter 11 there is a description of how a combination of strategic choice processes and an unexpectedly high retention rate of teachers in the service resulted in an oversupply of kindergarten teachers. The policies chosen to deal with this oversupply have been a clear example of 'muddling through' in the manner Lindblom describes.

Loeb's (1974) discussion of individual decision-making also takes a social-psychological approach. She extends Festinger's experiments (1957) on the phases of decision-making and his theory of 'cognitive dissonance'. "In any choice situation alternatives will have some attractive and some negative qualities; this has as a consequence that the choice of only one alternative results in the rejection of others that are all somewhat attractive ... the individual experiences tension, cognitive dissonance" (Ibid, p.4).

The tension is probably compounded when partners are involved in the strategic choice process, and is possibly related to the focus of attention of the leaders of the voluntary organisations compared with departmental senior personnel. The latter tend to be job-centred in their approach to their work, whereas voluntary organisation leaders need to be people-centred in their approach in order to attract voluntary helpers.

Likert (1961) said, "To be effective and to communicate as intended, a leader must adapt his behaviour to take into account the expectations, values and interpersonal skills of those with whom he is interacting" (Ibid, p.95). However, it is not a simple matter to do this when the leadership is a partnership and each partner has situational factors (like ideological beliefs which are often strongly held in voluntary organisation and like bureaucratic structures in government departments)

constraining him. The characteristics of bureaucracies mitigate against senior departmental officials being able to be very adaptive. New policies take a long time to be checked all the way up the hierarchy, then approved and implemented. Organisation structure can, constrain leaders from being able to adapt to the other people with whom they are interacting, and structure is a sociological factor which needs to be given some consideration in any discussion of decision-making.

### Structure

Structure is a variable which is central to many organisational studies. Again it is neither possible nor appropriate to review all studies dealing with this variable. Weber's works have had a profound influence in the field of organisational studies. Central to Weber's discussion (1974) on organisational structure is the concept of authority. He made distinctions between traditional authority, charismatic authority and legal authority; the latter being associated with bureaucracies. The characteristics of bureaucracy described by Weber typically include:

- A clear-cut division of labour with specialised staff;
- The positions are organised into a hierarchical structure, usually pyramidal;
- There are formal rules and regulations to obtain uniform decisions;
- The relationships between personnel are expected to be detached; and
- Staff are appointed according to qualifications and length of service.

The characteristics of bureaucracies are relevant to this study because the Department of Education (a bureaucracy) is an influential partner to many decisions concerning the pre-school organisation, and because there has been increasing bureaucratisation of the kindergarten movement.

Organisational structures are being examined critically at present by sociologists keen to see institutions which match the social conditions of a post-industrial society. I will cite only two authors who make criticisms which seem valid for the organisations being studied in this thesis.

1. V Thompson (1965) states that the bureaucratic structure depresses creativity, partly because conflict and uncertainty are not legitimate and yet these conditions foster innovation, partly because hierarchic competition does not contribute to co-operation and problem solving, and partly because new ideas are apt to be vetoed at some level in the hierarchy as administrators' reactions, politically-based, are likely to be 'How does it affect us?' (Ibid, p.7). Thompson

suggests that in order to achieve an innovative organisation, a decreased emphasis on authority is needed, with structural looseness, professional job definition and freedom to communicate in all directions. In many of its activities the playcentre movement can be described as an innovative organisation, although it does not have professional job definitions. Its history reveals that if one strategic choice is aborted or no longer successful then it will try another. For example, when an early attempt to get State subsidies for playcentre buildings failed, the leaders made an effort to improve public relations with municipal and church authorities. This innovativeness is probably associated with the structural looseness, the freedom to communicate in all directions and an insistence on democratic rather than authoritarian decision-making, all of which have been features of the playcentre organisation since the time of establishment.

2. Schon (1971) suggests re-structuring and de-structuring organisations to overcome the present problems in bureaucracies of information overload and resistance to change. A 'learning system' is proposed by Schon, which is an organisation with a shifting centre of control. He proposes that any change in either the structure, the technology or the value system (ideology) elements in an organisation will produce change in the other elements because of their interdependence. It does not appear to be so simple in reality. I think Schon under-emphasizes the often inhibiting influence of ideology. If the leaders are not willing to change the ideology, then no decision regarding the technology or structure will take place if it threatens the ideology. For example, the Auckland Playcentre Association has refused to accept some grants recently because it feels the changes will damage parental involvement.

What determines the structure of different organisations? Some social scientists say social conditions do, on the basis of strong statistical correlations between environmental variables and structure, but they give little consideration to the question of 'how'. Child (1972) argues that many theorists of organisation structure "do not incorporate the direct source of variation in formal structural arrangements, namely the strategic decision of those who have the power of structural initiation - the dominant coalition", (Ibid, p.16). The dominant coalition also has the



power to inhibit change. Burns and Stalker (1961) studied twenty electronic firms in England and Scotland, and constructed a continuum of management systems:

Mechanistic systems  $\longleftrightarrow$  Organic systems

They argue that the organic system is more appropriate for conditions of change and uncertainty. The authors also recognised that where personnel are over-concerned with their individual status and power, they may resist changing to the structure which best matches the social environment of the organisation. Changing to a decentralised, loosely-structured organisation will mean a decrease in power for national-level executive members.

It appears that both structure AND ideology can be constraining factors on leaders being effective and sensitive change agents, a point that I made earlier when discussing Schon's proposals (1971). Hage and Dewar's study (1973) showed that the values (ideology) of an organisation's elite are slightly stronger predictors of organisational innovativeness than are structural variables. This finding supports Child's hypothesis (1972) that the direct source of variations (structural or technological) is the decisions made by organisational leaders. Robert Guest (1962) showed that changes in patterns of interactions and sentiments led to improved performance in 'Plant Y' after a new manager was appointed without any change in structure occurring. It seems possible, therefore, that a change in organisational functioning can happen without structure coming into the picture at all. To understand such changes one goes full circle back to the concept of power.

### Ideology

It was noticeable that Child (1972) treated this concept very lightly and I intend commenting further on this in Chapter 13. At this point I will review other studies which focus on ideology.

The struggle for power is central to Selznick's study of a formal organisation reported in *TVA and the Grassroots* (Selznick, 1966), and the TVA's ideology of 'grass-roots' administration became one resource in a struggle for power. Selznick points out the balance that is needed as a result of the ideological belief in local participation: "... if (the leadership) ignores the need for participation, the goal of cooptation (of local groups) may be jeopardized; if participation is allowed to go too

far, the continuity of leadership and policy may be threatened" (p.261). The playcentre movement finds itself in a similar situation because of its ideology of parent involvement. However, the dilemma seldom becomes too threatening in the Wellington Association, as constant and informal communication is used to encourage local groups to think along the same lines as Association personnel.

Ideologies of management are attempts by the leaders of organisations to justify their own autonomy while imposing on all subordinates fairly strict control of their activities, according to Bendix (1956). Selznick (1966) defines ideology similarly. For him it is the official statements made by the power-holders about goals and means which are deemed to be critical for satisfactory achievement of these goals. He felt that some disparity between ideology and the actuality is to be expected and I would suggest that this may be because members may have a slightly different ideology. Selznick and Bendix are primarily concerned with management ideology. Ideology is seen by Selznick as "one of the pervasive obstacles to the understanding and even the inspection of a (non-economic) technology" (Ibid, p.8), such as is found in unions, churches and educational institutions. In the two voluntary organisations studied, ideology proved to be one of the main sources of variation in decision-making patterns (see the Epilogue).

Echoing Stinchcombe's (1965) hypothesis that an organisation's structure has a historical legacy component, Bendix proposes that an organisation's ideology has historical legacies. The history of the playcentre movement, recorded in Chapter 5, shows how the playcentre ideology has been strengthened over the years and, today, ideology is used as a resource by leaders to get certain decisions accepted by ordinary members. However, the Government partner in the State - playcentre organisation partnership is unimpressed with the ideology, particularly when it hinders the implementation of Cabinet-initiated decisions based on the Government's own ideology. The Government, via the Department of Education, can be seen as the most influential body in both the playcentre and kindergarten movements' environment; as other organisations seldom have a direct influence on the pre-school organisation's decisions.

#### The Organisation and its Environment, including Client Characteristics

1. Organisations and the wider social structure.



Touraine (1971) argues that the strategies possible for an organisation are no longer principally defined by its situation in the market, but by its penetration into the political system.

However, organisations do not just have to prove themselves to the politicians. Becoming legitimate in the eyes of a variety of groups in the environment is an important organisational activity according to Dowling and Pfeffer (1975). These authors adopt Maurer's definition of legitimation (1971, p.361) as "the process whereby an organisation justifies to a peer or superordinate system its right to exist, that is to continue to import, transform and export energy, material or information", and describe organisational legitimacy as existing when the value and normative system of the organisation and the value and normative system of the larger social system are congruent. The process of legitimation takes place at the highest hierarchical level in the organisation. The authors contend that "a legitimate purpose will not necessarily ensure resource allocation" (Dowling and Pfeffer, p.124). Challenges to an organisation's legitimacy arise when an organisation has to change its goals to adapt to environmental changes, when there is competition between organisations as to their respective domains, or when the organisations' methods or products are criticised. As I suggested earlier in this chapter, and will discuss further in the Epilogue, both the playcentre movement and the free kindergarten movement are facing differing challenges to their legitimacy at the present time by various environmental elements, which could well be the precipitators of new strategic choices in the near future. If Dowling and Pfeffer's hypothesis, that organisations receiving more benefits engage more in legitimating behaviour, is correct then it is anticipated that the kindergarten movement will engage in more such behaviour. The few pilot projects in kindergartens which offer longer hours of care to some children could be interpreted as legitimating behaviour. Some kindergarten committees are recognising that the usual hours of opening do not suit some families' needs in their community.

Few sociologists have been concerned with organisations' influences on the environment, but Stinchcombe (1965) is one of the exceptions. He proposes that there are several effects organisations can have on the environment. One of these effects stems from competition in

the political arena between different organisations. Because playcentres, kindergartens, and child care centres are accorded different degrees of legitimacy by politicians and our wider society, tensions exist between different early childhood organisations. "The effect of the mere presence or absence of organisations on the solidarity and feeling of identity of 'communal' groups" (Ibid, pp.144-145) is another effect listed by Stinchcombe which is considered in this thesis. Survey data in Chapter 7 indicate that the play-centre movement generally is better at helping individuals integrate into their suburb, thus promoting a feeling of 'community'.

Perrow (1972) says that organisational theory fails to see society as adaptive to organisations. Usually parts of the environment are seen as effecting organisations, but the organisation is not seen as influencing its environment. Hirsch (1975) explains that many issues which Perrow says are overlooked are not visible when studies of single firms are undertaken, possibly because organisational members are not conscious of their organisation's influence on the outside world. This was certainly true of playcentre and kindergarten personnel on the whole. Such issues are contingencies which whole industries face, not individual firms. If organisational sociologists varied their unit of analysis more often to encompass whole industries, both directions of the exchange of influence would become more apparent.

## 2. Organisations' relationships with client groups.

Generally, the sociology of organisations has paid little attention to the orientations of clients. The few studies which have been done include that of:

- (a) Blau and Scott (1962) who investigated how the power relationships between clients and social workers in two departments of a social work agency had effects on:
  - (i) the case load of social workers,
  - (ii) the allocation of cases, and
  - (iii) the frequency of disruption of social worker-client relationship in the two departments.

They found a relationship between the departments which had clients with power (and consequently who were not subordinate to the agency), and a more satisfying and effective organisation of that department.

- (b) Caudhill (1958) who studied patients in a mental hospital, found that when the hospital personnel failed to perceive and respect the clients' social sub-system, friction would arise.

On the basis of an examination of the above studies, it would appear that organisational decision-makers could make their organisations more effective if they took more notice of client characteristics. Clients reward the sub-system of organisation which provides a service by accepting that service, so assessments of acceptability call for a review of client characteristics and I have provided a small-scale survey in Chapter 7.

Having reviewed literature pertaining to formal organisations, I will now play down the importance of this literature by agreeing with Stinchcombe (1967) when he states that key variables and concepts in the study of voluntary organisations play only a small role in formal organisations; the corollary being that variables which are central to understanding formal work organisation may be relatively unimportant or require different operationalisation in voluntary organisation studies.

#### VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION LITERATURE

Smith and Freedman (1972) agree that much of the formal organisation literature is of limited use for voluntary organisation analysis. They survey voluntary organisation literature under headings such as the pluralist thesis, in which voluntary associations are seen as a necessary part of a democratic political order; oligarchical and mass organisations, in which the elected dominate the electors because they acquire the knowledge, skills and interest to maintain their positions; sociological studies which deal with voluntary organisations in relation to the power structure of a community; surveys which relate participation to urbanisation and neighbourhood characteristics; participation and members characteristics such as social class, sex, age, religion; and studies of individual organisations. Most of these approaches to voluntary organisations will be touched on in this thesis.

Sill's book (1957) is probably the most outstanding work focussing on a single voluntary organisation. Sills relies considerably on organisation theory in his book and I shall do likewise, although I will be using an open-systems framework rather than the goal framework used by Sills.

Earlier in this chapter, it was stated that penetration into the political

arena is important for organisational functioning. What voluntary organisation features assist penetration? Truman (1951) examined the internal structures of a number of voluntary 'interest' organisations to examine the effect of structure on voluntary group activities and found that organisations with a 'federated' structure were less effective in influencing government or moulding public opinion, than were 'unitary' organisations because the former types had difficulties in presenting a united front. It would seem that kindergarten leaders instinctively recognise this in their persistent call for all communications with Government to go through the Union and in their formation of Standard By-laws for all associations. However, this procedure also has potential for decreasing the amount of participation by ordinary members in decision-making.

Participation in decision-making is the focus for a large number of voluntary organisation studies. Michels (1949) argued, as early as 1915, that voluntary organisations have a tendency to move towards increasing centralisation of decision-making and towards a hierarchical structure, but the results of the International Typographical Union study contradict the inevitability of decreasing participation predicted by Michels. The Lipset, Trow and Coleman Study (1956) showed that if 'grass-roots members' are persistently allowed to disagree at their level of decision-making, oligarchy does not have to occur. Both these studies assume that high participation rates would or do prevent centralisation. It would seem that in order to preserve a decentralised, democratic type of organisation, grass-roots participants in a democratic organisation may need to refuse to accept decisions made solely by a small, upper-level committee. One such refusal occurred when the Auckland Kindergarten Association broke away from the Union (see Chapter 6) and eventually forced the re-writing of the Constitution to ensure wider participation in decision-making. Playcentre members objections to unnegotiated circular memoranda likewise illustrate members' insistence on democratic functioning.

Barber (1950) examines the tendency that voluntary organisations have towards oligarchy and attributes mass apathy to organisational characteristics such as the hierarchical structure which develops with organisational growth, and to each individual having a role set necessitating a division of interests and time amongst various roles; some roles such as family roles and work roles usually are regarded as more important than others.

Blau and Scott (1962) survey the literature on union participation\* and

\*Whether a union is a voluntary organisation depends on each society's laws on unionism.

extract several factors which relate to greater union participation, including high social status, frequent interaction with fellow workers, homogeneous work groups and high job satisfaction. In examining changes of affiliation, Babchuk and Booth (1969) commented that many voluntary organisations only have short-term objectives or they may encourage only 2-3 years of participation. However, low turnover of members is more probable in organisations with multiple objectives and tasks, catering for a wide range of motivations. This would suggest there may be a push-pull effect on play-centre members - leaders verbalise the desirability of a turnover of people holding office, and yet the multiple tasks encourage members to stay on even if they try new tasks.

Who joins voluntary organisations? Motivation for and means of involvement in voluntary organisations was studied by McMahon (1974) in the setting up of a working class suburb. He divided motivation into 'egotistic' and 'altruistic' categories and means of involvement into 'own initiative' and 'reputation'. He found that females and those from unskilled occupations were more likely to have egotistic motives, whereas males and those from skilled occupations were more likely to join because of altruistic motives. No males and no-one having a skilled occupation joined a voluntary organisation on their own initiative. McMahon attributed the high social participation scores of his working class respondents (relative to other studies of lower class social participation) to the fact that they had been recently moved to a new housing area from a slum area where informal participation had been the norm.

Motives to leave organisations have been examined in formal organisation settings by Hirschman (1970). Hirschman is concerned with the deterioration of an organisation's performance because of 'repairable lapses' of members behaviour. Management learns about such deterioration either via the exit option (customers stop buying or members leave) or via the voice option (members and customers express their dissatisfaction). The types of organisations where both the exit and voice options are important, are voluntary organisations; the exit option probably being exercised when the match between the individual and the role he is expected to perform is poor. The viability of the organisation will depend on its responsiveness to the option behaviour that the members use to indicate dissatisfaction.

Komarovsky (1949) was one of the first social scientists to study the characteristics of those who participate in voluntary organisations. She found that people having high socio-economic status tend to be members of more

voluntary organisations and to participate more actively than do individuals from low socio-economic status groups. Scott (1957) undertook a study of the adult population of a small New England town to find the kind of people who join voluntary associations and the degrees of membership participation. Sixty-six percent of the sample were members of a voluntary association but only sixteen percent of these members held office. Although more men were members, women were better attenders. Membership participation increased with increases in education level and social status. Scott's measurement of participation included: number of different memberships, attendance, and extra responsibilities assumed. Similar criteria are used in the Chapin Social Participation Scale (1970) which I have used to measure social participation.

Foskett (1955) isolated educational level as the most significant variable in participation scores. His explanation is that the differences in social participation scores of individuals in different categories of age, education and sex, reflect differences in the role positions of the individual. Certain positions in the social structure - for example, middle class status - have role expectations including participatory behaviour. He describes social participation skills as including verbal skills, knowledge about procedures and means, acquaintance with the informal social structure, professional and technical skills, access to the decision-makers, time and money; and comments that these skills are mostly associated with middle and upper socio-economic roles.

Bradley (1973) suggests that there are four types of social skills: verbal, written, manipulative and organisational; none of which are mutually exclusive. Each social skill can be described in terms of a level of sophistication and Bradley suggests that there is a positive correlation between the level of sophistication of skills and the socio-economic status of individuals.

A review of these studies left me far less worried by the apparent apathy of pre-school parents than are the volunteers. Only a proportion of parents will be active supporters of the organisations. New Zealand community studies reinforce this point.

#### NEW ZEALAND STUDIES OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

There have been very few studies of voluntary organisations in New Zealand and what has been done is often not available in libraries. Pitt (1973) provides a very superficial overview of New Zealand's voluntary associations and leisure activity. The only hypothesis of interest (based, it seems, on



intuition) is his statement that in earlier decades leisure groups provided opportunities for crossing social boundaries, but in the last decade or so they have changed to reinforcing social differences.

In the 'technical' version of *Careers, Marriage and Family* (Society for Research on Women, 1976) the authors include a chapter on voluntary work asking whether voluntary organisation membership had any relationship with attitude to employment. It was found that the non-working professional women in the sample participated more in voluntary organisations than did their working counterparts, in terms both of number of memberships and of time spent. These results were similar to those found in the New Zealand national survey reported in *Urban Woman* (Society for Research on Women, 1972). The *Careers, Marriage and Family* study also found that a higher proportion of those doubtful about returning to work gave more time to voluntary work than did those who planned to return to work when their children were older. The workers joined voluntary organisations to help others (altruistic motives), whereas social contacts and mental stimulus (egotistical motives) motivated non-workers to belong to voluntary organisations.

*Urban Women* reported that 37 percent of the interviewees did some unpaid community work\* and when a Society for Research on Women study group set out to survey social service organisations in Wellington "to establish whether there is a shortage of voluntary workers in social service organisations" (Society for Research on Women, 1974), they found that 48 percent of such organisations that used volunteers were not able to get as many volunteers as they wished.

Margot Roth concluded from a survey of 100 families in a New Zealand large urban centre that a large proportion of the population (45 percent) does not belong to voluntary associations, especially those in the lower socio-economic status group. Roth examined the age, sex, occupation, education, marital and family status, ethnicity, religion and ranking of residential area characteristics of those who participated in voluntary organisations. Her conclusion was that the conception of New Zealand as a 'land of joiners' is exaggerated.

In the community studies conducted in New Zealand in Hawera (Congalton, 1954), Masterton (Robb and Somerset, 1957), and Hamilton (VandenBerg, 1965), there was a common pattern where the majority of people would like to participate in more voluntary activities but other commitments prevented further participation. The Masterton study found that 30 percent of the population belonged to no voluntary organisations and a further 11 percent were inactive

\* 61 percent of the professional women in *Careers, Marriage and Family* did unpaid community work.

in the voluntary organisations that they did belong to. Because of this large proportion of inactive people and as 16 percent of the sample occupied 45 percent of the membership positions available in Masterton, Robb and Somerset concluded that most voluntary work was carried out by a small group of activists. Their findings supported the many overseas findings that the higher the socio-economic status the greater the number of memberships in voluntary organisations.

Case studies of New Zealand voluntary organisations appear to be rare.

Margaret Shields' paper on the Society for Research on Women (1971) examined the formation, structure and patterns of membership and leadership in order to evaluate the organisation. This organisation displays the characteristics of a 'mutual benefit' type of organisation and has in its five year life sacrificed some elements of membership participation to make "better decisions and crucial questions are now being settled more efficiently, if less democratically" (Ibid, p.12), thus rapidly becoming oligarchic. Shields concludes that the members' determination to keep the main part of research activity "firmly in the hands of ordinary members" sets this organisation aside from many other organisations where ordinary members just raise the money "for others to achieve the goals" (Ibid, p.13).

The New Zealand Family Planning Association has been studied by Penny Fenwick (1976) and she concludes that this lay women's organisation has been taken over by the medical profession to the extent that its services are provided on the doctors' and not the patients' terms.

Salmond's paper originally titled "Social Needs for Medical Services: the Inverse Care Law in New Zealand" (1975) is a consumer study of obstetric and infant care and has implications for the Plunket voluntary society's environmental strategies. He found that the availability of medical care varied inversely with the needs of different groups in the population. Recent analysis of the legal system in New Zealand, reported in *The Listener* (Muir, 1976), illustrates that the inverse care law may also apply to the legal subsystem of New Zealand society.

#### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

In this section of the chapter, I have selected some books and articles from a large number written about early childhood education. They fall into three categories:

1. Studies of the value of early childhood education;
2. Studies which deal more specifically with programmes; and
3. Literature about early childhood education in New Zealand.



1. The Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) and Peaker's follow-up study (1971) confirm earlier findings\* which focus on the early years of a child's life as being crucial in the development of socio-emotional and intellectual characteristics. The opening chapter of *The Penguin Book of Playgroups* (Lucas and McKennell, 1974) contains a comprehensive summary of the values of early childhood education to both mother and child, particularly if they live in an urban area.

De Lemos (1971) and Evans (1975) discuss influences which have heightened public interest in early childhood education and in different types of programmes, particularly programmes designed to help the so-called disadvantaged child. The Harvard Educational Review has published several papers evaluating the American Headstart projects which were funded with the objective of helping 'disadvantaged' children. Evans, and Gottfried (1973) also provide assessments of Headstart projects. Evans feels that a major issue now (and for the past decade) in early childhood education is the division amongst educationists of philosophic beliefs regarding determinism. One group believes that human ability is inherent while the other group believes that learning experiences can alter human ability. This controversy is a longstanding one. Moore (1975), who visited New Zealand early in 1976 belongs to the former school and he advocates that children should not be exposed to institutionalised care and education until they are about 8 years old, because children have not matured in a variety of ways until they are 7 to 8 years of age and because of the importance of a continuous relationship between child and a caring adult for the first six years to achieve adequate socialisation.

2. The two pre-school movements in New Zealand do not believe that a child's development is so determined. Both movements use Gwen Somerset's books in their training programmes. One of these books states the need for adult intervention to assist children's development thus: "one special type of play cannot be separated from the whole activity of a growing human being; nor is one type more important than another ... during play, a child relies on more and more stimulating experiences. Lack of such help means that he is not being provided with basic needs for his development. (The adults') job is to shape up the environment around the child so that he does have stimulation" (Somerset, 1975, p.13). Thus the adult intervenes, but not with planned lessons as are found in some American pre-school

\* See, for example, Kohlberg (1968); Piaget and Inhelder (1969).

- programmes. Millie Almy (1975) supports adult aid such as Somerset promotes in her discussion of the role of the early childhood educator: "In this role a person ... facilitates in a variety of ways the development and learning of young children" (p.vii). In her discussion of programmes, Almy sees a trend towards "Programmes where the major focus is on experiencing and enjoying" (p.263) - which she applauds only if the programmes recognize that feeling and thought are intertwined. In the 1950s socio-emotional development was emphasized to such a degree that cognitive development was precluded, and in the 1960s the primary concern in the United States particularly, was with cognitive development. Programmes should be concerned with the whole child, stresses Almy, and she reviews a range of programmes in different centres in the light of their approach to the child. She states that not all of those involved in the heredity-environment controversy have grasped the interconnectedness of socio-emotional and cognitive development. Almy contends that the educator must recognise the importance of both factors in his/her approach to children.
3. Major works on New Zealand early childhood education are few. The Hill Report (1971) and Barney's recent book (1975) are the most pertinent. The Hill Report, although having the serious shortcoming of not emphasizing the important role of parents in its consideration of pre-school education, provides a comprehensive overview of what services are available, educational aims, children with special needs, funding, training and administration. The recommendations made in this report have been the basis for most new government policy for pre-school education, particularly during the last Labour administration. The Hill Report had a greater impact on government decision-makers than did the *Bailey Report of Consultative Committee on Pre-School Education* (1974) whose major recommendation of a State take-over was never heeded. The Hill Report's recommendations have since been supplemented by the eight recommendations on early childhood education made by the Advisory Council on Educational Planning in their Report *Directions for Educational Development* (1974).

Barney examines the availability of pre-school education to different groups of families such as rural, small town, and urban families; families living in different socio-economic suburbs; families living in suburbs which have been established for varying amounts of time;

maori and pakeha families; and families with handicapped children. He concluded that while New Zealand has one of the highest proportions of 3 and 4 year olds attending some pre-school centre in the western world, it does not have an even distribution of pre-school places in different localities or for different social groups. McDonald (1973) suggests that the two main pre-school movements may not provide the best form of pre-school education for the maori rural life-style. She includes, in that same study, interesting data which indicates that playcentre activities produce a change in the mother's approach to parenting.

McDonald has been the most prolific writer of articles about New Zealand pre-school education. In *Grasping the Nettle* (1946) she examines the aspects of the playcentre movement - the co-operative administration, the 'freer' children's programme and the benefits to the mother from parent participation - which could allow this movement to qualify for the description given it in *The First New Zealand Whole Earth Catalogue* (1972) as an 'alternative' organisation. Her paper "Educational Innovation": the Case of the New Zealand Playcentre (1974a) pursues the question of the benefits to the mothers gained through involvement in the movement. Data in her M.A. thesis (1969) showed that the majority of mothers felt that "life had more to offer than housework and child care" (p.159), and McDonald hypothesizes on the basis of this data that the appeal of the playcentre movement lies in the benefits to the women themselves: "The playcentre movement would appear to effect a compromise between the two roles of mother and worker which in New Zealand are not easily combined. The playcentre has become an agency which permits a woman to reconcile these conflicting roles. But, in addition, the mothers as a group, run a professional enterprise, namely a pre-school educational institution, but do not neglect their children" (1974a, p.162). That parents have been involved in both pre-school movements has resulted in a distinguishing feature of pre-school education - its emphasis on human relations. McDonald notes that pre-school education personnel "relate to parents and children in a manner that conveys trust and respect, and if it is not successful in this, its clients drift away. Other sections of the education service (apart from continuing education) seldom have to put themselves to the test in this respect" (1975a, p.4).

Burdon (1971) has also focussed on what playcentres do for parents in his M.A. thesis research concerned with changes in attitudes of parents involved in playcentre. Marie Clay sums up the benefits of parents' understanding of children gained through participation in pre-school centres thus: "Sometimes an understanding of children is caught rather than taught, absorbed intuitively rather than consciously. When parents participate in pre-school organisations they frequently take over the tone and techniques used by experienced and relaxed adults around them" (Lecture, NZPCF Supervisors' Convention, 1966). Looking at the types of social relationships made between members of a playcentre, McDonald found a general picture of each member gaining a few special friends and lots of others 'to say hello to'. She told the Association for the Study of Childhood in one of their 1969 lectures (1970) that both length of membership and office-holding were associated with an increase in social contacts.

As McDonald reports, in *Set 75* (1975b), most New Zealand research on early childhood education tends to be reported in journals outside the mainstream of academic literature. One such piece of research is Beverley Morris's study of playcentre supervisors (1966) where she found a pattern of "Mothers around 30 years of age, having care of one or two pre-school children and unable to work full-time but who find satisfaction in doing a part-time job". Nearly a quarter of the sample preferred work at the pre-school level and nearly one-half said they would like to make pre-school work their profession. Morris felt therefore that more should be done to give such women advanced training. Since that time, the Playcentre Federation have introduced an advanced correspondence course, on the completion of which individuals are awarded the Playcentre Federation Diploma. Morris, like Burdon, published her research results in a *Playcentre Journal* but a good many papers such as Barney's "The Role of the State and the Voluntary Society in the Education of Pre-school Children" (1974) do not appear to be published at all. Barney argues for a range of complementary types of pre-school service from which families can choose the facility and programme that best suits their individual needs. While calling for complementarity, he also pleads for co-operation between the services.

Before closing this discussion of early childhood education literature, I feel that some mention should be made of the Ritchies' Study (1970) of New Zealand child-rearing practices. Gans (1969) classified families into three types:

- (a) adult-centred - run by adults for adults;
- (b) child-centred - parents subordinate their own pleasures to give the children what they need;
- (c) adult-directed - parents place low priority on their own needs and stress that their children be given opportunities to 'do well'.

The Ritchies use these concepts and classify the maori family into the first category as the children have a 'clearly subservient role'. Pakeha families do not fit so well into the schema but are probably best described as adult-directed. "In the ordinary New Zealand family the place of the child is precisely where the parents, and the mother in particular, want the child to be ... Mothers frequently have no occupation except the house and children, so it is on them that her attention focusses" (p.151). I would argue that the Ritchies' have generalized too much in saying that this description applies to all pakeha families. Child-rearing patterns is an area needing further research in New Zealand. 'Soft' data from the pre-school families survey lead me to believe that a minority of families in New Zealand are child-centred, and parents in such families want their children to be educated to "think, judge and discriminate" (Currie Report, 1961) rather than to be trained according to parents' directions. This finding could be described as an example of what Merton (1957) calls 'serendipitous' findings. It is instinctive, rather than being based on empirical data.

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis is based on two case studies examining processes and does not test theoretical explanations of relationships between environmental factors and characteristics of organisations. Such testing requires the systematic comparison of many independent cases. Blau and Scott (1962) suggest that there is a fundamental dilemma which can never be satisfactorily resolved in the study of organisations. Case studies of organisations allow the researcher to examine the interrelationship of elements within an organisation and, if an open-systems framework is adopted, the interrelationship of environmental factors and elements in the organisation; and yet social 'science' asks that the researcher validate generalizations by testing them on a number of independent cases. If a social scientist opts to do a close-up organisational study, generally research resources do not permit that piece of research to proceed on to testing hypotheses on a wider range of organisations. George Homans (1950) states the case for qualitative case studies very well:

*Sociology may miss a great deal if it tries to be too quantitative too soon. Data are not nobler because they are quantitative ... No one who studies a group will go far wrong if he gets close to it, and by whatever methods are available, observes all he can. (Ibid, p.22) ... The statistician might find fault with the passages for not letting know ... the relationship between the number of groups directly observed and the larger number for whose behaviour the average is supposed to hold good. He might find some fault with the passages for giving us no idea of the number of groups whose behaviour deviates from the average ... His criticisms are good, and they can only be answered by raising new questions: How much more effort, in time, in men and money, would be needed to get the kind of data he wants? (Ibid, p.33)*

Grusky and Churchill (1970), taking the 'scientific' statisticians' stance, are critical of case studies because verifying propositions systematically is not possible: "Because it is wearing to study even one organisation, the procedure can focus on unique events or on sub-organisational variables and thereby make comparative analysis of organisational variables less feasible". (Ibid, p.187)



In the decades when sociology was concerned with proving to the world that it was a 'science', most organisational studies tended to opt for fulfilling the requirement that hypotheses must be tested on a larger number of cases. However, in the last decade, organisational studies have increasingly emphasized obtaining systematic data about the inter-relationships and processes occurring within an organisation using the case study approach. Data collected in natural settings has more meaning.

Thus, although the number of cases of pre-school voluntary organisations in this study placed constraints on which of the requirements outlined by Blau and Scott (1962) would be met, the changes within the field of sociology of organisations toward accepting a more phenomenological approach clinched my decision to focus on dynamic, processual organisational behaviour rather than on formally testing hypotheses by use of experimental design research. Sofer (1973), Pettigrew (1973), Child (1972) and others, pleading for detailed close-up studies of organisations, argue that earlier organisational studies based on assumptions that organisational behaviour is always rational and tidy missed capturing the reality of organisational behaviour. There is an implication here that earlier 'scientific' studies lack validity. Bauer (1968) states this quite explicitly. He discards the usual decision-making models because they assume "a single unit with a single set of utility preferences and knowledge of a reasonably full range of action alternatives and their consequences" (p.11), and says that real life shows that these assumptions are false. To reflect the complexity of decision-making, he advocates a research approach akin to the one used in this present study, while agreeing that it does not fit with "many usual notions of what research is about" (p.28). Karl Weick (1976) suggests that educational organisations in particular could be depicted as an unconventional game. He gives, as an analogy, this picture of an unconventional soccer match:

*... the field for the game is round; there are several goals scattered haphazardly around the circular field; people can enter and leave the game whenever they want to; they can say "That's my goal" whenever they want to; the entire game takes place on a sloping field; and the game is played as if it makes sense. (Ibid, p.1)*

and proposes that such a game is played more by educational personnel than by business personnel, because the former act within a 'softer' structure.

Such a description strikes a chord, particularly as pre-school education in this country is provided by voluntary organisations which allow people even more freedom to "enter and leave the game whenever they want to" than in a State education system.

John Child's (1972) model satisfies my self-imposed criteria:

1. The model accepts an interactionist stance which believes that man is able to guide and direct his own activities. The extension of this perspective is the naturalistic stance.
2. The model accepts a naturalistic (voluntaristic) view of man rather than a deterministic view of man. This view says that man is able to choose; his behaviour is conscious and intentional, even when he chooses not to choose (Matza, 1969).
3. The model is an open-systems model, but with fairly loose interdependence of elements. After reading numerous organisational studies examining the relationship between an organisation and its environment (Stinchcombe, 1970; Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967; Emery and Trist, 1965) I agree with Child that the "argument from the environment is one of the more persuasive accompaniments of the growing use of open-systems theory in the study of organisations (Child, 1972, p.4) I was persuaded.
4. The model is dynamic.

Child argues that theories establishing associations between organisational features and 'contextual' (situational) factors are inadequate. They fail to give attention to the process of choice by decision-makers - choice regarding the organisation's context, choice about the standards of performance and choice regarding the structural design of the organisation. Hage and Dewar's study (1973) supports the importance of the 'inner-circle' of decision-makers' values (defined as 'preferences about desired organisational outcomes') in predicting changes in performance.

Using correlational analysis, they found that the value position of the elite was more strongly correlated with innovation than were any structural variables such as centralization or complexity. They concluded that their evidence "supports the view that elites are not totally determined by the kind of organisation they lead, but are able to manipulate their organisation, at least for innovation" (Ibid, p.287). Hage and Dewar suggest on this basis, the elite may also have a degree of choice regarding structure, lines of authority, regulations and performance. Tessa



Blackstone's (1971) comparison of different local education authorities' provision of pre-school education, illustrates the impact of L.E.A. elites' values on innovativeness and performance. Local education authorities were matched according to the material constraints they suffered and there were still marked differences in provision which could be explained mostly by the decision-makers' commitment to providing pre-school education.

It is the process of choice by the elite that Child focusses upon. He used the term 'dominant coalition' rather than elite. Political action is scrutinised in addition to the usual constraints discussed in organisational studies. These constraints are not seen as wholly determining - the organisational decision-makers can evaluate and choose how to react to environmental factors. Similarly, the association between technology and organisational design is not direct, but a derivative of decisions made by the dominant coalition in control of the organisation; as is the association between organisational size and other features of the organisation. That is, the decision-making process is an intervening variable. Zald (1970) places emphasis on the intervening nature of political processes in his Y.M.C.A. study in which he uses a 'political-economy' framework and examines "the interplay of political processes and structures with economic processes and structures" (Ibid, p.232). His study illustrates the argument that all variables, other than the intervening variable, can be either dependent or independent variables.

This picture of more flexible, causal relationships between organisational and environmental variables brings forward, from the background of most organisational studies, the decision-making process by the power-holders of an organisation (who are not necessarily the designated holders of authority). That it is a process which is focussed on in this study is in line with recent pleas from several social scientists - including Sofer (1973), Pettigrew (1973), Argyris (1972) and Mintzberg et al (1976) - for dynamic frameworks for the analysis of organisation. Child's concept of 'strategic choice' has been adopted to describe the decision-making process regarding long term goals and the adoption of courses of action, as the concept fulfils the dynamic criterion described very clearly by Sofer:

*To understand organisational behaviour in general and organisation decision-making in particular we need to examine organisations as flow systems analyzable only through time. I should like to view the roles of*

individual and department less as fixed positions than as loosely defined sets of rights and duties to improvise, innovate, and initiate action and to impinge on colleagues and on the external environment ... A significant part of organisational behaviour is to be understood only through close acquaintance with whole successions of interrelated and overlapping events as they unfold through time. We need a series of first-hand intensive studies that will show how and why it is that one event leads to another, and that will provide material for the detection of characteristic sequences, an organisational social psychology of process. (Sofer, 1972, pp.267-8)

Pettigrew attempted such a 'first-hand, intensive study' of an organisation. His object was to further develop Cyert and March's (1963) conception of organisational decision-making which Pettigrew (1973, p.265) felt was deficient in presenting the:

*processual aspects of demand generation and give(s) no consideration to the forms of strategic behaviour used in mobilizing support for a demand, and to how the organisational structure might limit such a process.*

Pettigrew analyzed personnel behaviour in one firm over a time period, observing the mobilization of power. 'Mobilization' is a key concept in his study because he started with the assumption that:

*decision-making in organisations is not merely a thought process that balances goals and means, or a choice process in which the environment is discriminated as a limit to choice only through the mind of the decision-maker. Rather, it may be understood as a political process that balances various power vectors. (Ibid, p.265)*

Five elements in the decision-making process are named:

1. Evaluating constraints from the environment;
2. Thinking through goals and means;
3. Negotiating with the power-centre (which requires that the negotiator has knowledge as to who are and as to how to approach the power-holders);
4. Mobilizing support for the proposed strategy; and
5. Implementing the strategy.

The third and fourth elements are additional elements to those described by Child (evaluation, choice or goal, and strategy) because Child is

describing the process only from the time it moves into the sphere of the 'dominant coalition'. He seems to assume that the power-holders initiate all strategies whereas Pettigrew recognises that demand can be generated at any level in the organisational hierarchy or even outside it. Gouldner (1954) implied what Pettigrew has made explicit when he, Gouldner, said that bureaucratic patterns can be either 'initiated or ratified' (my emphasis) by the power-holders. Zald also perceived that the decision-making process could be initiated through environmental pressures. To follow the process from its generation coming from pressure by an individual or group, through to the implementation of the strategy, Pettigrew suggests examining "where the demand is voiced, who articulates it, who hears it, and how widely it is diffused" (p.266). He found through empirical study, that the structural position of 'gatekeeper' was critical both for communicating demands and for mobilizing support for demands. A gatekeeper is a person who is the linkage between groups, either within levels or between levels. The gatekeeper is critical in the free kindergarten and playcentre movements because both have structures based on a system of representatives from each lower level comprising at least part-membership of the next level. These representatives have the opportunity to close the gate on communication between groups in the organisation.

There is a very strong resemblance between the approach adopted in this study and the political-economy approach used by Zald (1970) in his case study of the Chicago Association of the American Y.M.C.A. This study is a case study as was Zald's, and both use a framework to provide "a set of descriptive categories and an interpretive framework for ordering the analysis of the dynamics of structure and change" (Ibid, p.240), within the organisational unit being studied, rather than purporting to use the data to test theoretical generalisations. There is an agreement too that organisational studies should have a theoretical base and should study organisations as total organisations, examining the interrelationships among groups within and outside the organisation.

Zald argues that the economic and political variables in an organisation can be arranged into a political-economic framework which he sees as the most 'efficient and illuminating approach' for explaining organisational change.

*This approach postulates that economic and political forces, structures, pressures, and constraints (i) are among the most significant motivators of change, and (ii) are the key factors shaping directions of change. The political-economic approach is efficient because it concentrates investigation on two key processes and structures and their interrelation ... This approach is illuminating because it allows a greater explication of political and economic processes and structures within organisations than most sociologists have heretofore provided. It forces the researcher toward a more finely wrought conceptualization of organisational polity and economy than has been the norm ... Without explicit focus on polity and economy as the central objects of analysis, however, a rich set of distinctions and analytic units has not been developed. (Ibid, p.240)*

Child's framework uses many of the same variables as Zald's political-economic approach and much of the description and analysis in my study would be similar regardless of whether Child's or Zald's framework had been adapted, because key variables, for example, the power structure, decision-making process, resources, and client demands are the same. Zald organises his material by discussing the two strands of his framework - the polity and the economy - and the interrelationship between the strands. Child has developed his framework by proposing a cyclical framework which better describes the dynamic relationships between key variables influencing organisational change, and therefore subsumes the political-economic approach. I believe it is also superior because of the explicit focus on the process of strategic choice which produces change, and because it is able to cope with the 'unconventional game' which Weick described as occurring in education systems.

There are similarities also between Zald's Y.M.C.A. study, and Gouldner's case study of the gypsum factory and gypsum mine in their highlighting of the succession process in their discussion of power relations and organisational change. When a transfer of power occurs, the relationship between the polity's structure and the economic structure is frequently shown more explicitly in the subsequent changes.

What then are the key variables in this present study? Presented on the following page is my adaptation of Child's diagram of the role of strategic choice.

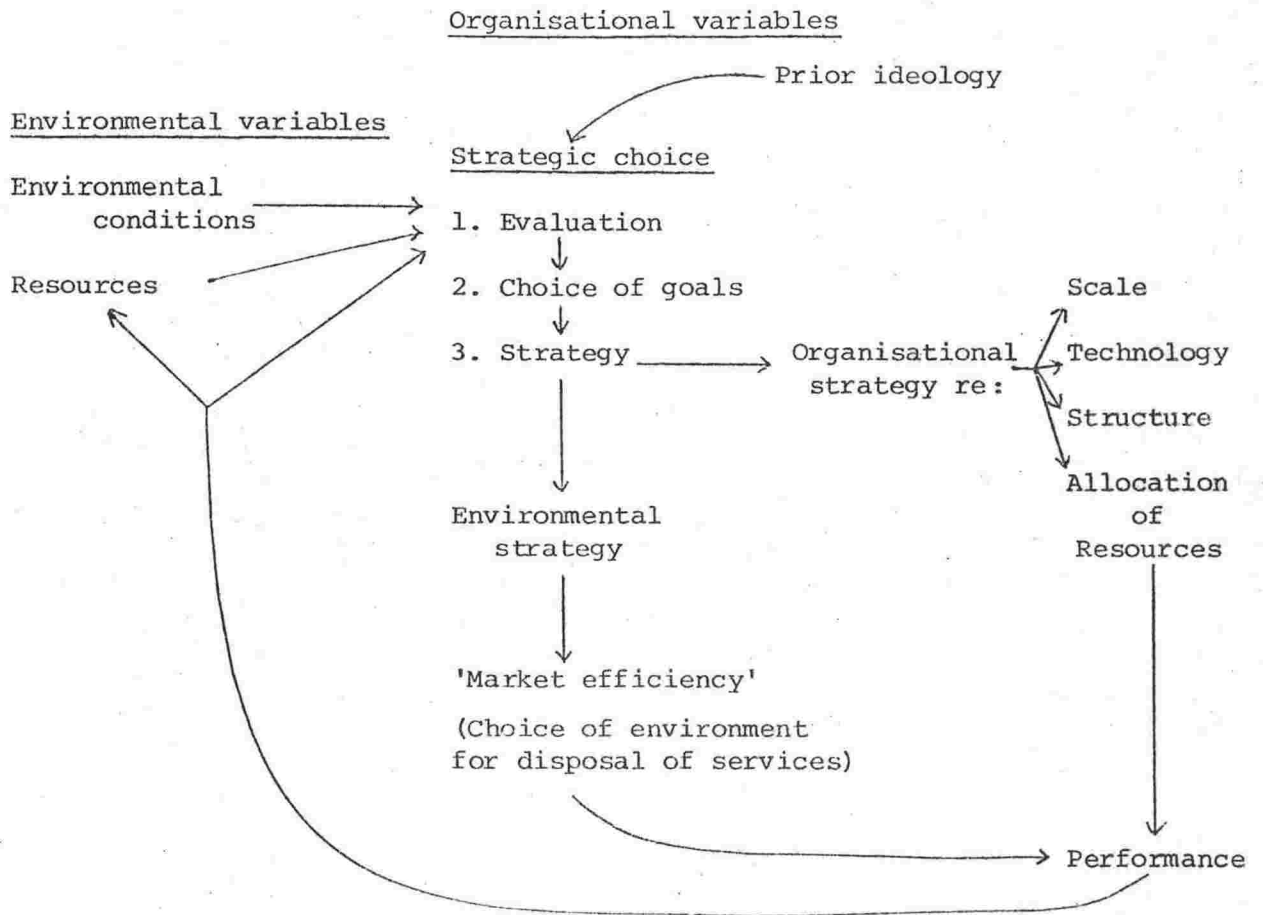


Figure 8: The Role of Strategic Choice in Organisations

The key concept in this framework is that of strategic choice by decision-makers. Child argues that:

*environmental conditions cannot be regarded as a direct source of variation in organisational structure, as open-systems theorists often imply. The critical link lies in the decision-makers' evaluation of the organisation's position in the environmental areas they regard as important, and in the action they may consequently take (p.10).*

The choice process, entailing evaluation of demand and of environmental factors, and action, is therefore an intervening variable in any change event within the organisation and between the organisation and its environment. Because of this intervening variable, constraints from environmental variability, complexity and illiberality, constraints from organisational size, and constraints from the organisation's technology are not as deterministic as many social scientists make out. The concept of strategic choice, in brief, describes the process whereby the decision-makers can filter the effects of one type of variable on another. In developing his argument, Child focussed on effects on structure.

A strategic choice is usually a complex process in that numerous referents are often involved. These referents may be any of the variables illustrated in the diagram. The number of variables influencing the strategic choice or being influenced by the strategic choice varies for each strategic choice; however, the variables involved are linked together loosely in an interacting relationship. Because the sub-systems in an education system are loosely connected, change in one organisational variable does not necessarily have a strong influence on the other organisational variables. For example, a strategy resulting in a change in the type of programme offered probably would not initially affect the scale or structure of the organisation, although re-allocation of resources may be necessary.

All variables are potentially dependent variables or independent variables (except, logically, the intervening variable: strategic choice). This characteristic of Child's framework allows for greater flexibility in the theoretical approach to organisations. For example, studies concerned with organisational performance have generally regarded structural variables (possibly affected by the organisation's environment) as the independent variables and performance as the dependent variable. Child says that performance can be viewed as input as well as output because performance can influence resource availability from the organisation's environment which in turn puts pressure on the decision-makers to alter their goals and/or strategies regarding the organisation. The cyclical nature of the framework and its flexibility poses problems however when it comes to documenting the process of formulating and implementing decisions in the playcentre and free kindergarten movement, because a book has to be written in linear form.

Four strategic choice processes will be examined in detail in this study - two for each voluntary organisation. Instead of allowing these examples to set me on a never-ending treadmill cycle, as is possible with cybernetic models, an arbitrary dependent variable has been selected; that of performance. The process culminating in performance can start anywhere on the cyclical diagram and may, in fact, go through this performance stage twice if the stimulus for change is an internal one; once early in the process when the strategic choice process is triggered off by an organisational variable, and organisational and/or environmental strategies are formulated; and the second time when the effectiveness



of the actions from the choice process is perceived by an awareness of organisation performance.

Performance is the result of two factors: organisation effectiveness and environmental effectiveness. The former will be assessed using two criteria:

1. Effectiveness in producing the educational service of the type, quality and in the quantity that families with young children who use pre-school services desire; and
2. Effectiveness in satisfying the organisation's personnel without adversely affecting in too great a degree the first criterion. Joint optimization of the 'production' and social needs is called for. Satisfaction will be assessed by intrinsic means (asking about feelings of satisfaction) and extrinsic means (expression of grievances, and turnover).

Environmental effectiveness will be operationalized by examining which social groups in the total population of pre-school families become clients of the two movements. David Barney's (1975) findings will be used to supplement my own data in this section.

These criteria of performance correspond closely with Bass's (1971) criteria for evaluating organisational success: "(1) the 'material' criteria of profits, productivity and self-maintenance, and (2) the 'social' criteria of worth of the organisation to the individual members, and (3) the worth of both to society" (p.103), except that Bass's third criterion is stated more explicitly. Bass doubts that a positive correlation exists on all occasions between the three criteria: so it would seem that a separate description of each criteria is called for.

Because this study has adopted the case study approach and is focussing on qualitative analysis of organisational processes, no attempts have been made to devise or use any indices of effectiveness. The literature on effectiveness indicates that attempts at measuring and comparing organisational effectiveness have been fraught with difficulties - difficulties in comparing effectiveness when there are too many variables to control for. Social scientists have not been successful in devising any measures of effectiveness, not even a multi-factor measure. As Mott (1972, p.185) concluded:

*single prescriptions for effectiveness are like mirages: desirable but distant, receding, unreal. Our research shows that various styles of leadership and organisational structure can be effective ... Selection of the appropriate decision-making structure is influenced by the legitimacy of the various alternative structures, the proportion of the professionals on the staff, whether or not emergencies exist, the degree of improvisation involved in the work, and so forth. Similarly, the degree of ... structure affects how other organisational characteristics are related to effectiveness.*

Organisational effectiveness and environmental effectiveness interact with one another. For example, an inadequate allocation of funds and personnel to support an advisory service could result in inadequate support for pre-school centres in some areas, resulting in these centres closing, or not even opening. Thus, the organisation becomes ineffective in meeting the needs of some social groups in the environment. The strategic choice process intervenes in the larger process at some point. To continue with the example above, the dominant coalition, faced with the decision about allocation of funds may choose to allocate them elsewhere and may or may not comprehend the dysfunctional effect on environmental effectiveness and performance; or they may realise the ineffective performance regarding potential clientele in the environment and seek to attract new resources from the environment - a strategy which may in turn influence organisational effectiveness and therefore performance. The strategic choice process often has consequences for both organisational and environmental effectiveness, even though the dominant coalition only intended to formulate goals and means for improving one or the other aspect of performance.

#### DOMINANT COALITION

Because strategic choice by decision-makers is the key variable, careful definition of who comprises the dominant coalition is important. Cyert and March (1963, p.13) first proposed this term to refer to those who "collectively happen to hold the most power over a particular period of time". However, because the other 'players' can enter the 'game' and 'throw balls' when they want to, the implementing of decisions depends on the co-operation of other organisational members - such mobilization of support was seen as being vital by Pettigrew in his discussion of the politics in organisational decision-making. The dominant coalition is seen by Child as the initiator of strategies, while the other organisational



members respond, given the assumption (which Pettigrew challenges) that lower-level members pragmatically accept decisions made by power-holders. I do not accept that the dominant coalition is characterised by their always being initiators of decisions. The determining characteristic of this group, I believe, is that they hold most power at the time of the decision. Characteristics of the members who most often form the dominant coalition will be described in Chapter 7.

In the Chicago Y.M.C.A. there was little internal pressure for change except when new key executives were elected and this led Zald (1970, p.208) to propose that "only under special circumstances such as internal slack ... does large-scale change occur in the absence of environmental pressure". If environmental pressure is an important impetus for change, an outline of environmental variables is necessary.

#### ENVIRONMENTAL VARIABLES

These fall into four classes: environmental conditions; resources and the conditions for their availability; interorganisational relationships; and the clientele and potential clientele.

##### 1. Environmental conditions

Child singled out three important environmental conditions. First, environmental variability, which refers to "the degree of change which characterises environmental activities relevant to an organisation's operations" (Ibid, p.3). He goes on to say:

*A number of writers have arrived at the same broad conclusion; the higher the environmental variability and the uncertainty consequently experienced, the more the prevailing structure of organisation should be adaptive, with roles open to continual redefinition and with co-ordination being achieved by frequent meetings and considerable lateral communication. (cf Stinchcombe, 1959; Burns and Stalker, 1961; and Lawrence and Lorsch, 1967) (Child, 1972, p.3)*

Second, environmental complexity which refers to "the heterogeneity and range of environmental activities which are relevant to an organisation's operations" (Ibid, p.3). It seems to follow that the greater the complexity, the more profuse is the information for the decision-makers to consider. Child argues that "environmental complexity does not of itself necessarily give rise to uncertainty if little environmental variability is present", (Ibid, p.4). The

third environmental condition Child calls environmental illiberality. This concept "refers to the degree of threat that faces organisational decision-makers in the achievement of their goals from external competition, hostility or even indifference" (Ibid, p.4). The likely consequence of considerable threat is centralization of decision-making and greater controls.

Child stresses that before these environmental conditions can effect organisational changes, the dominant coalition must first perceive and evaluate the variability, complexity and/or illiberality of the organisation's environment.

## 2. Resources

Resources and the rewards expected by the providers is a very important environmental variable in the study of the playcentre and free kindergarten voluntary organisations. As Government is a major source of funds, particularly for the free kindergarten organisation, the constraints which are placed on the organisations by Acts of Parliament or Departmental Regulations (Chapter 6 indicates that most were shaped in consultation with the subject organisation, but sometimes not) as conditions for the acceptance of funds, have important ramifications for strategies regarding organisational scale, structure, and internal allocation of resources, and for strategies regarding the approach to the environment. To quote Zald:

*When studying an organisation which depends on some fund sources apart from its clientele, the sociologist must examine the norms and rules that have developed in either public legislative committees or in relationship to major donors (p.112).*

These relationships seem to be strongly influenced by whether there is a scarcity or abundance of funds. The implications of different ways of funding for the two voluntary organisations are summarized on page 269. Funding, as I anticipated in Chapter 1, was a very influential variable on pre-school organisation functioning.

The second source of resources is fees and donations given by the clients in these voluntary organisations which have a mixed economy - with income from clients and from outside organisations. Non-monetary resources - for example aid with training - have been provided to both pre-school movements by various educational institutions, and these constitute the third type of resource. Following Zald's advice again, an examination of the norms and rules which

have developed with the provision of these resources must be undertaken.

The fourth type of resource is the time and skills given by paid staff and voluntary workers. Although most of the voluntary workers are also past or present clientele of the two organisations, I will distinguish the voluntary workers from the clientele in any discussion of resources by the criterion of committee membership. There is difficulty in the case of playcentre supervisors and tutors in deciding whether to class these people as paid staff or voluntary workers because of the very nominal wage given them. I have arbitrarily classed tutors as volunteers and supervisors as paid staff in my analysis of the survey data.

### 3. Inter-organisational relationships

My discussion of inter-organisational relationships excludes provision of resources relationships, and is concerned with the "kinds of relationships which (an organisation's) decision-makers choose to enter upon with their equivalents in other organisations" (Child, 1972, p.10). In the period of my fieldwork, most of the non-monetary, inter-organisational relationships were alliances. These alliances were either formal via such 'umbrella' organisations as the National Advisory Council for Pre-school Education and the District Pre-school Committees (both Government initiated), Pre-school Associations (initiated by decision-makers in the main organisations concerned with early childhood education); or refresher courses; or informal, such as gatherings of playcentre personnel and kindergarten lecturers, and informal study/liaison groups with no affiliations.

Zald (1970) mentions another type of inter-organisational relationship - that of deliberate referral of clients. In the field of early childhood education, this happens only in the case of children with special needs, although there is a good deal of transferring of children between playcentres and free kindergartens at local level which is not approved of generally by the decision-makers of either movement, except in the case of a change in family residence. In fact, some local collaborative alliances have been formed to try and stop transfers where there is no change of residence.

#### 4. Clientele

Sill's (1957) and Zald's (1970) studies of voluntary organisations illustrate the influence of the relationship between clients and the organisation. Zald calls the decision made by organisational power-holders regarding the line of action determining what services will be offered to which groups in the population and how the organisation will relate to clients, a 'niche-shaping' choice. He describes the pervasive change to the organisation's structure and economy that took place in the Chicago Y.M.C.A. after the personnel implemented a Youth Gang programme serving a totally new group in the population, and thus changing the Y.M.C.A.'s niche. Sills' study of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis described an organisation whose leaders, on the fruition of the original goals with the introduction of the Salk Vaccine, were faced with the strategic choice between changing clientele or dying. By adopting the former strategy and focussing more widely on children with birth defects, and thus changing its niche, considerable change occurred in the other elements and relationships within the National Foundation.

Blau and Scott (1962) felt that something was known about organisational personnel's orientation to clients but very few studies had been done at the time they wrote *Formal Organisations* to ascertain clients' orientations to different organisations and their personnel. They made a study of two groups of clients who approached two departments of the same County Agency. One group of clients came to request help while the other group provided a service: foster care. The clients in the second group, having some power, got a better deal from the agency and the social workers in that department also had better working conditions and were accorded greater prestige.

It is the clients or more generally, the 'public-in-contact' which form Blau and Scott's third category of persons who can benefit from an organisation's activities. The other groups are: members; owners or managers; and the 'public-at-large'. By asking "Who is the prime beneficiary?" Blau and Scott devised a typology of organisations comprising mutual-benefit associations, business concerns, service organisations and commonweal organisations (Ibid, p.43), and then outlined the problems each type of organisation was most likely to face. The playcentre organisation could best be classed as a

'mutual-benefit' organisation having as its recurring problem, the maintenance of democratic processes. The kindergarten movement appears to be a mixed type - part mutual-benefit, part service - "because it serves its members' interest in serving the interests of others" (Ibid, p.45). It too has problems in maintaining membership participation and also has problems of personnel losing interest in serving clients and more interested in making their own work easier.

#### ORGANISATIONAL VARIABLES

The diagram showing the adaptation of Child's schema illustrating the role of strategic choice, gives four organisational variables: scale, programme (technology), structure and allocation of resources. All these can be, and usually are, interrelated.

##### 1. Scale

Most studies illustrating the relationship between size and structure argue that increased size leads to greater differentiation and complexity usually resulting in management imposing a system of impersonal control; or that increased size makes personalized management impossible, so management usually opts for a decentralized structure and employs more administrative staff to supervise the system. Child states that the relationship between size of organisation and its structure is not as deterministic as studies such as that by Blau (1970) imply, and that different structures are possible given controlled size and type of programme. He emphasizes that when size and technology impose some constraints, they only do so on certain areas of activity.

##### 2. Technology

The technology of an organisation comprises the materials, tools, and techniques (involving knowledge) used by the members.

Perrow's (1970) and Woodward's (1965) research are probably the most refined industrial studies of the relationship between different types of technologies and organisational structure. These studies are of little use for the examination of voluntary organisations, except for Woodward's suggestion that analysis of the informal organisation may be critical only when mass-production firms are under scrutiny. However, Perrow's (1965) discussion of hospital

technology, structure and goals stresses the importance of technology. In his conclusion Perrow states "... social scientists will do well not to neglect a basic, pedestrian characteristic of organisations they study - the nature of the work performed or, more generally, the techniques available and in current use for achieving organisational goals" (p.966). He asks that research look at all of the three factors: the cultural system, the technology and the social structure, which influence organisations, and regard them as being interdependent.

Any discussion of voluntary organisations involving employed staff requires two strands of analysis - one for the staff, and one for the voluntary workers. This applies to all the organisational variables apart from scale. There appear to be no studies evaluating the unique work-role of pre-school staff and its relationship to organisational functioning. If the children in an educational centre are regarded as the materials, the play equipment as the tools and the type of programme as the technique, then it is possible to visualize the relationship between the technology used by the staff and other aspects of the organisation. For example, a change in tools and/or technique may interact with the allocation of human resources and with the environmental strategy concerning the approach to the market of young families.

More is known about the role of voluntary workers and the relationship of their work activities and other organisational and environmental variables. Stinchcombe (1967) says that by creating activities in which people can participate, voluntary organisation leaders try to move people to higher levels of activity and thus sustain the organisation. He is implying that as well as the goal-achievement (purposive) activities, voluntary workers are engaged in activities which provided a solidary incentive to members to continue to participate. The means (technology) by which the playcentre voluntary personnel achieve their goals are weighted strongly towards providing solidary incentives (except for a few aspects of the children's programme which irritate a large proportion of New Zealand parents and act as disincentives) and its main broad goal aims for solidarity through improved human relationships, particularly within families. Such emphasis on solidarity-giving techniques means that



the absence of solidarity is potentially disruptive.

The means by which kindergarten voluntary workers achieve their goals are generally more business-like, providing satisfaction via purposive incentives, such as opening a new kindergarten. Also the narrow range of tasks left to lower level kindergarten volunteers leaves them with few chances to develop a sense of solidarity.

Voluntary workers in service organisations are not equipped with physical tools to turn raw materials into a product. Their tools and materials are predominantly their own skills and knowledge. That is, the only element of technology (which in industrial organisations comprises materials, tools and techniques) available to voluntary workers is technique, which could well indicate why few low socio-economic people involve themselves in such voluntary work - it is not work with 'concrete' tools and materials. It appears to be 'all talk and no do'.

### 3. Structure

Child limits the use of this variable by regarding it throughout his discussion as a dependent variable, although his diagram showing the role of strategic choice does not place structure in the dependent variable position. He does not give adequate recognition to the constraining influence of structure on other elements of the organisation, in this writer's view, because he generally viewed it as the dependent variable. As I have expressed interest in the effects of structure on adaptability (p.11), structure as an independent variable was discussed in the literature review chapter as well.

Scott Greer (1955) separates structure in formal organisations into two classes: the scalar system (division of control and the relationship between control groups), and the functional system (division of work). Both structures are present in the playcentre and kindergarten organisations. It is the former system we are concerned with when the term structure is used in this study. The division of work is discussed under the heading Allocation of Resources.

Hierarchical administrative systems are the most common scalar systems used to lighten the load of top management. Communication break-

downs and slowness in communication are two limitations commonly experienced by those in contact with such a hierarchical structure. In Greer's opinion (1955, p.62), "bureaucracy is the characteristic and dominating extended group of our day", or as Sofer (1973, p.224) phrases it, "the strain towards efficiency manifests itself within contemporary organisations in bureaucratic principles".

Both the playcentre and free kindergarten movements could be said to have 'legal' authority, as both have formal rules (a constitution) describing their goals and the means of attaining these goals. Formally, "obedience is owed not to a person - whether a traditional chief or a charismatic leader - but to a set of impersonal principles" (Blau and Scott, 1962, p.31). Informally, however, the Free Kindergarten Union President on some occasions attempted to get members' obedience to decisions by direct appeal; for example, to have Standard By-laws for the whole movement, instead of each association having its own By-laws.

Under the legal form of authority, a staff of officials are appointed to administer the organisation efficiently and rationally (bureaucratically). Weber proposed that the 'ideal type' of bureaucracy had several distinct characteristics; there is a high degree of specialization possible via the division of labour; positions are organised into a hierarchical structure; formal rules and regulations govern the activities of officials; officials are expected to keep relations with clients impersonal; and employment of personnel is based on appointment of the person with the best technical qualifications with career promotions possible depending on seniority and/or achievement level. On the basis of a study of a gypsum mine and factory, Gouldner (1954) proposed that some of the obscurities in Weber's discussion of bureaucracy could be overcome if it were to be accepted that there is not one pattern of bureaucracy but three: mock, representative and punishment-centred bureaucracies. Mock bureaucracy exists when rules are initiated by an 'outside' agency which organisational members feel are not legitimate so no one enforces them. When organisational members make rules which everyone finds acceptable and are willing to adhere to, the bureaucracy is defined as representative. Punishment-centred bureaucracy, however, is characterised by rules having to be enforced by means of punishment



leading to a good deal of tension. This situation usually arises when one group of members does not see the rules as legitimate.

There has been considerable discussion in recent years about the shortcoming of bureaucratic structures for our post-industrial societies and many new structural forms which have been proposed were discussed in the literature review, suggesting structure as an independent variable, not a dependent variable. What determines the structure of different organisations?

Child argues that the "direct source of variation in formal structural arrangements ... (is) the strategic decision of those who have the power of structural initiation - the dominant coalition" (p.10).

Other studies have overlooked this direct source of structural variation by failing to recognise that strategic choices by decision-makers intervene between environmental or organisational variables and the structural variable. For example, Perrow's study (1970) has a conceptual framework with the structure as the dependent variable, and material and information as the independent variables; and Woodward (1965) links certain kinds of technology with different structures. Like Child, Sofer (1973) recognises that task and technology are not absolute determinants, although they will influence the shape of the administrative hierarchy and the style of management; all of which have "effects on the sort of employees ... the organisation attracts and retains" (p.220).

In analyzing structure in this study, the levels in the hierarchy will be described and the amount of power each level has to make decisions will be examined. The concepts of centralisation and de-centralisation refer to structural patterns of control: in a centralised structure the control is predominantly with an executive unit usually at the top of the hierarchy if there is a pyramidal structure; whereas in de-centralised organisations, a greater range of decisions are made by the lower level constituent parts. Membership participation in decision-making is used as an indicator of the degree of centralisation of structure. The type of participation in similar situations needs to be compared to ascertain whether constituent members are asked only to provide information or whether they generate the decision along with the leaders. The

flow of information, crucial for the making and implementing of decisions, will be analyzed and the importance of gatekeepers will be noted.

4. Allocation of resources

Resources include: human resources in terms of time, energy, knowledge and skills; funds; facilities; and rewards and sanctions to motivate performance. Just where in the organisation decisions regarding the allocation of resources are made gives an indication of the degree of centralisation of structure in an organisation - organisations vary in the amount of discretion over allocation of resources given to lower level constituent groups.

In the kindergarten movement, during the period of this study, the voluntary workers moved out of active involvement with the teachers' structural system, when they handed over their training tasks to the Teachers' Colleges. Therefore the members (human resources) of the Free Kindergarten movement, now primarily devote themselves to serving on administrative committees and possibly parent-helping in the kindergartens. Systems growth tasks appear to be given priority at upper levels while systems maintenance predominates at the local level, which gives local members some power over the running of pre-school centres. The members of the playcentre movement are deployed in a wider range of tasks which fall into two main classes: educational and administrative tasks. With training (which has publication tasks as its adjunct) still completely controlled by voluntary workers, and with parent education tasks to do along with administrative tasks, playcentre members at all levels in the organisation are engaged in a considerable variety of tasks. Systems maintenance tasks take up most membership time.

Funds can come from sources internal to the organisation or from environmental sources. As we are here concerned with organisational variables, any discussion regarding funds will cover the questions:

- (a) What are the sources of funds from within the organisation and how (if at all) do these sources influence the types of strategic choices made by the dominant coalition?
- (b) How do decisions about the allocation of funds made by decision-makers affect the programme, scale, structure, approach to

potential clients, economic performance, feedback, and funding from external sources? (Decisions made by outside agencies about the funds they have provided are dealt with under the heading: Environmental Variables.)

- (c) How does the internal to external proportion of funds affect the organisations? This is relevant in this present study, as both organisations have a mixed economy.

The latter question leads us into the issue of accountability - a thorny issue for any segment of the education system, because educational organisations are service organisations which cannot be evaluated principally in terms of an economic efficiency criterion. However, this criterion can assume importance in service organisations in times of economic scarcity, or possibly if higher level members have a business orientation.

What about resources termed facilities? These include the accommodation and teaching aids used for the childrens' sessions; and the accommodation, libraries and teaching equipment used for training staff and conducting parent education sessions. The strategic choices regarding facilities have been crucial for the directions of change seen in both the playcentre and the free kindergarten movements, in terms of the tasks facing voluntary workers and paid staff and in terms of strategies for approaching clientele. The historical chapters which follow this one, and Chapters 8 to 11, show how decisions about types of facilities have influenced the availability and acceptability of pre-school services in New Zealand.

The final class of resources are the rewards and sanctions used by the organisation's dominant coalition to motivate voluntary workers and paid staff to perform their tasks. The rewards are the incentives discussed briefly under the heading of Technology, and these fall into three classes: material, purposive and solidary (Zald, 1970). Where the rewards are tangible, the dominant coalition can use the sanction of withdrawal of rewards to motivate members to perform their tasks, at the risk of the members using the exit option (Hirschman, 1970). If purposive-solidary incentives dominate, as they must in a voluntary organisation, the informal sentiments of other volunteers sanction those members who do not adequately perform their tasks. If neither positive wooing nor negative sentiments result in adequate task

performance by a voluntary worker, the dominant coalition can find themselves in the awkward position of not being able to sack the voluntary worker and therefore not achieving the objectives set for that volunteer. If large numbers of members appear to lack the motivation to perform the tasks, it would suggest that either mock bureaucracy or punishment-centred bureaucracy is present, characterised by either the leaders or ordinary workers evading the rules set down for improving performance because the other party does not regard such rules as legitimate and therefore evades such rules at the risk of punishments or ill-feeling emanating from the other party (Gouldner, 1954). Sanctions would be used frequently in punishment-centred, large organisations.

Accusations of not upholding organisational values may be another type of sanction used, particularly in non-commercial organisation. This is one function of ideology. I found ideological arguments to be very influential in voluntary organisations as they were used on several occasions to induce members to think in the same way as the leaders.

Sills (1968) outlines two kinds of rewards found in voluntary organisations for the individual members. The manifest functions of membership include the satisfactions of sociability, recreation, service and/or political action; and the latent functions are social integration and training in organisational skills. This last reward is highlighted by McDonald (1974) when she analysed the reason for the popularity of the playcentre movement, and playcentre members themselves have admitted this in articles written for the *Playcentre Journal* (see for example, No. 35).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### METHODOLOGY

*There is no one perfect, universal approach to social research and what is needed is a clear perception of the various problems inherent in different situations and techniques, so that attempts can be made rationally and without rancour to choose what is most appropriate to improve present defects rather than to abandon a promising approach because it is not already perfect.*

Robb, 1975, p.13.

The key variables in the conceptual framework used in this study are the intervening variable - strategic choice process - and the variables which indicate the performance of the organisation as a result of past strategic choices - client groups (environmental variable), and scale, programme, structure and allocation of resources (organisational variables).

As the main focus of the study is on a process, it was agreed early in the planning of this research that participant observation was the most appropriate methodology to gather information about how people actually go about making decisions, and that organisational records would be used to validate my diary notes. To gather data about variables which indicate performance, more than one methodology was also necessary. To look at client groups, a survey was mounted to ascertain the characteristics of pre-school families who use or do not use playcentre or kindergarten facilities, and this was cross-checked by observation and by a statistical analysis of Wellington pre-school roll numbers compared with three and four year olds living in Wellington. Structural and scale variables were assessed mainly by examining historical and present-day records with some additional data being sought by my collecting additional figures; for example, finding out how many adults completed playcentre certificates in one year. Information about programmes was gathered by reading descriptions of them in the organisations' records and by observing during the children's sessions and during the training gatherings for adults. Two further surveys were conducted as part of my evaluation of each organisation's

resources and how they are allocated, and the records of the playcentre and kindergarten movements were searched for additional data concerning resources.

Thus, it can be seen that a combination of methodologies was used, which is fairly typical of most case studies. According to Blau and Scott (1962):

*the field study is the typical research design employed in the study of formal organisations. This approach is well adapted for providing an overall picture of the organisation and information about the interdependence of its constituent parts ... The field study is particularly hospitable to the combined use of a variety of data gathering methods, including direct observation, interviewing and the analysis of documents and records. (Ibid, p.20)*

I employed the same variety of methods to gather data during this study. That is, I used a methodological triangle. Lipset, Trow and Coleman (1962) used a similar methodological triangle in their case study of the International Typographical Union, including interviewing people both personally and by post. These researchers found it necessary, because of limited research resources, to focus on one organisation; while, for similar reasons, I have made a very thorough examination of two.

Are data from one or two case studies sufficient for obtaining explanatory generalisations?

*A fundamental dilemma is posed for the study of organisations by the double requirement of examining the interdependence between elements of a social structure on the one hand, and of observing many independent cases to substantiate generalisations, on the other ... And even when comparative empirical data on many organisations are available, conceptualising the organisations as independent cases would involve ignoring their interdependence on larger society, whereas focussing upon their interdependence would leave the investigator, once more, with only one case. This dilemma cannot be definitively resolved. (Blau and Scott, 1962, p.12)*

Lipset, Trow and Coleman chose one case, not only for economic reasons, but also because more vivid description is possible and because they believe that generalisation is possible from one case if sociological concepts are used; while Tannenbaum et al (1974) chose many organisations in seven different countries to show the effect of the culture of the society in

which they are embedded, as well as the effects of organisational variables on organisational hierarchy and on organisational participativeness. If research resources are no problem, the choice between studying one organisation or many cases will probably depend upon the commitment of the researcher to one of Chern's approaches (1969) to social research: pure basic research (orientated towards theoretical problems), basic objective research (orientated towards a problem which arises in some field of application), operational research (orientated towards tackling an on-going problem within some organisational framework), and action research (the researcher introduces and observes planned change).

As I believe that the disadvantages of detached social research, exemplified in the first two approaches, outweigh the advantages, my choice of approach was mainly operational research - tackling on-going problems within two organisations, the playcentre and free kindergarten organisations. I was also sufficiently accepted by my subjects to suggest minor changes to the playcentre association structure during my field work, which enabled me to study the consequences (not reported in this thesis). Such research behaviour falls into Chern's category of action research. The dissemination of my results via the media, non-academic journals, and papers given to the subject organisations (in addition to writing this thesis) reflects my commitment to doing research which is useful to the general public as well as being concerned with finding themes useful for developing models from which theoreticians can generalise.

During this study, the data was gathered by using a methodological triangle, but different combinations of methods were employed to measure different variables as I have described at the beginning of this chapter. Rather than going into more detail about these various combinations, I intend reporting on each of the methods in turn: participant observation, interviewing and analysis of the organisations' records, discussing selected relevant literature and describing my experiences in using each of the methods.

#### PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

As it is a process which is the key variable in this study, the method most used and emphasized is participant observation, because it reflects the nature of human life (Bruyn, 1966). Riley (1970) says that the asset of this method is that the observer can grasp the processes and patterns



of behaviour as a whole and thus obtain a rounded view of life in the organisation, including latent patterns of behaviour. It was for these reasons that so much importance has been given to data obtained by participant observation.

Junker's discussion (1960) of the social roles an observer may take ranging from complete participant, to participant as observer, to observer as participant, to complete observer; and of problems involved in 'getting in', 'staying in' and 'easing out' were most useful to me when I adopted the role of participant observer. I was not totally unprepared for the initial strange feelings I experienced as a 'marginal man' and I was also able to anticipate some of the pleasures of the field work. Vidich et al. (1964) also provide examples of the problems and joys of field work. They describe the data collection process of several community studies, such as Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1955). Their presentation of the researcher's feeling of divided loyalties at the report writing stage have been particularly reassuring.

Early in my field work I was usually a passive observer. One playcentre member's tally of the number of times I non-verbally communicated my feelings about matters under discussion in a meeting late in 1973, indicated to me that I had already moved away from being a complete observer, and also that I ought to dampen my non-verbal communication when I was supposed to be observing. As I came to know the members of the voluntary organisations on a more personal level, the amount of my participation tended to increase, although I rarely took on the role of complete participant - such rare occasions were at training workshops, and during the one term I tutored a Helpers Certificate group in my own suburb. Probably reflecting the greater formality of relationships between kindergarten members, I was practically always more of an observer than participant in kindergarten meetings; whereas at playcentre gatherings I often participated in small ways for, an estimate of, 50 percent of their gatherings.

This participation was usually during tea breaks (more common in playcentre meetings) when members would come and ask me for feedback from my study of their history, my surveys or reading. Sometimes I was asked for information during meetings. I endeavoured, in the

interests of remaining a detached researcher, to keep this information factual, pointing out the limitations of some of my data and possible alternative interpretations. More playcentre personnel were involved in the wider field of early childhood care and education than were kindergarten members, and the former group also made use of my wide knowledge of the field to keep up to date with visiting speakers, imminent meetings, courses and so on.

1974 was spent doing field work with the playcentre movement at national, Wellington Association and local levels: paying particular attention to the playcentres in the suburbs used for the pre-school families survey conducted in 1974-4. During 1975, I attended some additional national playcentre meetings to obtain fuller notes about Federation conferences, National Executive and Education Sub-committee meetings.

Obtaining permission to observe at kindergarten meetings took a long time. Kindergarten volunteers felt far more threatened by the presence of a researcher than did playcentre personnel and, when permission to observe was granted, I was allowed access to only some meetings or some portions of meetings. I never attended a Union Executive meeting. For knowledge about its tasks and functioning I read the minutes, received verbal reports from one or two participants, and asked questions in the pre-school volunteers survey. I did not attend Wellington Association Executive meetings, except on one occasion when I was around and was not asked to leave. More personal, confidential matters were attended to at the Association Executive meeting, otherwise the business was the same as at Council meetings. I began attending kindergarten meetings (including the Union conference) in mid-1974, and I continued with the field work with the kindergarten organisation throughout 1975. The pre-school staff survey and the pre-school volunteers survey were completed in 1975 also.

During the course of my research I attended seventy-two playcentre meetings (training and administrative, including two Federation conferences); and fifty kindergarten meetings (training and administrative, including two Union conferences and one N.Z.F.K.T.A. conference).

I attended 50 percent more playcentre meetings than I did kindergarten meetings for three reasons, mostly related to differences in their structure and functioning. Firstly, the kindergarten organisation held fewer meetings. Secondly, I was excluded from attending kindergarten national and association level executive meetings. Thirdly, the playcentre tradition is to include as many people as possible in decision making, and they take proposals to a variety of meetings before the decision is finally made. The historical chapter will describe how major proposals are circulated around New Zealand before a decision was made. When a change seems necessary, alternatives are generally discussed and re-formulated at a variety of meetings before consensus is reached as to choice and method of implementation.

I spent a week participating and observing at Wellington Kindergarten Teachers' College; and three days attending the Early Childhood Care and Development Convention. I was able to attend five meetings of the National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education and eight meetings of the Wellington District Pre-school Committee. In addition, I went to approximately fifteen meetings of various groups interested in early childhood education; devoted over sixty hours to participant observation of children's sessions in many playcentres and kindergartens; conducted sixteen informal interviews of over an hour's duration with a variety of early childhood personnel; and spent many hours chatting to pre-school parents, staff and volunteers either over the phone or over cups of tea.

My field work diary finally comprised 490 pages of single-spaced, abbreviated notes. The extent of my field work, with regard to time spent and with regard to the range of activities, gave me a full and first hand understanding of the strategic choice processes and the day-to-day activities occurring in the playcentre and kindergarten organisations, assuming I was able to accomplish the task which Goethe says is the most difficult of all: "That which seems to you the easiest, to see with one's eyes what is lying before them"; which I believe I did. Data from other methods substantiates this.

Stacey (1969) describes the hazards of the participant observation method thus:

*The information collected in the course of participant observation is revealing, especially to the observer. It is hard to transmit to others, except in a wordy and descriptive manner, and even more difficult to prove the truth of the insights received. More systematic observation can sometimes turn such insights, or field work hunches, into demonstrable facts. (p.102)*

More systematic observation was undertaken, with the assistance of twenty-seven senior sociology students doing a course on research methodology, of the children's programme in playcentres and kindergartens, and the results of these more structured observations are reported in Appendix 4. To summarize briefly, there were a number of small differences in the children's programme which, when aggregated, indicate that kindergarten sessions are more organised or more structured. The validity of parents' views expressed during interviewing was established.

In addition to using structured observations to demonstrate the factual base of field work insights, I kept relating my observations to current theories and to empirical facts (gathered from my own survey material and from other research reports). This was to enhance the objectivity of my data after I had spent time close to the playcentre and kindergarten members in an attempt to build up a valid picture of the patterns of behaviour exhibited by these people in their empirical world. The use of other methods was essential for checking the reliability of my observational data.

#### INTERVIEWING

Two introductory texts on social research methodology brought to my attention the issues that need to be considered before starting interviewing - either face-to-face or by post. The first, by Blalock (1970) emphasizes the need for 'sound research' attained by standardization of questions, systematic sampling and standardization of analysis without giving details of how to achieve them. The second, by Goode and Hatt (1952), provided more detail on how to construct a questionnaire (including points that need to be considered in constructing a mailed questionnaire as opposed to a questionnaire that will be personally administered) and what types of sampling technique

are appropriate for different types of research.

Of the more detailed texts consulted, Riley (1970) was found to be the most useful. She points out that observation and interviewing methods "parallel and supplement one another in the data they obtain ... Data from observation refers directly to interaction, ... (while) the answers to questions represent directly the orientations of members" (Ibid, p.167). This is why I have obtained data by interviewing. The data from three different surveys provided information about the characteristics of the voluntary decision-makers, the providers (staff), and the clients. Also, the viewpoints expressed by these groups of people during interviews supplemented the observational material which described their actions and interactions.

Riley presents a paradigm containing different alternatives of sociological research design and, throughout the commentaries on other research briefly reported in the text, calls for consistency between, for example the level of analysis (termed 'nature of the research case'), the conceptual model employed and the type of analysis of the data. The two problems regarding interviewing methodology raised by Riley are:

1. How can the techniques for questioning individuals be used to cover several members of a group without their discussing the questions with other group members? Riley suggests using many interviewers simultaneously, or conducting a postal questionnaire.
2. How can data about individuals be aggregated into collective data? Riley says that how they will be fitted together will vary according to the conceptual model for each particular study and the level of analysis focussed upon. The techniques include two which I have used in this study: finding proportions of each group which have particular characteristics and/or orientations; and by describing their responses.

In discussing sampling, Riley covers not only the representational basis for sampling design, but also the requirements of analysis. Sampling

errors can arise from:

- (a) the failure to match the sample to the conceptual total population,
- (b) the failure to follow the procedures of probability sampling, and
- (c) the failure to question a substantial proportion of individuals because of their reluctance to co-operate.

Because the samples of pre-school families, of pre-school staff and of local and association voluntary members of the playcentre and kindergarten organisation were drawn in the Wellington region, it could be said that these samples do not match the conceptual total population. It is accepted that this is a limitation of the study - generalisations should not be drawn for the whole of New Zealand from the survey data. Probability sampling was carried out for the pre-school families survey and for the staff survey, but in the case of the pre-school volunteers survey a representative sample was subordinated to the requirements of analysis and a focussed sample was drawn. The high response rate in all three surveys assured me that there was little chance of sampling error due to reluctant individuals being missed from the sample.

Details of how each sample was drawn are given below:

1. Pre-school families survey in three Wellington suburbs

One hundred and thirty-eight parents with children aged 3 and 4 years were interviewed in three different suburbs in Wellington in early 1974. The suburbs were chosen on the basis of one high, one middle and one low socio-economic district on McGee's ranking (1969) of Wellington suburbs.

One hundred and eleven interviewees attended either playcentre or free kindergarten - 45 were playcentre participants and 66 were free kindergarten participants. These numbers represent 25 percent of those listed on the playcentre and kindergarten rolls in the three suburbs - Khandallah, Newlands and Newtown, representing high, middle and low socio-economic suburbs - at the time of interviewing. Each pre-school centre's roll was sorted into alphabetical order, and every fourth family was drawn for the user family sample. Of a sub-sample of 114, 111 interviews were completed. One family in Newlands and one in Newtown refused to be interviewed, and a further family in Newtown could not be contacted for interviewing. The refusal rate for user-families was 2.7 percent.

Twenty-seven interviewees were 'non-users' - that is families who did not use nor intend to use the playcentre or kindergarten service in that suburb. They all lived in the middle socio-economic suburb of Newlands. Unfortunately, I was not able to interview non-users in any other census areas because I was dependent upon the Wellington Education Board asking schools to conduct a door-to-door survey to obtain a complete list of all 3 and 4 year olds in a district, and no other saturation surveys were done (within travelling distance) during the time of my field work. Therefore a sample of non-users discovered in the saturation survey of Newlands and comprising 33 percent of the 85 families who had pre-schoolers but were not using playcentres or using or intending to use kindergartens, had to suffice.

Two of the non-user families in Newlands were not interviewed of the original sample of 29. One refused outright, while the other family was so busy that an interview could not be fitted into their time-schedule. Thus the refusal rate for this sub-sample was 7 percent. However, the failure rate was probably higher as I found that the Education Board's saturation survey had not captured approximately 20 percent of the families who were using pre-school services in the suburb. On the basis of this, I estimate that there were probably another 21 non-user families in Newlands (total = 106) which means that my sample is only about 25 percent of this group of families; the same proportion as was drawn for the 'users' sample from a more reliable list of the total population under study.

I obtained the assistance of another interviewer for a small number of interviews, which was a useful check on my possible biases. None were revealed. A pilot study was conducted in two different suburbs not used in the main survey.

2. Pre-school staff survey in the Wellington Playcentre and Free Kindergarten Associations

Following a pilot study being conducted in late 1974, a small survey of Wellington pre-school staff was undertaken early in 1975. Using an alphabetical list of kindergartens in the Wellington Association, the Head-teacher of every second kindergarten was selected for the sample, as was the Assistant-teachers of the alternative kindergartens on the list. In addition, those staff members at the kindergarten in the three suburbs used for the pre-school families survey who



were not caught up in the first draw were added to the sample list. All twelve Head-teachers and eleven Assistant-teachers in the sample agreed to be interviewed.

In the Wellington Playcentre Association, the sample comprised twenty-one Supervisors\* and eighteen Assistant Supervisors. From an alphabetical list of playcentres giving staff names, I selected every fifth Supervisor and every fifth Assistant Supervisor to obtain a random sample of twenty-three. In addition, those staff members at the playcentres in the three suburbs used for the pre-school families survey who were not caught up in the first draw were placed on the sample list. The total sample of playcentre staff was thirty-nine and, again, the refusal rate was nil.

Because the survey was on such a small scale, no computer analysis was attempted. The information on the schedules was analysed by hand-tallies and any necessary calculations were done on a calculator.

### 3. Pre-school volunteers survey

In mid-1975 a further small survey was conducted. This time it was of voluntary members of the playcentre and kindergarten movements, using Wellington respondents at the local and association levels plus members of the national body of both organisations.

As was the case for the other surveys, this one was a limited survey of an exploratory nature because it was only one component of a complex study being undertaken by one person. The total sample of 162 volunteers was surveyed by two methods. Forty-four local and association people in Wellington were personally interviewed, and a further 140 members from all levels in each organisation's hierarchy were sent a postal questionnaire which had identical questions to those used in the personal interview schedule - thus preserving the standardization of questions that Blalock (1970) calls for.

Two of the 46 members originally approached for an interview declined to be interviewed; making a refusal rate of 4 percent. There were 118 responses to the postal survey which gave a reply rate of 84 percent.

\* Supervisor with a capital 'S' refers to the head Supervisor.

The sample finally comprised 162 people; and the composition of the sample is given in Table 4.1 below:

Table 4.1.      Composition of the Pre-school Volunteers Sample

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Local	57	65.5	50	66.7	107	66.0
Association	13	14.9	16	21.4	29	17.9
National	<u>17</u>	<u>19.5</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>12.0</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>16.0</u>
	87	99.9	75	100.1	162	99.9
Proportions of Total:	53.7		46.3		100.0	

It was in this sample that representativeness was subordinated to the need to get sufficient numbers in the different categories to learn something from them. The 87 playcentre volunteers and the 75 kindergarten volunteers do not represent, proportionally, the number of people in New Zealand who are involved in the two movements. No-one knows how many people are on pre-school committees and councils, but as there were approximately 400 kindergartens and over 700 playcentres existing in New Zealand in mid-1975, it is very probable that playcentre volunteers considerably outnumber kindergarten volunteers.

Two-thirds of the total sample were involved only at the local level and these local respondents were placed on the list from which the sample was drawn on the basis of their holding a position of responsibility, because I wanted people who could give me more informed opinions than I assume ordinary committee members may have. Thus the sample does not encompass ordinary committee members at the lowest level of commitment. Fifteen percent of the playcentre sample and 21 percent of the kindergarten sample were association members all working for the Wellington associations, and many of whom were also involved at the local level.

Nineteen percent of the playcentre sample and 12 percent of the kindergarten sample were national members (most of whom were also involved at the association level, for constitutional reasons, as well as choice). Again, these proportions do not reflect proportions for the whole movement. All of the Free Kindergarten Union Ward members were sent a questionnaire, whereas only 50 percent of the Playcentre Federation's National Executive were included in the sample. Also, the sampling proportion was weighted

more heavily at the top level of each organisation's hierarchy to get reasonable numbers of members for statistical analysis purposes.

Selection of the sample was based on several criteria:

For the kindergarten movement the sample included:

- All Union members. They were sent a postal questionnaire.
- Sixteen Wellington Association members. Five elected Council members were interviewed and seven were sent a postal questionnaire; twelve of the local sample were delegates to Council and therefore also on the Association.
- Sixty-six local members. Four office-bearers from every second kindergarten committee in the Wellington Association (total = 48 volunteers) were sent a postal questionnaire. Four office-bearers from four local committees and one establishment committee were approached for a personal interview. The local committees selected included those in the three suburbs used for the pre-school families survey, plus the local committee of a Grade 2 kindergarten which has a roll of 105.

For the playcentre movement the sample included:

- Eighteen Federation National Executive members. These members, who were sent a postal questionnaire, comprised every second name on the National Executive mailing list which has office-bearers then gives association National Executive members according to the alphabetical order of associations.
- Sixteen Wellington Association Executive members. This was the whole Executive and they were sent a postal questionnaire.
- Seventy-two local members. Four office-bearers from every second Wellington-area playcentre were sent a postal questionnaire (total = 48 volunteers). Twenty-two volunteers from six playcentre councils were interviewed personally. The six playcentres included three in the suburbs used for the pre-school families survey; one centre using group supervision; one centre which had for years been able to obtain accommodation that would qualify it for full recognition by the Department of Education; and one centre which operated for nine half-days per week (an exceptionally high number of sessions).

The data obtained by the three sample surveys not only provided material to validate observational data, but also produced data that was useful for evaluating the organisation's performance. Records of the playcentre and

free kindergarten movements were also useful for both these purposes.

#### ANALYSIS OF ORGANISATIONAL DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

Another purpose of examining organisational records was to find out about the history of the two movements. Riley (1970) states that the most important advantage of using existing data is that:

*It affords the only means of studying certain kinds of problems. Past events can no longer be observed directly by the researcher, nor can they be reached through questioning beyond the recollection of respondents living today. Thus, the important analysis of historical situations or long-term trends depends upon the prior existence of relevant materials,*  
(Ibid, p.253)

By looking at the playcentre and kindergarten organisations' records, past and present, I have been able to perceive the patterns of social change, and the emergence of themes in their strategic choice processes over time.

Examination of existing records was undertaken in an exhaustive manner. All of the files of the Playcentre Federation and the Wellington Playcentre Association that are still in existence were read and notes taken. These files contained minutes of a variety of meetings, reports, and correspondence. In addition, all of the playcentre publications (apart from some of the child development texts recommended for trainees) and, in particular, the Playcentre Journals were examined. Where the information was inadequate on topics of special interest for this study, I supplemented the written information by informally interviewing early and present-day leaders. To gather information from the playcentre records, I visited the then Federation secretary in Auckland to read Federation files, as well as spending long hours in the following libraries: the Wellington Playcentre Association library (which keeps old Association files), the National Archives library, the General Assembly library, and the New Zealand Council for Educational Research library.

Free Kindergarten Union records are incomplete. Because one long-serving secretary became rather disorganised in her old age, minutes, reports and correspondence covering several years were not filed efficiently. In addition, during one of the changes of location of the Wellington Kindergarten Training Centre, many valuable records of both the Union and the Wellington Association were blown off the back of a truck!! However, I

read all of the Union and Wellington Free Kindergarten Association material still in existence. The Union has published fewer books and pamphlets than has the Playcentre Federation, because the adult education component of the kindergarten movement is relatively undeveloped.

To examine kindergarten records, I travelled to Rotorua to visit the then Union secretary to read Union files, and I also spent many hours reading kindergarten archive material kept at the Wellington Kindergarten Teachers College before it was integrated, and present-day material at the Wellington Association office. Some gaps were filled by having informal discussion with former national and association leaders.

As stated earlier, the gathering of historical information was only one of three purposes for searching existing records. Examination of present-day materials was more often used to validate observational data and to evaluate organisational performance. However, the historical records were most useful for gathering material which illustrates how the consequences of earlier strategic choice processes affect the alternatives open to present-day decision-makers. The two historical chapters (Chapters 5 and 6) which follow are a necessary prelude for the central chapters of the thesis concerned with detailed examinations of how strategic choice processes influence organisational and environmental variables. It is hoped that by the end of the historical chapters the thesis of this study will be emerging. Namely, that the strategic choice process is the critical variable in organisational change, and that ideology, economic resources and earlier strategies are the key factors influencing each new strategic choice process in the two pre-school organisations.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE HISTORY OF THE PLAYCENTRE\* MOVEMENT

*I have heard the playcentre described by one of your own members as a place where you 'go along with your children and grow along with them'.*

Prof. H C D Somerset, 1961 Conference

In keeping with the way organisations really function, and with the dynamic approach to the analysis of organisational change adopted for this thesis, these historical chapters have been organised chronologically, rather than thematically. I am treating the organisations as "flow systems analyzable only through time" (Sofer, 1973). A summary at the end of each chapter will attempt to draw out the thematic patterns.

In addition to building up a pattern of earlier strategic choice processes, the historical chapters provide the opportunity for the writer to describe how the playcentre movement's mode of functioning differs from that of the kindergarten movement. Only the structural differences were outlined in Chapter 1. Also, like Robert Brown (1963), I believe that historical explanation is part of every scientific explanation - be it in the field of physical, biological or social science. Therefore these historical descriptions and analyses of the two movements which follow, contain partial explanations of today's strategic choice processes. Stinchcombe (1965) contends that "organisational forms and types have a history and this history determines some aspects of the present structure of organisations of that type" (Ibid, p.153).

The next two chapters contain material which is predominantly descriptive. In this chapter I will deal with the beginnings of the playcentre movement

\* Playcentres were originally called Nursery Play Centres. In 1962 the word "Nursery" was dropped and the 1973 Conference decided to use the title "Playcentre" (as opposed to Play Centre) in an attempt to protect the title. I shall use "playcentre" throughout this manuscript unless giving a direct quote made prior to 1973.

and then describe separately the development of the Playcentre Federation and the development of the Wellington Playcentre Association. The kindergarten movement will be similarly described in the following chapter.

#### PLAYCENTRE BEGINNINGS

The playcentre movement grew from two different seedlings which were grafted together in 1948. One seedling was a course run by a new form of adult education centre. In 1938, Gwendolen and Crawford Somerset established the Fielding Community Centre for Further Education, which had the broad objective of "making a fuller life possible. (Continuing or further education) was essential to the maturing of a personality through the development of a more sensitive perception of people and events, along with a deeper understanding of one's own development" (Somerset, 1972, p.23). Gwen Somerset felt there were two 'frontiers' of education at that time - adult education and early childhood education - and believed that if parents participated in play groups then adult education could be integrated with early childhood education. Following the approaches of two mothers with 'problem' children to Gwen Somerset, the Community Centre Nursery School was established in September, 1938. It had as its primary objective: adult education. This nursery school had both a practical function and an educational function, as it provided concrete activities for mothers and children, upon which discussion could be based. The Fielding Nursery School, which changed its name to Nursery Play Centre in 1944, was also used by a class of secondary school pupils as a practical workshop for their child development course.

The other seedling grew from an idea proposed by Inge Smithells and Joan Wood (both from Wellington) soon after the outbreak of World War II. Their idea was formulated, with the help of Beatrice Beeby, into the strategy of establishing co-operative groups of mothers to run playcentres, having as their objective: giving mothers some respite from the care of young children. From the outset, mothers had the responsibility for running their own playcentres.

The first playcentre opened in April, 1941 in Karori, and a second one was opened shortly afterwards in Kelburn, both using church halls for accommodation. These and other playcentres were quickly formalized by the foundation of an Association with a Management committee in July, 1941. The Association drew up a "statement of aims that read: 'The purpose of a



Play Centre is to provide (a) leisure time for mothers, (b) opportunities for the social development of the pre-school child; these benefits should be provided by a co-operative effort on the part of mothers (i.e., by taking the responsibility of caring for the children, and by making the Play Centre self-supporting).' It was agreed that time and effort should not be wasted on the usual money-raising activities" (P.C. Journal, No. 7, 1962). Minimum attention given to this latter task is still a feature of the movement. Funds at this stage came from the New Education Fellowship, the Department of Internal Affairs and parents giving 3d per session contributions. In these early years, playcentres were established in districts where there was no other provision for pre-school education.

The grafting of the two seedlings was a gradual process. Beatrice Beeby and Gwen Somerset were friends. Beatrice Beeby, when she saw the Fielding Nursery School, exclaimed that it was a playcentre, and so its name was changed. Gwen Somerset in the mid-1940s gave occasional adult educational lectures to playcentre personnel while visiting Wellington and began instilling the philosophy of helping the child by educating the parents. The grafting process was completed when the Somersets moved to Wellington, and Gwen Somerset was appointed the first Supervisor of Training to the Wellington Association, and was elected first Federation President of the New Zealand Federation of Play Centre Associations in 1948. It is interesting to note that although Gwen Somerset also lectured at the Wellington Kindergarten Teachers' College from 1948 to 1960, this did not result in a close affiliation between the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association and the Wellington Playcentre Association.

#### HISTORY OF THE NEW ZEALAND PLAYCENTRE FEDERATION

Playcentres were opened in Christchurch in 1941 and later in other North Island towns; for example 1944 saw the first playcentre in Auckland. Rural playcentres were established in Canterbury from 1943, but other rural areas did not have playcentres until after 1950. Inge Smithells visited playcentres around New Zealand in the interests of uniformity and to discuss the possibility of a federation being formed. The drafting of the Federation Constitution was begun in 1944, and this Constitution formalized the federated structure (Sills, 1957) of the national body; such a structure being anticipated by the organisation being a voluntary one and by the constituent parts functioning before the national body existed,

although only for five years. The Playcentre Journal which documents the Federation history reports:

*The organisation of a national body so early in the history of the Play Centre movement was made for good reasons, not the least of which was that a small Government grant had been made available to Play Centres and a Federation would be necessary to receive and distribute the money. The inaugural meeting, held in Wellington in December 1946, was attended by representatives of the Auckland, Christchurch, Palmerston North and Wellington Associations. The initial £100 grant from the Education Department, the meeting decided, would be used for (1) training of supervisors, (2) subsidizing staff salaries, and (3) equipment. (P.C. Journal No. 7, 1962)*

The Constitution was approved by the four Associations and the first Annual Meeting of the Federation was held in May, 1948. When a Department of Education grant of £1000 was made, the Federation decision-makers agreed on the strategy of distributing it to the associations on a pro rata basis. Other tasks adopted by Federation members in 1948 included:

- preparing a standard list of equipment,
- preparing Federation publications.

*I Play and I Grow* (N.Z. Playcentre Federation, 1949) was adopted as the National 'book of words' and did much to help Association and Federation leaders formulate their organisational strategies as regards organisational structure, technology and allocation of resources, and their environmental strategies as regards relationships with clients, Government and other organisations. The Foreword to the 1949 Edition of *I Play and I Grow* stated:

*A Nursery Play Centre is a pre-school service which provides suitable play conditions for small groups of children of nursery age on one or two afternoons or at such other times as the local playcentre may determine.*

*A nursery play centre is also a service to mothers of pre-school children. It provides help to mothers by giving them some relief from the constant care of young children. It also provides opportunities for parents to learn more about the needs of children by asking them to take a share in the activities of the play centre by organising discussions, by showing films and by promoting in other ways the study of the life of the child.*

Also contained in the booklet were a list of standard equipment; the tasks the mothers had to perform in order that a playcentre function; the structure and tasks of Associations and Federation; and statement about methods for the children's sessions: "The methods practised in nursery play centres are similar to those used in modern kindergartens" (*I Play and I Grow*, 1949: Foreword). At that time the programme for children in both services was fairly 'structured'. Auckland Association records the first free play session occurring there in 1951, and a later edition of *I Play and I Grow* (1970) says that as playcentres developed, "free, spontaneous play was substituted for more formal routines" (p.39).

It is interesting to note that at this stage, 1949, playcentre personnel saw their movements as having the same aims as the free kindergarten movement, and envisaged that "where numbers warrant, and finance and a site are available, a playcentre may develop into a free kindergarten" (*I Play and I Grow*, 1949); and "the converting of some playcentres to kindergartens might be regarded as a natural growth of a play centre" (NZPCF Ann. Rpt., 1949). In 1950, apparently, "there was still no recognition of the indivisibility of a Play Centre and parent education as we accept it now" (P.C. Journal, No. 7, 1962). Publications such as the Federation Newsletter and *I Play and I Grow* pointed out the relationship, but the practise of this ideology was not instituted except around Wellington where Gwen Somerset was able to help centre personnel with parent education programmes.

Parents from each playcentre training to be supervisors for that centre is the strategy which identifies the New Zealand playcentre movement as unique in the world, even amongst other early childhood services which share the ideology of parents co-operating to provide a pre-school service. In 1946, the supply of kindergarten teachers willing to supervise in afternoon playcentre sessions ran short; and when Government agreed to pay kindergarten teachers' salaries in 1948 on the condition that free kindergartens had afternoon sessions and did afternoon parent work, this source of teacher resources to playcentres dried up. For further information, see Chapter 6. All associations decided to train parents for the task of supervising; thus deciding that playcentre was to remain separate from the kindergarten movement. Out of this event (externally stimulated) grew the practice of parents being supervisors based on the ideological belief "in parents as the best educators of their own children" (P.C. Journal, No. 18, 1970).

The strategy of obligatory introductory talks for new members, first raised in 1954 and adopted at the 1960 Federation conference after much debate, did much to strengthen the unique identity of the playcentre movement. The ideology of parent involvement, took on an additional depth of meaning. There are only two obligatory facets of the parent education programme: parent helping, which is recognised as having an educational function, and the introductory talks. Other parent education activities are voluntary, but they also function to enrich parenthood and improve the effectiveness of the parent helping in children's sessions; with the latent function of deepening parental involvement in the organisation.

The literature about early childhood education has only recently come to endorse Gwen Somerset's philosophy that little can be done for the young child unless it is done with his parents. Because of the education/training service offered to parents, the playcentre movement must be regarded as a dual service having two principal tasks - adult education, and early childhood education.

These tasks are inextricably intertwined, which involved members recognise and reiterate in their publications; for example, in the Foreword to most Playcentre Journals there is a statement to this effect:

*If you want to participate in your child's education, if you want to learn as he learns, if you want to watch him develop and help him by knowing how to help him learn and grow effectively - Playcentre is for you. (P.C. Journal, No. 30, 1974, p.2)*

Individuals and groups in the environment, do not appear to appreciate the interaction between the two forms of education so well. This is illustrated by some of the ways Government assistance is given to the playcentre movement. For example, since 1973 the grants given to associations are adequate if they were only for administration costs, but they are inadequate when it is realised that associations finance the training and parent education programmes. Another example is the lack of provision of space for parent education activities in the playcentre building code drawn up by Departmental officers.

Overseas research, however, is supporting this ideology. Gray (1974) reporting on the Early Training Project in the U.S.A., a programme for young children which involved the mothers as active participants in their children's early childhood education, comments on the 'vertical diffusion'

effects on the siblings of the experimental children. Gray concludes that a small amount of intervention, in terms of the proportion of time spent at the programme in relation to waking hours, could not have a lasting effect unless programme experiences were reinforced by home and appropriate schooling experiences. Gray, like Somerset, believes that there is an interplay between the child, his home and his pre-school; and an effective programme for the children must involve all three working together. The playcentre philosophy is "children and parents living and learning alongside, is a sound basis on which to build educational practice, as well as to provide a rich family life" (*I Play and I Grow*, 1970, p.40).

The 1949 Federation conference discussed the drawing up of basic principles and a common syllabus for the training of supervisors but decided to defer such action. The question of a standard training scheme for all associations has been a perennial issue since that date; for example, Lex Grey, the other leading figure in the history of the playcentre movement, moved that the Dominion Advisor co-ordinate standards of training. This was defeated when put to the vote. Successive dominant coalitions of the Federation have doggedly reinforced the decision to allow "Associations to meet the problems peculiar to their areas in their own style, (as) this keeps individuality alive and enhances the variety and depth of experience in the Federation as a whole" (P.C. Journal, No. 18, 1970) both for administrative and parent education/training tasks. A common base was arrived at in 1961 when national minimum standards of training were introduced, and in 1966 Federation did begin issuing National Supervisors Certificates.

1950 saw a new association, Dunedin, formed and a change in the relationship between the movement and the Department of Education as funding agency. From 1951, grants were made to individual playcentres on a per term basis (with a maximum of three sessions per week permitted) for their maintenance once they were 'recognised' by the Department of Education, and providing they maintained the minimum standard list of equipment. New playcentres could also receive a one-off establishment grant. Thus, Government now dealt directly with associations and playcentres and these latter two groups had complete autonomy over the way they spent their funds. The leaders of the movement were, by 1951, aware that the function of playcentres for mothers was just as much educational as it was social: "constant direction is necessary in case Nursery Play Centres deteriorate into mere

'minding places' where children are kept clean and secure ... we have an educational aim as well as a social function" (NZPCF Ann. Rpt., 1950).

Eighty-two playcentres existed in New Zealand by the 1953 conference. The increase in scale effected several long-standing strategic choices:

1. The rotation of Federation officers and the Federation centre every few years was started;
2. The formation of a Standing Committee was proposed; and
3. The creation of the position of Dominion Advisor occurred - Gwen Somerset was asked to fill the position.

In the early 1950s, the Federation dominant coalition wondered if playcentres tended to cater for a particular sub-group in the population. Trainee supervisors tended to be 'thoughtful', 'ex-student mothers' and the movement seemed to "apply more to the thinking parent who could take their part in discussions and in the work of centres" (NZPCF Ann. Mtg. Mins., 1954). Leaders ever since have wondered whether the education programme for adults results in the exclusion of families with a real need.

The mid-1950s was also the time when the Federation members of the playcentre movement gave thought to their interrelations with the kindergarten movement. Miss Gallagher, the Department of Education's Pre-school Advisor, informed the 1954 Federation conference that playcentres must define the relationship. She pointed out that the form of Government grants and the decisions about allocation of funds would influence the organisation itself and also the relationship between Government and the playcentre organisation. Mr Ball from the Department of Education was interested to know whether playcentres and free kindergartens would overlap or complement one another. He indicated that the Department would like to see facilities such as training centres shared by both services. These questions, raised by an outside organisation, stimulated the establishment of a Policy sub-committee of Federation, and stimulated attempts to have informal meetings with Free Kindergarten Union members. These attempts continued for many years before Pre-school Associations eventuated in 1963.

The playcentre Association and Federation leaders chose not to use kindergarten facilities but to share Regional Council of Adult Education and W.E.A. facilities which were open to all parents, not just those wishing to supervise, as would have been kindergarten facilities; possibly because



of early links with Adult Education (later University Extension) personnel such as Lex Grey and Doreen Dolton. Playcentre now aimed to provide an alternative service to the free kindergarten service, not to complement it.

From the late 1950s, systems-maintenance of the organisation was of central concern. "The tradition of parent responsibility in playcentre is one that has to be built into the fabric of the movement from year to year. It is never done once and for all" (Dom. Adviser's Rpt., 1961). Leadership mechanisms to maintain parent participation were discussed frequently; varying authority structures were tried in different associations; and proposals for professional (paid) leaders were raised on several occasions. With the growth in the movement and in particular in the number of rural centres, Federation and association leaders faced problems in keeping in contact with playcentres regarding administrative and training matters; and with helping them maintain a true parent co-operative.

Mechanisms to maintain parent participation included: having parent councils rather than a committee to run playcentres; keeping playcentres relaxed and welcoming so that everyone feels that the playcentre is run by the parents - not for the parents. The authority structures of associations were altered both to promote leaders and to maintain contact between leaders and playcentre parents. Some associations divided themselves horizontally by adding a new level of Zone Advisors (called Liaison Officers in some associations); and some associations divided themselves vertically into Branches or sub-associations.

The debate about professional leaders is still continuing. (See P.C. Journal No. 35, 1975). The arguments against permanent paid leaders are that it could mean parents lose control of the decision-making, and parents may lose the feeling that playcentre "is a place of their own where they can come and go freely and where they can talk to other parents" (NZPCF Ann. Conf. Mins., 1961), which may in turn lead to the loss of effective parent education. The arguments for permanent leaders are that the movement loses excellent people too rapidly because the demands, in terms of time, energy and expense, are too great a burden for voluntary workers to carry, and that with New Zealand families growing smaller and more women returning to work, the movement may not be able to produce enough voluntary leaders unless there is some financial reward. Most proposals for paid leaders envisage playcentre personnel being paid by Government, but employed by the voluntary organisation.



The concern with systems-maintenance and the growth in size of the movement resulted in the formation of a National Executive in the mid-1960s. Neither Standing Committee nor the then Policy Committee had the constitutional right to make policy decisions until they had consulted all associations. Neither of these groups had a representative structure, so full understanding and knowledge of issues did not always occur - be it a national or an association issue. It was agreed policy-making power was to remain with conference, because "negotiation conducted on behalf of the Federation constituent associations must be conducted with their full knowledge and their full concurrence"\*, but National Executive was accorded powers to implement Federation policy and act on Federation's behalf. Some lesser policy decisions are handled at National Executive meetings.

1961 brought an increased Government maintenance grant - half of which went to playcentres and half went to the associations for training, visiting, producing educational materials and helping new playcentres. This swung the emphasis of the Government-playcentre relationship away from equipment and towards training in line with the concern felt by Federation.

In the same year the Maori Education Foundation (MEF) was set up and the Federation conference that year agreed to contact this organisation and offer to co-operate with other interested groups to provide early childhood education for Maori children and parent education for Maori parents. Moira Gallagher said later that the playcentre movement "needed no second telling [regarding Maori early childhood education] - they just got going" (NZPCF Ann. Conf. Mins., 1963). Requests were made for resources (funds and an adviser) from the Maori Education Foundation to help with this work. Lex Grey, by then very heavily involved in the Auckland Playcentre Association, was appointed M.E.F. Pre-school Officer. However, the movement still felt considerable strain in communicating with centres because of the rapid increase in rural playcentres and the need to provide training for supervisors in remote areas.

About the same time the Standing Committee became aware that playcentre personnel were tending to think that playcentre was a Government service

\* From "Urgently Needed: A National Executive", a Wellington Playcentre Association circular.

and that Government would pay for everything. Such an awareness led to the decision to levy playcentres for Federation finance, rather than asking Government to pay. Funds which did not have accountability problems, came from Golden Kiwi lottery grants, made first in 1963. Government and the playcentre movement were bound tighter together by legislation in 1964 which gave the Department of Education the responsibility for pre-school education. That year the issue of being accountable to Government was raised by a Department of Education officer for the first time. Playcentre members felt that it was an association task to watch standards, not a Departmental one. However, the basis for the playcentres being exempt from Child Care Regulations lay with the Department of Education being responsible for playcentres; so Federation and Departmental officers had consultations in 1965 to jointly draft standards for establishing and operating playcentres. The tension between Government and a faction in the movement is illustrated by the conference remit that Government control be limited to that which existed in 1966. Other Federation members felt that the best approach would be to try and improve communication.

The form of the Government grant was changed yet again in 1966. Centres received a per session grant, while associations received an annual grant based on the number of playcentres they served. The setting up grant remained, but was increased. In 1965 the Federation conference elected a man as President - a useful tactic to encourage greater father involvement - but it had the consequence of breaking the pattern of moving the Federation centre every few years. After that date, a succession of Auckland fathers became Federation President, and Federation has only moved away from Auckland in 1976. The strategy of having a National Headquarters was mooted in 1967 and 1969, but it was not agreed to. Instead conference elected some Standing Committee members from outside the city in which Federation officers resided.

A systems-maintenance problem of maintaining and improving supervision standards resulted in the formation of a Federation Education Sub-committee in 1968 - thus creating a dual elite in the Federation with an administrative dominant coalition and an education dominant coalition. The latter group's tasks were to co-ordinate and advise, not to control training.

The case to Government for finance for Liaison Officers, which is still under discussion in 1976, was being framed at this time also. The

kindergarten movement leaders, who also felt the need for pre-school liaison officers (but called Supervising Head Teachers), issued a joint policy statement with Federation personnel in 1968 to the effect that New Zealand should be divided into areas and each area should have liaison officers which work in close co-operation. Playcentre and kindergarten leaders felt they needed to co-operate more to ensure maximum growth and when dealing with Government. The Government answered the early Federation case for liaison officers by saying that it was not prepared to set a precedent by allowing a voluntary organisation to employ officers who are paid by a Government grant\*. Each presentation of the case for liaison (now termed 'training') officers has become more flexible, but has still met with no success; however, a more general training grant was agreed to in 1977.

In 1970 the Federation Standing Committee's energy was devoted to preparing submissions for the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education for circulation for association approval, and in 1971-2 for reacting to the Hill Report. The main criticism from playcentre members was that the Committee did not include parent education in its frame of reference.

There was a direct conflict between Federation and Government in 1971 when Federation conference refused to supply a priority list for new playcentres, because Federation members did not want buildings and neither did they have any procedures worked out to ascertain greatest needs in a reasonably democratic manner. After 1961 when sites became 'pre-school' sites, not just kindergarten sites, cases for building aid were made; Federation interest in buildings had waned as they witnessed playcentre parent education/training programmes suffer when a playcentre worked towards having its own building.

Building subsidies were given by Government in the 1970s following a Hill Report recommendation, and the Federation's National Executive have been trying to dampen local playcentre interest in buildings ever since, without too much success.

At the 1976 conference, having a priority list for playcentre buildings was passed because the recession in New Zealand means that only about one-third of the playcentre subsidy applications will be approved, so procedures for deciding upon priorities are now deemed necessary.

\* Government would not be setting a precedent however, because the kindergarten organisation and Marriage Guidance Council already employ officers who have their salaries paid by Government grant.

Many hours of Federation and Association leaders' time is now spent on tasks related to playcentre buildings. It is ironic that the present case to Government is for liaison officers to relieve pressure on the leadership, and what was granted was building subsidies which have increased the pressure on leaders; and the 1973 increase in the maintenance grant discriminated against the associations in favour of the local centres, so that associations had less finance for liaison work.

The Labour Government, in power from 1972 to 1975, appeared to adopt the Hill Report as their pre-school education manifesto, as most of the recommendations have been implemented in the past few years. Federation officers have been increasingly involved in relating to Government; indirectly on new committees such as the National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education; and directly to facilitate the implementation of the recommendations in a manner which does not erode parental involvement too much - a difficulty, because the Hill committee placed parent education outside its terms of reference. Fortunately, Government has not adopted the recommendation of payment by results; that is, payment to those centres which meet certain criteria and fulfil their objectives. Coltham (1972), examining the consequences of payment by results in England, argues that such schemes narrow the goals, and that financial rather than educational considerations shape allocations of time, energy and money. There have been an increasing number of comments by Department of Education personnel about needing to supervise taxpayers' money. This issue of accountability to Government has given rise to feelings that the essence of playcentre is being threatened. The ideology is that of parents running playcentres and therefore playcentre personnel feel that the people whom the organisation must be accountable to, are the parents in each co-operative centre. This is in line with the definition of a playcentre as a:

*pre-school centre, where parents are prepared to co-operate, to become informed and sufficiently involved to shape up an environment where (small groups of) children are provided with the means for sensory-motor experiences, intellectual stimulation, creative expression, and social and emotional competence.*  
(*I Play and I Grow*, 1970, p.35)

#### HISTORY OF THE WELLINGTON PLAYCENTRE ASSOCIATION

In many ways the history of the Wellington Association foreshadows and shadows the Federation history. Because the Wellington Association pre-

ceded the founding of the Federation and because the playcentre organisation is relatively decentralized, the Association has the power to make a wide range of decisions and the playcentres within the Association have considerable autonomy when compared with free kindergartens.

Features of the whole movement are to be found in the beginnings of the Wellington Association. The statement of aims drawn up by the Association's Management Committee in 1941 were adopted by all associations. It is interesting to note the change in aims through the years. The earliest Wellington Association Constitution I could find, written about the early 1950s, stated the objects as:

- (a) *The providing of means for satisfactory play experience of pre-school children.*
- (b) *The fostering of better parent-child relationships in the home, and for this purpose to organise meetings, discussions, lectures and film evenings.*
- (c) *The forming of Nursery Play Centres and providing and employing of adequately skilled persons as supervisors of such Play Centres.*
- (d) *To help mothers of pre-school children by providing some means whereby young children may play together under trained supervisors for short periods.*

The next Constitution written between 1959 and 1962 when there were two branches, had added a new object to those recorded above. The Constitution which was ratified in the early 1960s had changed the emphasis of the aims quite considerably to:

- (a) *To foster good parent/child relationships in the home, and for this purpose to organise meetings, discussions, lectures, film evenings and education programmes.*
- (b) *To help families by providing means for the satisfactory play experiences of pre-school children under trained supervision.*
- (c) *To achieve the above by the formation of Play Centres and the provision and employment of suitable persons as supervisors of play sessions.*
- (d) *To maintain the Association Council as an Executive body.*
- (e) *To operate a supervisor training programme.*

Responsibility for the establishing and functioning of playcentres had moved from the Association to groups of parents in the 1973 Constitution as can be seen by the addition of the object "To encourage full parent

participation and responsibility in the setting up and conducting of playcentres". The concept of accountability had also been introduced in the 1973 Constitution with the new object: "To maintain standards as agreed upon by the N.Z. Playcentre Federation and Department of Education".

Initial emphasis was on using halls, so that groups could be started quickly. Mothers and children met together - the children played with a good range of equipment while the mothers helped or relaxed. As early as 1943 an 'Organiser' was appointed by the Central Committee to keep in contact with playcentres.

When the supply of kindergarten teachers able to supervise in playcentres (which operated in the afternoons) ran short in 1946, the Association planned its own training course, comprising practical work in playcentres, observations and six lectures. The training course for supervisors was extended to 20 lectures in 1949; half of which dealt with playcentre aims and methods; and half of which were on 'Healthy Emotional Development' - the latter being given by Lex Grey, then an Adult Education lecturer. The relationship with the Adult Education Department (later called University Extension) has been of great importance to the Wellington Association. In most other localities the bond between the playcentre organisation and the University Extension Department is not so strong and helpful.

By the end of 1949 all the foundation members of the Association had moved out of the organisation and Gwen Somerset had been co-opted onto the Central Committee. The new committee decided to spend the first Department of Education grant on equipment - blocks and creative materials.

The Association Executive, in the years following the introduction of training, came to realise that the playcentre movement ought to aim to be more than a minding place. They decided to publish pamphlets explaining the 'playcentre view' to parents, and in 1951 the first introductory pamphlets were produced - a strategy which other associations have adopted or borrowed. 1952 saw the addition of practical assignments to the theory part of the course, and the introduction of parent education tutorial and discussion sessions. Playcentre supervisors completing these early courses generally gave many years of service.

Communication between playcentres and the Association Executive became more difficult as the number of playcentres increased. A strategy of electing



Zone advisors (later called Liaison Officers) was implemented in 1953 to give advice and support to local centres. These advisors had between one and four centres in their care.

Standards of supervision were of central concern in the mid-1950s and this led the Wellington Association (foreshadowing the later Federation decision) to making Introductory Talks obligatory in 1954. 1955 has been described (P.C. Journal, No. 7, 1962) as a peak year for parent involvement and interest. Two additions were made to the parent education/training - a correspondence course and an advanced course were begun by the Association. A further innovation occurred in 1957 when the Regional Council for Adult Education sponsored a weekend workshop for Association Education Officers.

Supervisors banded together in 1959 to establish a Supervisors' Association, primarily to facilitate visits between centres. This group still exists today, with only a minority of supervisors participating. It functions to give supervisors a chance to meet together, to provide refresher courses and to ensure that a practising supervisor attends Executive meetings.

With continuing growth in the number of playcentres, the Executive decided in 1959 after much discussion with centres, to alter the Association structure, and form two fairly autonomous branches: Hutt and Wellington. The Annual Report that year said that "it is hoped branches will be able to re-establish a more democratic framework, retaining the voluntary basis without overburdening particular individuals" (WPCA Ann. Rpt., 1959).

In 1962, the Association attempted to streamline this structure when Branch officers also took on Association offices to avoid duplication of effort; but late in 1963 the leaders decided that the administration was still too clumsy and two separate associations were formed. Concern for the volunteers carrying heavy work-loads led the Association to request that the Regional Council for Adult Education pay tutors to do playcentre work in 1959. This request was not acceded to. The rate of turnover of staff had increased. Length of service, by then, averaged one or two years, which added burdens to those members responsible for parent education/training. The turnover was, however, encouraged by the leaders who believed that there would be dangers in having permanent supervisors: "the balance of power may be tilted in favour of supervisors to the detriment of ... parent participation" (Ibid). Such turnover did create



systems-maintenance problems:

*... the wheel may turn and still be forever still.*  
(T S Eliot)

The Winter courses for parent education as opposed to supervisor training, were firmly established by the early 1960s and covered a wide range of topics; for example, craft, health, civics, education and psychology. Many other new tasks were taken on by the Association members in the early 1960s. In 1962 two new sub-committees, publications and research, were formed. In 1963 a parents' library was established; and by 1964 several Wellington centres were building their own accommodation, ownership of which was vested in the Association. Dr Katherine Whiteside-Taylor from the United States visited New Zealand in 1964 and introduced an experimental form of parent education/training - mothers observed their children, had discussions about the observations, then wrote up a notebook. A modified form of this method of parent education is still in use for the Wellington Playcentre Association's Helpers' Certificate.

Most playcentres are established after a group of parents take the initiative to band together and form a group which asks for affiliation with the Association. However, in the last decade some other groups have taken the initiative to establish playcentres for families, particularly in Porirua. Cannons Creek playcentre was established through the initiative of the Baptist Church in the district, and Owen Ward playcentre through the initiative of a local headmaster and the Department of Education.

Some thought was given to extending the number of playcentre sessions in 1967, but the ideology that playcentre is an extension of the home was used to rationalize the Association decision that a 5-day week was not an acceptable strategy. I suspect that it was also not a feasible strategy in practical terms because of a shortage of human resources. Experienced supervisors were becoming Liaison Officers and these people visited centres. The President was less able to visit frequently the ever-increasing number of playcentres. With more centres, Council meeting agendas were filled with business matters and there was no longer time for speakers or films. Administration and education tasks were separated now at Council meetings, which perhaps caused the lower attendances. The President in 1968 was concerned about the inadequate representation of playcentres at Council meetings, particularly as they were the policy-making meetings. This

concern still persists.

In 1969, the Association structure was changed yet again. The Nelson playcentres formed themselves into a separate association; and the remaining playcentres were grouped into six zones. These zones were formalized in 1971 by changing the Constitution to give each zone a representative on the Executive. It was also agreed in 1969 to form a training team rather than relying on a Parent Education Officer and a Director of Training to organise the parent education/training courses. These changes had the effect of creating a dual elite and expanding the numbers in each of these elites.

Staffing became less of a problem in the early 1970s with most centres being able to find a supervisor from their own group. More autonomy was given to playcentres in Wellington to find their own staff than happens in some other associations where the Training personnel play a greater part in organising staff. The Wellington Training Team retained the right to veto local centre suggestions for supervision arrangements if they found them not up to standard when this greater autonomy was given with the 1973 revision of the Constitution. With more parents doing the Helpers' Certificate, it was decided to discontinue the compulsory Winter courses. Some involved members later felt this was an unwise move because it tended to narrow the scope of parent education to child development topics and possibly therefore appealed to a more limited group of parents.

The buildings issue began to rear its head in the early 1970s and has taken up an increasing amount of the Association Executive members' time ever since. Because local centres see buildings as a desirable goal, the allocation of time Association personnel have to give to tasks related to playcentre buildings is beginning to look like the allocation of time Wellington Free Kindergarten Association Executive members devote to kindergarten buildings tasks.

#### CONCLUSIONS

Looking back over the years since the Wellington Playcentre Association was formed and the Playcentre Federation constituted, a number of key themes can be identified. These included:

1. The development of an identity which distinguished the playcentre organisation from the kindergarten organisation. This identity was largely the result of the ideological belief that early childhood

education can be most effective when the parent and child learn together. It took a number of years for this ideology to crystallize, and during those years it was sometimes difficult to distinguish playcentres from kindergartens. When Gwen Somerset moved to Wellington and took on leadership positions in both Federation and the Association, the parent education function became an established feature of playcentres.

Two strategic choices in the first decade of the playcentre movement grew out of the basic approach of parents co-operatively providing opportunities for their children to play together, and gave the ideology a pragmatic turn. The first was the strategy of making introductory talks obligatory, and the second and most critical strategy was the training of parents as supervisors. From then on, parents participated in administrative and educational tasks.

2. The preservation of that identity based on the ideological belief in democratic functioning whereby parents participate in all aspects of playcentre work. Playcentre leaders were very critical of the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education because it did not examine parental involvement which led to some recommendations threatening the level of parental involvement. Similarly, playcentre leaders have been wary of approaching Government for funds because they believe grants may be accompanied by Regulations which would lessen parents' rights to make decisions that suit their playcentre. Thus the organisation's economic policy is linked to its ideology.
3. Playcentre leaders chose not to share training facilities with kindergarten trainees, but to develop autonomous schemes in each association. This strategic choice was part of the development of a separate identity and strengthened the adult education component of the playcentre organisation. By using Adult Education facilities, the playcentre leaders encouraged parents not only to train supervisors but also to attend a wide variety of adult education courses. It also ensured that decision-making about training programmes was kept within the playcentre organisation. This strategic choice meant that training funding was less likely to be a separate grant.
4. Growth in size led the playcentre dominant coalitions to make decisions

regarding different structures to cope with the greater work loads and to improve deteriorating communication particularly with remote playcentres. In keeping with the ideology of parental involvement in decision-making, no one structural pattern emerged - different associations decided upon different structures. However, all of the structures resulted in the dominant coalitions expanding in size, both at Association and Federation levels.

It can be seen from the above summary that ideology and earlier strategic choices are influential factors on later strategic choices made by playcentre leaders. The structure and functioning of the kindergarten movement is considerably different from that of the playcentre movement, and the next chapter examines how decisions and events in the history of the kindergarten movement led to these present-day differences. As will be seen, funds - the amounts, reasons for, and timing of Government grants - has been the major influence on the development of the kindergarten movement. The crucial strategic choices have been those where more Government funds were accepted.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE HISTORY OF THE FREE KINDERGARTEN MOVEMENT

*The story of how the attitude of the community towards pre-school education has been gradually transformed, is in itself the history of the free kindergarten movement.*

Simpson, 1970

The free kindergarten organisation has a far more complex structure than the playcentre movement. Instead of a simple three-level hierarchy coping with all tasks, as is found in the playcentre organisation, there are several social systems which cope with the different tasks involved in providing kindergarten education. Each of these systems interacts with the others, but, because they have distinctive tasks and ways of allocating resources, communication can become a problem. I believe that a history of the kindergarten movement needs to examine not only the changing community attitudes towards pre-school education but also needs to examine the decisions which led to the fragmentation (specialization) of this service organisation into several social systems. Before describing the beginnings of the movement, an outline of the present organisation would be useful, expanding on the brief structural description given in Chapter 1.

There are four systems:

1. The system which is under study in this thesis is the voluntary administrative system which has four levels - local committees, associations, wards and a national body known as the Free Kindergarten Union. The voluntary organisation employs kindergarten teachers and looks after the administrative and growth tasks.
2. In 1975, the Government took over all kindergarten training units - the second social system. Although the Free Kindergarten Union and the New Zealand Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association have a representative on the Early Childhood Advisory Committee for each Teachers' College Council, the training of kindergarten teachers is now the prime responsibility of Teachers' Colleges Council and Staff and appropriate officers of the Department of Education. There is no body which affiliates all the Early Childhood Units. Without

there being a direct relationship, the recent emergence of the new training system has occurred at the same time as the apparent dying of the mothers' club system in urban centres.

3. The third system is the teachers' union, established in 1952 and recognised by Government as a service organisation in 1958. It is known as the Free Kindergarten Teachers' Association (K.T.A.) and has two levels: branches at local level and the national body (N.Z.F.K.T.A.). Although kindergarten teachers are employed by the voluntary organisation, the salaries are paid by Government, so the K.T.A., in attempting to look after its members, is often in the position of having to negotiate with both Government and the Union.
4. The fourth social system is that of the mothers' clubs. In earlier years, each kindergarten had a Mothers' Club responsible for social and educational activities for mothers. These Mothers' Clubs sent representatives to a federated group known as the United Mothers' Club in each association. In urban areas, it has been difficult to maintain mothers' interest in these dominantly expressive groups (Gordon & Babchuk, 1959) and the local committees have had to take over both instrumental and expressive functions, when Mothers' Clubs have died.

#### FREE KINDERGARTEN BEGINNINGS

Two ministers of religion and a newspaper editor played very important roles in the founding of the first 'public kindergarten' in New Zealand, in Dunedin in 1889. The Rev. Dr. Rutherford Waddell was concerned about the number of "little ragged, unkempt, barefooted children" (Simpson, 1970, p.7) he saw on the streets of Dunedin. He discussed the situation and his idea for a kindergarten with a Mr Mark Cohen, editor of the *Evening Star*. His idea was that such children should be gathered in his Church hall and some young women with "time on their hands" could do some "Christian work" by "entertaining the children" (Ibid). He wondered whether such a gathering should give some pre-school training. After consulting Mr Cohen who advised an educational component to the gathering of children, then securing the interest of Mrs Reynolds, the Rev. Dr. Waddell became persuaded that they should try and get a trained teacher and start a kindergarten. By this time a committee had been formed and when Waddell had visited a trained teacher in Christchurch - "one who was interested more perhaps in the mission than the educational side of the work" (Ibid) - this committee agreed that a Miss Wienicke should be asked to work in the

first free kindergarten in Dunedin. Miss Wienicke agreed, on condition that she should be allowed to teach Christianity. She recalled that she started work in the middle of June 1889, about three months after a public meeting, addressed by Bishop Sutor of Nelson, had been held to form a 'public kindergarten'. It has since been commented that Bishop Sutor had a profound understanding of what a kindergarten could mean, particularly when he emphasized that children were individuals and should never "be dealt with as a collection" (Lockhart, 1975, p.4).

This, then, was how the free kindergarten movement was founded in New Zealand. However, kindergarten methods had been used in schools prior to this date. For example, for 2 to 3 years prior to the 1890 education cuts, a Froebel trained teacher worked as a kindergarten mistress in the Canterbury Normal School, and Miss Wienicke had a "sort of kindergarten in a small way at Papanui, Christchurch" (Ibid) prior to becoming the teacher at the Dunedin Free Kindergarten.

In 1906, the first Wellington free kindergarten was opened; the Auckland Association was formed late in 1908; and Christchurch did not establish its 'Creche and Kindergarten Association' until 1911. There appeared to be a discrepancy in the records about establishment dates when one reads that in 1904 the Government made its first grant of £500 to free kindergartens which was divided between Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin. The Christchurch history (Lockhart, 1975) provides a clue to this mystery when it states that the Children's Aid Society in Canterbury applied for part of this grant. Obviously, kindergartens existed but they were not regarded as free kindergartens by the movement until free kindergarten associations had been established. The Children's Aid Society kindergartens became 'free kindergartens' in 1911. Early in the history of the movement, members saw the strategy of accommodating kindergartens in their own buildings as desirable. Auckland was the first association to erect a permanent building in 1910; Christchurch and Dunedin opened their first own buildings in 1911 and 1913 respectively; and Wellington moved the Taranaki Street kindergarten into a purpose-built building in 1917.

Unlike the playcentre movement, the early kindergarten leaders did not feel the need to establish a national body to accept and distribute Government grants. Twenty-two years elapsed between receiving the first



grant and the formation of the Union. In 1909 the Government 'recognised' the kindergarten movement by instituting regular funding of £1 for £1 subsidy on moneys collected by associations, and agreed to inspect kindergartens. The form of the grant was added to in 1914 by a capitation grant of £2 per head, based on the average attendance of children. This capitation grant had the consequence that early dominant coalitions worried about attendance (which was far less predictable in those days), and about the health of the children more than they did in later years.

If grants were given without a national body being in existence, why was the Free Kindergarten Union formed?

#### HISTORY OF THE FREE KINDERGARTEN UNION

The reasons behind the formation of the Union have been scantily spelled out in the kindergarten publications. An early Union publication gave training needs as the impetus behind the re-formation of the Union in 1926. The Montessori influence felt in the 1920s brought about an increased awareness of the importance of training and it was felt a Union would promote a common ideal and uniform training methods. Simpson (1970) said that kindergarten members "felt the need for mutual consultation and assistance" (p.17). An early Union Constitution, not dated but probably passed about 1928, states that the objects of the Union were to co-ordinate associations; to promote the establishment of associations (this approach to expansion had important consequences later); and to make provision for training teachers. It seems that the main reasons for the formation of the Union are contained in these objects.

Simpson (1970) records the early events in the establishment of the Union thus:

*In 1912 delegates from the four main centres met to consider forming a national organisation. In 1913 a second meeting was held and a national association formed. Because war broke out in 1914, it was 1920 before another conference met in Wellington. There seems to have been little more consultation on a national scale until 1926 when, at a meeting in Wellington, the Free Kindergarten Union was revived. Delegates from five associations: Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill, decided that membership of the Union should be open to all associations receiving Government recognition and that conference should be held biennially. A standing committee representing associations was set up. (p.17)*

Lady Sidey, of Dunedin, was elected as President of the Union. Thus she began her long association with the Union, setting a pattern of Presidential long-service which has continued throughout the Union's history.

The feelings about the importance of training were expressed in the agreement to have refresher courses for Trainers in the intervening years between Union conferences. The four original associations had begun training before the Union was established:

1. In Auckland in 1910, although some students had begun training in 1908 by attending lectures at the Training College and the Technical School and doing practical work in private kindergartens.
2. In Wellington in 1911, although some students had worked with the kindergarten teachers since 1906.
3. In Christchurch in 1911.
4. In Dunedin, no date is recorded, but it seems to be about 1911-1912.

The first students paid to train and spent the mornings working in kindergartens and attended lectures in the afternoons. The training personnel in the early years comprised a Trainer (later called Principal) for each Training Centre and part-time lecturers. Each centre had its own examinations and standards of work, and each awarded its own certificate until 1950 when the first Diplomas from the Union were issued. Commonalities in training programmes were attained via the biennial Principals' conference which usually included discussions on curricula. A Principals' Report was given to each Union conference, and was an important part of the conferences because the Principals were not only responsible for the theoretical courses for students but also for the practical work in the kindergartens, and the Union deemed itself responsible for kindergarten standards.

Owing to the loss of Union records, little is known about the Union's activities between 1926 and approximately 1945. If an archivist were to organise a trunk-full of jumbled letters and papers belonging to the then Union secretary, many more historical details might become available. New associations became affiliated to the Union when they adopted a Constitution approved by the Union and became an incorporated society. Hamilton, the sixth association, was established in 1920 and it started its own training scheme. However, this association survived only three years. No other association appears to have attempted to take on train-

ing tasks. The four training centres remained the sole administrative and financial responsibility of the four main city associations, until the 1961 Union conference decided that all associations should share in the cost of administering training. During those 20 years, about which no kindergarten records remain, it would appear that the movement expanded slowly. The Department of Education Annual Reports (E.1) record an increase of about ten kindergartens between 1930-40, and by the end of World War II, there were still only forty-five kindergartens. The Union "continued to co-ordinate the work of its members and to uphold high standards of teacher training and kindergarten practice" (Lockhart, 1975, p.6). The Union also had the function of negotiating with Government for teachers' salaries (Government sponsored since 1948) and student allowances (first granted in 1941) until the N.Z.F.K.T.A. was recognised in 1958. The Union structure apparently changed sometime in those years to include some training association representatives and some non-training association representatives on the Executive.

Late in the second world war, two related events in the environment occurred which resulted in considerable change in the Union. An internal event, the succession of new leaders, allowed such change to affect the kindergarten organisation. The first external event was the growth in demand for kindergarten education from parents; the second was the setting up of a Government Consultative Committee on Pre-school Education in 1945. The growth in demand for pre-school education during and after the war, did not just occur in New Zealand. Tessa Blackstone (1971) describes and analyses a similar spurt of interest in England and Wales. Social and economic changes during the war appeared to create a dissatisfaction with the family's role and individuals began to look to educational institutions to take over some socialization tasks. The middle classes began to show interest in pre-school education in large numbers. This increase in demand came at a time in New Zealand when there was a Labour Government in power sympathetic to spending money on pre-school services.

Shortly before the Report of the Consultative Committee on Pre-school Educational Services (1947) was published, a Supervisor of Pre-school Services had been appointed to the Department of Education staff. The Consultative Committee had been asked to pay particular attention to the financing and control of pre-school services and to the training of personnel. Their main recommendations were that pre-school services

should be extended as rapidly as possible; that the State should be responsible for providing pre-school education for those who wish to use it; and that this should be implemented gradually over a five-year period, concentrating initially on training enough teachers to inaugurate the State system. Although a State 'take-over' has never taken place, there was a major change in funding policies in 1948. 'Integration' was averted by two changes of Government in 1948 and 1951, and the whole education system being stretched to its limits in the early 1950s with 'baby boom' children.

In 1948 the long-standing policy of giving capitation grants on attendance figures was replaced by Government paying teachers' salaries. This strategy relieved volunteers of some fund-raising and made salaries uniform throughout New Zealand. Voluntary funds could then all be devoted to buildings and equipment. The subsidies were also raised from £1 for £1, to £2 for £1, and student allowances were increased. The 1949 E1 Report said that these changes were to place associations in a stronger position to expand services. The other conditions attached to the new funding policy included:

- (i) the head teacher had to be trained;
- (ii) a minimum weekly schedule of services had to be adhered to, which included some afternoon sessions;
- (iii) a ratio of one teacher to twenty children had to be adopted - 60 children was the maximum roll allowed.

These conditions gave Government considerable control over kindergarten activities. That year all the Principals met with the Supervisor of Pre-school Services and devised a New Zealand syllabus for kindergarten teacher training.

With the increased parent interest, the supportiveness of the Supervisor of Pre-school Services and new funds, expansion of the kindergarten movement accelerated. By the end of 1949 many new associations had been established, and the total number of kindergartens had risen to 80, with a further 20 being established in 1950. Such rapid expansion outstripped the supply of teachers (particularly when the 'baby boom' children reached primary age and stretched the primary system's teacher resources to the limit), and so in the early 1950s, the Union and the Department of Education had to consult over ways to reduce the growth rate in order to stabilize staffing.

The Consultative Committee had recommended that kindergartens should offer a 'playcentre service' (including mother helpers) on two afternoons per week; but when Government agreed to pay kindergarten teachers' salaries, a new weekly schedule including afternoon sessions was instituted. The Union Executive had regarded playcentres as an auxiliary to their own movement and kindergarten personnel were not very welcoming to playcentre groups wishing to share the accommodation on the other afternoons. The Consultative Committee saw playcentres and kindergartens as 'eventually functioning together', because the Committee thought that neither kindergarten nor playcentre could remain viable organisations if they continued to expand with so few resources. Christison's thesis (1966) states that originally the second group did not have to be a kindergarten group. Government left the options open for each organisation to develop in its own way, thinking that the voluntary organisations were to be absorbed by the State education system.

The Principal's Report to the 1947 Kindergarten Union conference stated that kindergarten teachers found playcentre work 'distasteful and extremely tiring' because the younger children had difficulty in adjusting, partly because of their infrequent attendance. The teachers found the long hours tiring; disliked the turnover of mother helpers; and felt the playcentre associations gave insufficient direction to their members. The Principals recommended that kindergarten associations organise afternoon sessions, and ask for a subsidy for such sessions. They also proposed two remits to the 1947 Union conference to the effect that the Department of Education should pay kindergarten teachers' salaries, but leave the organisation of kindergartens in the hands of voluntary workers. The Dunedin Association proposed similar remits. All these recommendations eventually became Union-Government policy.

It will be recalled from the previous chapter that playcentres chose to maintain their separate identity. When sharing facilities became less workable for the few playcentres which operated in kindergartens, playcentre association leaders helped centres find new premises and mothers to train as supervisors.

1947 was the first year in which mention is made of the need for a Union liaison officer. This person was to keep in contact with the Department's Supervisor of Pre-school Services. Having a full-time Union secretary based in Wellington was also first proposed that year - a strategy which was not implemented until 1974.

It has been said that the Union was re-born in 1951. There was a new President, Mrs Johnson, elected that year and she was the first leader for many years who 'thought nationally'. The Union secretary for many years was Miss England who was a highly qualified and able woman. She had 'been the Union' up until 1949. She has been described as a remarkable woman in her prime but, as she grew older, she had taken it upon herself to tell kindergarteners what they could and could not do. She was succeeded by a woman of her own choice, a Mrs Barnard, who was remembered as being 'unable to achieve any success ... because Miss England found it almost impossible to relinquish office'\*. .

The Union President from 1949 to 1951 is reputed to have seen the Union only from a Christchurch perspective. There was a lot of parochialism at the time of Mrs Johnson's succession in 1951 - Auckland had withdrawn from the Union in 1944 because it did not like the management and there was considerable bitterness between the Union and the Dunedin Association. The Christchurch Association proposed a series of remits aimed at decreasing Union control. Mrs Johnson, with great diplomacy, succeeded in uniting the Union again, principally via a major revision of the Constitution in 1952; and in 1954 the Auckland Association re-joined the Union.

No one involved in the provision of kindergarten education envisaged such rapid expansion in the early 1950s, partly because no one envisaged the consequence of the demographic change in birth rates. All levels in the education system were faced with a shortage of staff and resources, and kindergarten associations adopted the strategy of employing untrained assistants. In an attempt to slow expansion and improve staff standards Government, in consultation with the Union, introduced a new restriction in the form of a Regulation, in 1952. This stated that no new kindergarten could be recognised unless all existing kindergartens in an association were fully staffed with trained teachers. The strategy

\* Personal communication with Mrs Johnson, Union President: 1951-57.



slowed the expansion of existing associations, but had the unforeseen consequence of encouraging a proliferation of new one-kindergarten associations; all repeating the same 'teething' problems through the lack of experienced personnel. This unforeseen consequence still creates administrative difficulties today.

One third of all kindergarten teachers were still untrained in 1956 because of the loop-hole in the 1952 strategy, and because of the high loss-rate of staff. In 1955, although 68 students qualified for their Diploma, the increase in the total number of trained kindergarten teachers was only one! This situation forced Government to agree to raise salaries, and the Government and the Union agreed, in 1956, to halt expansion for two years. This 'period of consolidation' was followed by a period of 'controlled expansion' where the rate of expansion was pegged to the number of staff available. Shortage of finance also inhibited growth in this period.

It was during this period that Government standards for gaining subsidies on buildings were raised - once in 1955 and again in 1959 when a permanent building of approved design became obligatory. The booklet "Sites, Buildings and Equipment" produced by the Department of Education in consultation with the Union was issued as a guide to raising standards in 1954, and became the gazetted Regulations in 1959. These Regulations provided:

1. recognition to the Union as the body which represented associations regarding policy matters; and
2. clear-cut policies for staff and volunteers to work by.

Three new kindergartens were allowed in 1958 and five in 1959. A further 30 establishment committees were 'ready and waiting' at that time, and the Union Executive had the unenviable task of sorting out a short priority list for new kindergartens.

Union Executive members spent considerable time in the late 1950s on the administration of training tasks. A national system of training was under discussion and regional meetings were set up to discuss the whole question of training. This created some confusion, as there were also proposals for regional associations at that time to overcome the problem of fragmented control. This latter problem will be discussed later. Increased numbers of students put pressure on the four training centres, which were in inadequate accommodation. There was discussion of a



proposal to have only two centres with more lecturers, if new training buildings were needed. However, Government agreed to purchase permanent buildings for the Wellington and Dunedin Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges in 1959.

The Union Executive wrote a report recommending that non-training associations should be levied to help cover the voluntary movement's portion of training costs to give relief to the training associations, and the 1961 Union conference agreed that this financial burden should be shared by all associations.

In 1962 the Union requested that Government take control of the Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges. This was countered by a proposal that one or two colleges pilot a scheme whereby control should be transferred from the kindergarten association in each of the four main centres to a Regional Council of Management. After the Regulations were changed in 1965, the Wellington Kindergarten Teachers' College was administered by a Regional Council of Management. Administration of training in the other centres changed from Education Committees to broader-membership Boards of Study, who were given more Government funds. This change in the training structure effected a closer relationship between the training centres and the university and Teachers' College in each district. This pattern was maintained until 1973 when Pre-school Units were established at North Shore and Hamilton Teachers' Colleges. This began the process of integration of primary and kindergarten teacher training, a goal which had been sought for many, many years (see, for example, WFKC Council Mins., 1920; NZFKU Exec. Mins., 1959).

At this point it becomes relevant to return to the late 1950s when Mrs Downer was Union President. By 1957 the Department of Education had realised the consequences of their 1952 restrictions which led to a proliferation of small kindergarten associations, and suggested an amalgamation policy to improve the administration of the kindergarten voluntary system. The Union took this up and suggested that associations should amalgamate into regional associations with much larger geographic boundaries than existed at that time. The Union Executive drew up suggested boundaries and drafted a new Constitution to allow amalgamation. Generally however, parochialism prevailed. Three small associations amalgamated in 1959, and in 1960 seven associations in the Bay of Plenty amalgamated, partly because of a recommendation from the Minister of

Education to two associations wanting new kindergartens recognised; and partly because the Union President lived in the Bay of Plenty and she wanted her local associations to set an example regarding amalgamation. Only a few more associations amalgamated because democratic procedures were adhered to to maintain volunteer morale and the Union Executive refused to coerce associations to adopt their suggestions.

In 1961 the proportion of untrained staff again rose to 30 percent of all positions and another 'period of consolidation' was declared at the request of the Union Executive. Much discussion took place about ways to provide shortened courses for selected applicants. These were refused by Department of Education officers. The fifteen kindergartens in the 'pipeline' were allowed to proceed. 1962 saw a further increase in salary, this time negotiated by the N.Z.F.K.T.A. (recognised in 1958). The new scale gave some recognition to those with higher status or greater qualifications, in the hope that this would provide an incentive for kindergarten teachers to stay longer in the service. The Department of Education's Annual Report (1963) recorded that the improved scale helped "in no small measure to improve staffing" (p.20), as did bonding introduced in 1963. By 1964 only 7 percent of positions were filled by untrained staff; thus enabling the 'period of consolidation' to end. Expansion was slow for a year or so because of committee tardiness in proceeding with buildings once they received Departmental approval. This affected staff planning, and there was a restriction of funds because previous allocations were not completely taken up. The President fought hard for streamlining the procedures to get the maximum number of buildings completed each year.

The Union Executive expressed a feeling in the early 1960s that kindergartens would take second place to playcentres if 'consolidation' continued. The Executive stated that overlapping of playcentre and kindergarten provision was a product of organisational differences: the Playcentre Federation allowed associations to interpret ideals their way whereas the Union had co-ordinated kindergarten association activities (NZFKU Exec. Mins., Sept., 1961). Since the early 1950s when the situation of the kindergarten national body was made precarious through lack of co-ordination, there appeared to be competition between the two movements, although the idea of a joint gathering such as a Pre-school Convention was discussed for many years. No joint meetings occurred between national members until Departmental officers provided the initiative. The only step taken at a

1960 joint meeting was the establishment of a small committee to investigate forming a Pre-school Association, which was finally established in 1963, mainly through the efforts of Gwen Somerset.

The demand for kindergarten education has continued to present the movement with problems; problems of systems-maintenance in relation to the administrative tasks of the association and problems of finding greater and greater financial resources to expand on the scale that parent interest has demanded. Human resources were also under pressure during the 1960s. Regular requests began to go forward to the Department from Union conferences that Government should sponsor Supervising Head Teachers for all large associations to relieve the pressure felt by voluntary workers, particularly in rural areas. The first request for kindergarten supervisors had been made in 1956, to help new and remote kindergartens. Supervising Head Teachers were appointed in the 4 training associations in the later 1950s and early 1960s to relieve the Principals of the task of overseeing kindergarten sessions. The Union President, Miss Ingram, stated in 1971 that the request for Supervising Head Teachers was still being 'stubbornly resisted' by the Department; and the case (much modified over the years) was still being presented in 1976. Government officials and the Union Executive have never reached a compromise situation where Government could agree to pay for such people. Two of the persistent objections raised by the Department have been: who should employ and oversee such personnel when her work would take her into kindergartens in several autonomous associations; and who should pay travelling costs as Government money would entail accountability to Government, thus giving the Supervising Head Teacher another master. These thorny issues have not been adequately answered. Departmental officers and Government officials delayed the case for many years because it was felt that an expanded Pre-school Advisory Service on the scale recommended in the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education would meet the need for Supervising Head Teachers and the need for playcentre Liaison Officers. From the comments made to me by kindergarten and playcentre staff during the Pre-school staff survey in 1975, summarized in Chapter 7, the Pre-school Advisory Service would meet most professional needs if it was expanded still further. Teachers said such things as: "The Pre-school Advisers are helpful but we don't see enough of them," "We've only seen the Pre-school Adviser once," and "The Pre-school Advisers are not here often enough to give sound advice."

However, the Advisory Service has not been able to relieve the voluntary workers of the pressures they feel - kindergarten volunteers are still finding administrative tasks too onerous in large associations. The movement's case for liaison workers employed by the voluntary organisation is still being put before Government at the time of writing. . Other schemes to lessen the kindergarten volunteers' administrative burden have been proposed: that Education Boards take over the maintenance of kindergarten buildings, that Education Boards should take over the mechanics of salary payments, and that financial help should be given for large association offices. The former two schemes have been implemented, while the latter has been refused in that form, but funds have been given for association expenses based on the number of kindergartens in the association.

In 1965 a remit was put forward that the Union Executive formulate plans for extra sessions or for greater roll size to better utilize premises. The Minister of Education's reaction to this proposal was that it needed further investigation. At the same time a case for three 2-hour afternoon sessions was put and in 1968 three 2½-hour afternoon sessions became obligatory for kindergarten staff. Several teachers during interviews in 1975 said that they still felt irritated by the extra ½-hour as the younger children tend to fall asleep.

The strategy where kindergartens accept an additional group of children was instituted on a pilot basis in six kindergartens for two years from 1967; such kindergartens are known as extended roll kindergartens. In 1975-76 these kindergartens became the object of considerable conflict between K.T.A., who oppose extended roll kindergartens because they feel that the teachers cannot effectively relate to such a large number of children and their parents, and the Department and the Union who see such schemes as a way of meeting parents' demands for kindergarten education and for better utilization of expensive buildings. There was some concern felt by Union members in the early 1970s about the lack of evaluation of these pilot scheme kindergartens, and yet the Department would allow no change to these schemes until the evaluation was complete. An informal evaluation was done over three years by advisers, lecturers and teachers, but this was never made public knowledge. In 1973 extended roll kindergartens became Government policy - the advantages of more children being catered for, won over the disadvantages of the strain on staff, the more superficial teacher-child relationship and the faster turnover-rate

of children attending morning sessions. However, the Department restrained the expansion of this scheme below the number requested by associations, and many kindergarten Head Teachers refused such schemes when they realised they could make the final decision. N.Z.F.K.T.A. is at present opposing a modified extended roll scheme whereby an additional ten children could be added to every kindergarten's roll.

In 1968 Miss Ingram decided to delegate more Union tasks to the secretary and to Executive members, so that associations and Executive members should be in closer contact. She suggested a Ward system to give some permanency to this delegation and such a re-structuring of the Union Executive did become formalized at the 1971 annual meeting. Anti-playcentre feeling was running high that year because the Union dominant coalition interpreted many of the statements made in the Playcentre Federation submissions to the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education as a criticism of the kindergarten movement. An increased liaison grant given to the playcentre movement, while the Union case for more Supervising Head Teachers was ignored, further antagonised the Union Executive members.

Parent involvement and parent education began to come under scrutiny in 1964. In her last address to the Union conference before retirement, Miss Gallagher, the Department of Education's Officer for Pre-school Education, expressed concern that parent committees might lose sight of the children in their efforts to provide money. She queried whether volunteers were keeping abreast with trends in education, as no kindergarten association was availing itself of Adult Education services and suggested that each association should have an Education Officer. Miss Christison, her successor, commented the following year (1965) that Adult Education services were still not being patronised by kindergarten parents. Today, the parent education programme in the movement - Mothers' Club gatherings - is declining, although some teachers have recently begun discussion groups as a substitute. When the grant to help with running costs was announced in 1974, it was hoped by the Department that more time would be devoted to parent education programmes, but this seems to have happened in only a few isolated instances. This topic is dealt with in more detail in Chapter 10.

Mrs Downer, when she retired in 1966, told the Union conference that she hoped that the kindergarten movement would never become part of the State

education system. She felt that parent apathy was already creeping in. This opinion, a reversal of the desire for take-over expressed by most of the earlier leaders, is still of concern at the Union level. The Union Executive now see each new grant with its accompanying conditions as a threat to parent involvement because it narrows the range of tasks and control that parent volunteers can participate in, which produces a loss of motivation to be involved in their children's kindergarten education. Despite this attitude, the Union Executive have not resisted increased Government aid and control; perhaps because they feel that would be 'biting the hand that feeds them', but the Union has, in fact, felt it necessary to seek further assistance. The ambivalence is expressed in the President's opening remarks to the 1973 conference. She felt that:

*Parents being involved in the education of their children and thereby becoming more educated themselves is more important than how the financial involvement of any Government is to be dictated ... We agreed that financial involvement (of parents) is necessary to retain and stimulate interest, but there are three areas where help is needed if we are to expand our service ... buildings, association administration costs and a Union office grant.*  
(NZFKU Ann. Mtg. Mins., 1973)

Less committed volunteers, do not perceive any negative consequences to Government aid, and propose and pass a steady stream of remits at Union conferences asking for more Government funds to assist in all task areas. For example, funds for offices for association administration, bussing facilities for children who have to travel, Supervising Head Teachers, full cost of buildings, mileage allowance, replacement of equipment, free sites, running costs grant, bigger equipment sheds and refresher courses for staff, have all been requested in the last five years and the last four requests have been acceded to. In addition, a grant has been given to associations to assist with administrative costs; buildings in areas of special need are paid for in full by Government; and a permanent Union office has been facilitated by a one-off grant. These new forms of Government assistance have left local committees with few tasks, and have increased the number of liaison contacts with various government departments that association and Union Executive members must cope with. More and more 'the tail seems to be wagging the dog' and members expand much energy worrying about this and doing battle to control 'the wag of the tail' which has, in part, prevented them from moving into the task area of



parent education in any organised way.

The Union's dominant coalition has been increasingly worried about the control they have over decision-making. Strategies are largely shaped by Government as funding agency, and with the establishment of the National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education and the District Pre-school Committees, came a further threat to the Union's control over strategic choices. Kindergarten participation in these new committees is characterised by defensive actions to protect the status quo. Innovative ideas have more often come from other members of these quasi-Government committees. An attitude of resentment that the two main voluntary groups are outnumbered on these committees prevails. Kindergarten volunteers fear that such committees may formulate kindergarten strategies which they believe is their prerogative to formulate and negotiate with other parties who might be involved.

Like the playcentre's dominant coalition the Union Executive object now to the idea of a Government take-over, and want to see parent involvement in the movement retained. Making Education Boards responsible for buildings maintenance tipped the balance, in the writer's view, for parent interest to fall away in the kindergarten movement. It is a development which is probably more beneficial to the playcentre movement.

This history of the free kindergarten movement indicates that there are few tasks left where volunteers have opportunities for making decisions of their own. The Union President, Laura Ingram, stated at the 1974 Union conference, that she felt the Department of Education was failing to consult the Union over decisions that were still within the Union's sphere of decision-making. "Many of the changes taking shape are what we have asked for in submissions over many years - the strong objection is our non-involvement in the mechanics as to how these should be implemented - we must keep up with the play" (NZFKU Conf. Rpt., 1974). She cited some examples of non-consultation and these included:

1. The decision to integrate kindergarten and primary teacher training,
2. An Education Board deciding to undertake kindergarten teacher recruiting, and
3. The decision that primary teachers be in charge of special groups in kindergartens.

Obviously there is a conflict of opinion over who should be the senior partner. The recently mooted re-structuring of the Department of



Education has heightened the feeling of threatened control - the outcome of regional discussions is not clear at the time of writing, but some regions have agreed to pilot Regional Authorities. New Zealand-wide adoption could be the end of the Union as it is presently organised in a pyramidal hierarchy. The Union would have to adopt a new role or die.

When one compares the Union and Federation's histories, it can therefore be seen that the strategic choices crucial to the development of the Free Kindergarten Union are far less likely to be decisions made by the Union alone. Key Union strategic choices have been those involving Government in some way. This chapter, therefore, has been just as much a history of Government involvement in kindergarten education as it has been a history of the Free Kindergarten Union. There are lessons contained here for the playcentre movement if it wishes to retain its present parent co-operative characteristics. It must not try and compete with the kindergarten movement for similar funds or similar policies. Unless politicians and departmental officers change their attitudes about accountability for public money, such competition could contribute to the destruction of the most valuable attributes of the playcentre organisation.

I now want to turn from this account of the development of the national kindergarten movement to examining the development of the Wellington Association.

#### HISTORY OF THE WELLINGTON FREE KINDERGARTEN ASSOCIATION

*A kindergarten is not a building placed on a suitable piece of land but rather a children's playground with a suitable building to provide warmth and shelter when it is required.*  
(From *Sites, Buildings and Equipment*, 1954)

An account of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's history is necessary to provide the context for the analysis of two strategic choice processes interpreted mostly from the Wellington Association's perspective.

The kindergarten publication *Kindergartens in New Zealand* (Lockhart, 1975) records that the Wellington Association owes its origin to Miss Mary Richmond who:

*was President of the Froebel Society in Wellington.*  
*In the streets Miss Richmond saw little ones too*  
*small to go to school, sitting about in the dirt on*

*the pavements, dusty and grubby, learning language which was certainly no good for them, and her tender mother-heart ached for these neglected babies. 'We must have kindergartens for these children' she said and set to work to get them. (p.95)*

The idea behind the kindergartens was a philanthropic one. Miss Richmond launched herself into a complicated scheme for fund-raising to establish an experimental kindergarten and in 1906, a kindergarten was opened in the Baptist Sunday School room in Vivian Street, although it was soon transferred to the Tory Street Mission Hall. It was as a result of Miss Richmond's approaches to Government to have this experimental kindergarten taken over by the State, that the Education Department formulated a policy, in 1909, about voluntary kindergartens. It was agreed that kindergartens should be 'recognised' and inspected and given a capitation grant, but not taken over.

The structure of the first Wellington Association, then known as the 'Riley Free Kindergarten Union' was based on the financial contributions of the various types of members. The Executive consisted of some expert teachers plus the office-holders, while the Women's Financial Council consisted of 20 'centre leaders' who had to find 15 'associates' to qualify for such a position. An 'associate' was someone who pledged £1 per year; this £1 could be collected from 8 'subscribers' giving 2/6 per annum. The Association was completed by an advisory board composed of 'gentlemen of standing'. The names of the associates give clues as to the middle class status of the Council; for example, Richmond, Hannah and Kirkaldie. The early minutes were pre-occupied with who was forming centres and the amounts paid by associates. Obtaining funds has been a continuing concern until the mid-1970s. It biassed all other activities; for example, in 1926, a demonstration kindergarten was set up in the concert hall to publicise kindergartens to get more subscribers!

In 1909 the second Wellington kindergarten was opened in Constable Street, Newtown, and during 1911 kindergartens were established in Lyall Bay and Island Bay. Miss Freeman was appointed head-mistress of the Wellington kindergartens in 1911. She held a Froebel Union Certificate and on her arrival, systematic training was organised. It is interesting to read comments made by Mary Richmond about the type of girl who should do kindergarten training:

*Many a girl who cannot qualify as a public-school teacher has all the natural qualifications of patience and motherliness required for kindergarten school. (WFKA Ann. Mtg. Rpt., 1909) and:*

*Kindergartens minister to the need of mothers for help, and need of children for nurture, the need of girls for training in motherly ways. (WFKA Ann. Mtg. Rpt., 1913)*

A more modern version of her attitude was expressed in 1956 by a visiting American, Miss Heinig:

*Kindergarten training is the best training for family life and marriage that any woman could have.*

Such attitudes and the system of asking students to pay a fee to train had long-term consequences for the movement regarding attracting trainees for kindergarten work. By 1914 the administrators realised how crucial was the supply of trainees. The number of students determined kindergarten rolls (each student meant an additional twelve children could be accepted, as a ratio of 1 : 12 seemed to be the ideal ratio to those decision-makers), and kindergarten attendance determined the Government grant under the system of capitation grants. Attendance and student numbers were of central concern to kindergarten committees for the next 30 odd years.

During 1915, at the suggestion of the Advisory Board, local committees were formed in the districts where there were kindergartens to attract interest from a greater number of people.

In 1917 the name of the Association was changed to the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association, and an important strategic choice was made to erect a school building in Taranaki Street to accommodate 100 children, the Principal and the students during their lecture periods. Government agreed to pay £600 of the building costs if the property was vested in it. The Council decided not to accept the money in 1918 because of these conditions, and decided to convert a factory for their purposes rather than build. This seems to be the only time a kindergarten committee's dominant coalition has said a flat 'No' to Government funds. There were five kindergartens in Wellington by this date and parents in each district, except Taranaki Street, assisted with the running costs - often in the form of donations towards the 'rusk' fund. The Principal organised a Mothers' Club (when the new building at Taranaki Street was finished) which had educational

and social functions. The Council agreed that the new kindergarten's playground ought to be open to all young people in the district.

Annual Reports in the 1920s sound like those written in the 1960s and 1970s by local playcentre councils, when they describe the pay as pitiful and the work created for the adults by the use of rented accommodation. Cleaning up after other groups' functions in the halls before opening, and packing away at the end of the sessions was greatly disliked. This latter dislike caused many local committees to raise money for their own buildings.

Contained in the Principal's annual reports are many statements about kindergarten philosophy. The garden was often discussed and was another reason why owning buildings was seen as vital to the kindergartens. The 'home spirit' was regarded as the true note of kindergarten work, and this work was seen as being not only good for the child, but also good for the nation, because it taught the children habits of applying "energy to fulfil some definite purpose, ... and cleanliness arising from a sense of self-respect and obligations to our fellows" (WFKA Ann. Mtg. Rpt., 1922). The work with the children was to establish the basis of a 'useful life'. The philosophy therefore focusses on the child. It is also a philosophy based on the Protestant Ethic: "the childish ideal of play for the sake of enjoyment is gradually converted into a desire for work for work's sake" (WFKA Council Mins., 1924). The aim of the kindergarten was "to develop citizens who have been taught that there is only one sin, and that was to be idle" (WFKA Principal, 1926).

Women who had completed the kindergarten training were able, in those early days, to be accredited with one year of the primary training if they changed their career. An infants' class was attached to Taranaki Street for a few years to help with training students to understand 5 and 6 year olds.

There was much discussion in 1924 of a Government take-over when the time was ripe financially. It was thought that a take-over would entail the provision of a kindergarten for every public school - an expensive exercise. The Council members, the Chief Inspector and the Minister of Education were all involved in these discussions.

An increased capitation grant in 1926 allowed the Association to raise

salaries above 'starvation rate'. Wellington Association members were beginning to look in envy at the beautiful kindergarten buildings in other associations and launched themselves into fund-raising tasks. Buildings seemed better able to inspire such efforts than did staff salaries. The Association Constitution was revised in 1926 to allow delegates from local committees and the Mothers' Club to form the Council - a similar composition to that which exists in the 1970s. Mothers' Clubs were established in each kindergarten in 1929 and a United Mothers' Club was formed in 1931. Most Mothers' Club members engaged in educational activities, but were quickly drawn into fund-raising in the financial crisis during the Depression.

Miss England, an important leader in the Wellington Association and the Union, is singled out for special mention in the Annual Report for 1930 for her free service as a lecturer and examiner of students, and convenor of the Education Committee entrusted with training policy. In 1931, when the New Zealand economy was caught in the throes of the world-wide depression, Government withdrew its financial support for the kindergarten movement. Miss England led a delegation to Government to ask for half the usual grant, but this delegation was unsuccessful, partly because the Auckland Association had £2000 invested. Kindergartens stayed open through greater public generosity and staff working for lower wages. Out of this period of austerity, grew the Women's Auxiliary to assist with fund-raising activities. They disbanded in 1950, but re-convened in 1966. Art Union (lottery) grants also helped the financial situation. The raising of the minimum age of entry for school from 5 to 6 years in the depression years posed problems for kindergarten staff, as did the declining health of the children and students.

The Principal at that time was rather patronizing about parents - her reports talked about 'parental blundering' and about 'developing responsibility in the mothers'. She realised that 'to be fully effective the training that kindergartens give its children must be practised in the home', and welcomed mothers coming in to prepare the milk each morning and to observe kindergarten work. Contrast this with the playcentre philosophy that parents are the experts on bringing up children. The Association also met the needs of parents by visiting homes, through the fortnightly Mothers' Club meetings and by holding functions for fund-raising.

When the first Labour Government came into power in 1935 coinciding with the emergence from the depression, the capitation grant was restored and raised, and the school entrance age was lowered to five once more. In the next two years, the Government considerably increased the funds given to kindergartens. Not all of this could be taken up however, because the voluntary movement was not able to match the amount provided. Funding was still on a £1 for £1 basis. Despite the additional finance, the movement began to run into staffing difficulties because it was not in a position to grant student allowances on a par with that given to teacher and dental nurse trainees. Government granted kindergarten student allowances in 1941 after a deputation had waited on the Minister of Education. The effects of the various measures taken could be seen by 1945 when Government spending on kindergartens had risen by 850 percent in ten years.

The philosophy underlying kindergarten work during World War II was to foster the ability of people to "live together as brothers from early childhood ... It is upon the practice of this that future peace depends" (WFKA Principal, 1941). Two kindergartens became all-day nurseries to meet the needs of mothers doing war work; otherwise the war caused little disruption to kindergarten activities. The Association Executive looked at expansion possibilities and there was considerable time spent on acquiring sites and raising money for kindergarten buildings by a variety of means - not necessarily all from kindergarten members' efforts. These sites had to be approved by the Department to get the £1 for £1 subsidy. 1941 seems to be the first year that the Union asked Government for help with sites by setting aside land in new housing areas. Liaison with church groups was important as many kindergartens were in church halls; only 8 of the 16 kindergartens in the Association in 1951 had their own buildings. Council members became angry with unco-operative church groups on several occasions but failed to perceive fault in their own actions when they refused other community groups' requests to use kindergarten accommodation - a strategy which is only fading today.

Better liaison was sought between staff and the Council during the war. A staff member was invited to each Council meeting. A leading member of the Association, the Organising Secretary, retired in 1942 after nineteen years of service. This reflected the pattern of long-service evident in the Association, which many people attribute to the 'snob-value' of doing voluntary work in kindergartens in the early years. For example, Miss



England was involved in many capacities from 1913 to 1950, one accountant handled the Association's finances from 1923 to 1950, and Mrs Doctor was Wellington President for 20 years.

The year the second world war ended saw a decision to re-organise local committee membership and functions. By now committees were mainly composed of interested parents. It was agreed that men should be allowed on the committees (they soon became the majority); and each local committee was given full financial responsibility to administer its kindergarten - a strategy which left the Association with a smaller pool of funds for expansion. The decreased availability of local funds for new growth was later regretted, so an establishment fund was instituted in the early 1970s and, in 1974, a decision was made (it had first been mooted in 1958) that all local committees should bank with the same bank to obtain a pool of funds which the Association could use as collateral for loans on new kindergartens. Contact between the Association's members and local committee members was maintained in the late 1940s by a 'combined' meeting once a term and by Council members being delegated to keep in contact with particular kindergartens. Obviously the Council composition of local committee representatives failed sometime after 1926.

1948 was a year of major change. Government replaced the capitation grant by a scale of salaries and in return imposed many requirements which brought more control and greater uniformity of policy - not always seen as the best thing for all districts. At the end of that year, the Principal retired after giving 20 years service to the Association and the Director of the Taranaki Street kindergarten retired after teaching there for 34 years! Miss Baucke became the new Principal, bringing with her ideas for training and teaching in kindergartens from her recent trip to Australia, where she had found that Kindergarteners were giving greater freedom to children. This approach was also familiar to Miss Christison, a new staff member from England; and so 1949 saw 'freer' methods being adopted, which was not an approach that all parents agreed with.

Local body interest in kindergarten work was evident at that time, but dwindled in the 1960s. The Wellington City Council gave a regular grant to the Association in the 1940s and leased two sites for kindergartens in Hataitai and Miramar North in 1953. Parent interest in certain districts was causing concern, however. Since the 1940s, there has been



a recurring pattern of difficulties in getting and retaining local committees in the kindergartens in low SES areas. Association personnel have had to step in on various occasions in such areas to provide leadership and/or funds over the years.

The desperate shortage of teachers, made worse by the rapid growth in the primary sector of the education system in the 1950s was partly attributed to the cramped training centre. It was not until 1960 that the centre was able to move from Taranaki Street to premises in Tinakori Road. It was decided in that year that all associations in the Victoria University district should be levied to help with training costs. The Education Committee of the Association which was entrusted with overseeing methods and educational matters, was expanded to allow four delegates from the other associations being levied, to attend its meetings. It was not long before the Education Committee was streamlined - in 1964 it met in full only once a term, although some members met more frequently to deal with day-to-day business. Gwen Somerset was its Chairman for two years. Because she held this position as well as leadership positions in the playcentre movement, she influenced the programmes in both organisations.

The expansion of training once it was established in the new centre placed a greater load on the Principal and led the Association Council to make a case to Government for a Supervising Head Teacher. The Department of Education agreed to this strategy in 1963 and Mrs Davin was appointed late that year. She visited kindergartens, held staff meetings for refresher purposes, prepared newsletters and helped to prepare staff rules for circulation before acceptance. Her appointment coincided with Dr Katherine Whiteside-Taylor's visit to New Zealand, and the introduction of her approach to parent work by kindergarten and playcentre staff - an approach which was new to free kindergarten members. Katherine Whiteside-Taylor's approach to parent education based on written observations of children in pre-school settings did not catch on amongst kindergarten parents.

There was a considerable conflict in the early 1960s between the Education Committee and the Council Executive over their respective areas of responsibility for administering training. However, in 1965, when the

Wellington Training Centre began a three year trial period of being

~~administered by the National Council of Education~~

Most kindergartens in older areas have faced, in the last decade, the problem of falling rolls and continuing difficulties in finding and keeping a local committee. Parent apathy in Newtown is one example of the kinds of difficulties which have been experienced and was one of the reasons why the nursery attached to Newtown kindergarten was phased out in 1967.

The dwindling number of activities left under the control of the Association Council members, had the effect of decreasing the participation of members; and although a revision of the Constitution in 1968 raised the dominant coalition's hopes that attendance would improve, a strategy of fewer Council meetings only temporarily improved attendance for about one year, before interest dropped away again.

#### CONCLUSION

Looking back over the history of the kindergarten movement and the history of the Wellington Association, a number of themes can be identified:

1. The movement's leaders have, since the turn of the century, expected Government to provide funds for the areas of kindergarten work seen as causing systems-maintenance difficulties. Because the 'public' kindergarten service was provided by one class of people for lower class children, the ideology seemed to be that it was legitimate to ask for public funds.
2. Accompanying the new grants were new Regulations or the loss of rights to be involved in decision-making, and this had consequences seen most clearly in the history of the Wellington Association - difficulties in attracting and keeping members interested in the voluntary sub-system of the kindergarten organisation.

I think that these two themes are intertwined and I would like to elaborate on them because the material is important contextual information for the discussion in Chapter 10 which is focussed on Government's decision to provide sessional grants to local kindergartens.

The President of the Wellington Association in 1973 estimated in her Annual Report that 50 percent of Wellington kindergartens were not participating in Association decision-making that year. Most Association activities are now undertaken by an inner elite of the President, Secretary and the Executive member who is the Wellington region's Ward member on the Union Executive (and the Supervising Head Teacher on some occasions).

Part of the reasons for a low level of participation lies with the office-bearers' unwillingness to delegate authority, but the main reason is the decrease in the range of decisions that Association voluntary members have any control over.

Early Council meetings used to include discussion and decision-making on all aspects of kindergarten and training operations: new kindergartens and new equipment for kindergartens, their playgrounds, the children's health and attendance, visitors, excursions, examiners, recruitment of students, staff salaries and staff problems, buildings maintenance, rolls' size, opening times, conference matters, graduation, Christmas parties, the closing of kindergartens in Brooklyn, Thorndon and finally Taranaki Street, and Mothers' Club activities.

In 1941 student allowances reduced Association control in that area of tasks. With the 1948 change in Government funding came standardization of teachers' salaries, kindergarten opening times and ratio; and also in 1948 a national syllabus decreased associations' control over some aspects of training. In 1963, the Supervising Head Teacher was given authority to deal with decisions about the children's programme, staffing and refresher courses, and Association members only had to ratify them. The transfer of training to the control of the Regional Council of Management in 1965 took away a large area of decision-making. With the increase in proportion of Government funds in sites and buildings in 1973 came more red-tape in this area leaving the Council members feeling helpless over most decisions regarding new kindergartens. The recent scheme whereby Education Boards took over major maintenance of kindergarten buildings, has left the Associations (and local committees) with a minute amount of control over kindergarten affairs. (For further discussion, see Chapter 10.)

3. An associated theme is that once Government had assumed financial responsibility for certain aspects of kindergarten functioning, the voluntary organisation's dominant coalition seem to be powerless to change tactics for implementing the strategies; for example, the Union have negligible influence over student quotas, a critical variable affecting future staff numbers.
4. Early in the history of the movement training courses were established in the four main cities. The Principals were not only responsible for training but also for standards in the children's sessions until

Government agreed to pay for Supervising Head Teachers in those cities. That the training remained largely the responsibility of four associations - in terms of decision-making and funding - long after the establishment of the Union and the proliferation of associations is surprising. The pressures on these associations led to cases to Government for assistance with training and these cases brought forth more and more State aid for kindergarten training culminating with the decision to integrate kindergarten and primary teacher training in 1975, described in greater detail in Chapter 11.

5. Purpose-built buildings for kindergartens were seen as desirable throughout the development of the movement. Much of the voluntary sub-system's resources (financial and time) have been concentrated upon this task. Because buildings were desired, no objections were raised when the strategic choice was made to have all kindergartens in their own buildings. However, this strategy has inhibited growth drastically in recent years, and many people now see buildings as taking up a disproportionate amount of funds.
6. The changing characteristics of volunteers has probably most affected the Mothers' Club sub-system of the movement. 'Outsiders' worked on the association committees and parents belonged to the Mothers' Clubs. Since World War II, the proportions of parents on the administrative committees have increased to almost 100 percent, and at the same time the Mothers' Club sub-system has been declining.
7. Environmental variables such as population changes, the economic situation of the country and increased general public interest in, and support for, early childhood education are important influences on the functioning of the organisation. But the complexities of the organisation's structure and the bureaucratic mode of functioning (indicated by the numbers of rules) mean that the organisation is not able to adapt to changed environmental conditions very quickly.

It is now time for me to turn to the analysis of the field-work data collected during 1973-75. In the last chapter of Section I, a selection of the data collected by three small surveys is presented to provide additional background information of a different nature from historical material. Already, we know something about the characteristics of staff members and volunteers in earlier years. For example, staff had to come from families who could pay for their daughters' training prior to 1941;

and involved kindergarten volunteers often came from prominent business families in the community until parents of pre-school children became more active on the committees, while involved playcentre volunteers were often educationists in other institutions. The survey data provides a profile of present-day pre-school parents, staff and volunteers.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE SURVEYS

Three surveys of personnel connected with pre-school services were conducted during the field work stage of this study to provide further information, in addition to that of an historical nature, for the examination of strategic choice processes occurring in the playcentre and free kindergarten movements in the mid-1970s. These surveys sought to find out the background characteristics, and the motivations for certain acts of pre-school parents, pre-school staff and pre-school volunteers. Details of the types of survey and sampling techniques have been outlined in Chapter 4. I propose in this chapter to describe some of the results of the surveys - firstly the pre-school families survey, then the pre-school staff survey and finally the pre-school volunteers survey. Other data from these surveys particularly pertinent to the analysis of those strategic choice processes selected for examination in Part II are given in Chapters 8 to 11. Copies of the questionnaires used are provided in Appendices 1 to 3. Statistical tests used are the Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) and, where there are small cell sizes, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (D).

#### PRE-SCHOOL FAMILIES SURVEY

##### Who Gets to Pre-School?

It would seem that most parents of children aged 3 and 4 years in New Zealand desire some pre-school education for their off-spring. This is particularly true of families classified as having high or medium SES rating. My survey, like Barney's (1975), found that there was an under-representation of families with fathers' occupations in SES Levels 5 and 6 (Elley and Irving, 1972b) using pre-school centres in comparison with the proportions of Wellington males in SES Levels 5 and 6.

Table 7.1.            Pre-school Fathers' Occupational Status

	<u>Total</u>		<u>Wellington Male</u>
	<u>Users</u>		<u>Labour Force</u>
		%	%
SES Level 1	22	20.8	7.3
SES Level 2	36	34.0	16.2
SES Level 3	19	17.9	18.6
SES Level 4	18	17.0	28.1
SES Level 5	10	9.4	20.1
SES Level 6	1	0.9	9.7
	106*	100.0	100.0

\* Five interviewees were solo mothers.



An analysis of data taken from the records of the pre-school organisations and from the New Zealand Census of Population and Dwellings (1971), which compares pre-school places (roll numbers) with the population of 3 and 4 year olds in different SES areas in Wellington, indicates that there is also an undersupply of places for children living in low SES suburbs. During the period of this study, there was, however, little pressure for increased places in inner-city, low SES areas from either parents or association personnel.

Table 7.2. Ratio of Pre-school Places (1974) to Population of 3 & 4 Year Olds (1971 Census) by SES Areas of Wellington City

	<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Places :</u>	<u>Number of 3 &amp; 4 Year Olds</u>
Upper SES Areas	1 :	1.7
Upper-middle SES Areas	1 :	2.6
Lower-middle SES Areas	1 :	2.8
Lower SES Areas	1 :	4.2
<u>TOTAL:</u>	1 :	2.7

The distribution of pre-school centres, comparing playcentre and free kindergarten places, presents an interesting picture. In 1974, in the upper SES graded areas in Wellington city, there were 5 playcentres and 2 kindergartens, and the 5 playcentres catered for more children than the 2 kindergartens (playcentres, 233 and free kindergartens, 160). In the upper-middle graded areas there were 3 playcentres and 2 kindergartens - the playcentres catered for approximately 140 children and kindergartens for 240 children. In lower SES suburbs, kindergartens catered for far greater proportions of children. There are 7 playcentres in the lower-middle socio-economic graded areas and they cater for 310 children, compared with 850 children who attended 10 free kindergartens in similar areas. There were equal numbers of playcentres and kindergartens in lower graded areas (2 each) but the free kindergartens with 140 children on their rolls had more than twice as many children attending them as did playcentres in such areas.

Table 7.3.      Distribution of Pre-school Centres and Roll  
Numbers by SES Area in Wellington City  
(August, 1974)

	<u>Playcentres</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Roll</u>	<u>Kindergartens</u>	<u>No.</u>	<u>Roll</u>
Upper SES Areas	Karori			Karori		
	Karori West			Khandallah	2	160
	Kelburn	5	233			
	Cashmere					
	Wadestown					
Upper-middle SES Areas	Ngaio			Hataitai		
	Roseneath	3	139	Ngaio	3	240
	Wilton			Seatoun		
Lower-middle SES Areas	Brooklyn			Berhampore		
	Houghton Valley			Island Bay		
	Island Bay			Johnsonville		
	Johnsonville			Lyall Bay		
	Kilbirnie	7	309	Miramar	10	850
	Newlands			Miramar North		
	Tamariki			Newlands		
				Northland		
Lower SES Areas				Strathmore		
				Paparangi		
	Newtown			Newtown		
	Wellington Central	2	57	Wellington South	2	140
		17	738		17	1390

When the roll numbers are compared with the population of 3 and 4 year olds in the different SES areas, it can be seen that there are fewer places in the lower SES areas. In the middle and upper SES areas, there is at least one pre-school place for every 2.8 children aged 3 and 4 years, which could give every pre-schooler in those suburbs about one year of pre-school education were it not for the variation from suburb to suburb. However, the proportion of pre-school places to children aged 3 and 4 years, drops off when inner-city, lower SES suburbs are analyzed.

Table 7.4.      Ratio of Pre-school Places (1974) to Population  
of 3 and 4 Year Olds (1971) by SES Areas of  
Wellington City

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	<u>Place : Population</u>		<u>Place : Population</u>		<u>Place : Population</u>	
Upper SES Areas	1 : 2.9 (233 : 667)		1 : 4.2 (160 : 667)		1 : 1.7 (393 : 667)	
Upper-middle SES Areas	1 : 7.1 (139 : 982)		1 : 4.1 (240 : 982)		1 : 2.6 (379 : 982)	
Lower-middle SES Areas	1 : 10.5 (309 : 3252)		1 : 3.8 (850 : 3252)		1 : 2.8 (1159 : 3252)	
Lower SES Areas	1 : 15 (57 : 834)		1 : 6 (140 : 834)		1 : 4.2 (197 : 334)	
<u>TOTALS:</u>	1 : 7.7 (738 : 5735)		1 : 4.1 (1390 : 5735)		1 : 2.7 (2098 : 5735)	

If the demand was such that parents of every pre-school child in low SES suburbs wanted their children to attend a playcentre or free kindergarten, the lower availability would mean that each child would only get six months pre-school education. To put it another way, only one-quarter of the children living in low SES suburbs are attending a pre-school centre compared with nearly half of the 3 and 4 year olds who are living in middle and high SES suburbs.

Although a higher proportion of 3 and 4 year olds in middle and high SES suburbs attend playcentres and kindergartens, there is also considerable demand for an increase in places. An inadequate number of places to meet demand was one of the main factors affecting families who did not use playcentre or kindergarten in the middle SES suburb.

#### Non-users

Twenty-seven families who used neither playcentre nor kindergarten in Newlands (a middle SES suburb) were interviewed during the pre-school families survey. Most of this sub-sample (86 percent) said they would have liked to have used playcentre or kindergarten. This is in line with the socio-economic status of the fathers of these non-user families from the young suburb of Newlands. They tended towards the professional/

managerial occupational groups and had greater proportions in Levels 1 and 2 of Elley and Irving's Socio-economic Index (1972b) than the pre-school participants in the same suburb as well as the total sample of pre-school families. This study, as well as Barney's (1975), showed that the higher the fathers' SES the greater the likelihood of pre-school use.

Table 7.5.      User and Non-user Fathers' Occupational Status

	<u>Newlands Non-user</u>		<u>Newlands User</u>		<u>Total Users</u>	
		%		%		%
SES Level 1	( 4	14.8	( 5	11.1	22	20.8
SES Level 2	17( 13	48.1	21( 16	35.6	36	34.0
SES Level 3	( 1	3.7	(10	22.2	19	17.9
SES Level 4	6( 5	18.5	19( 9	20.0	18	17.0
SES Level 5	( 3	11.1	( 4	8.9	10	9.4
SES Level 6	4( 1	3.7	5( 1	2.2	1	0.9
	27	99.9	45	100.0	106*	100.0

Newlands' samples:

$\chi^2 = 3.53$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p > 0.1$ .

\* Five interviewees were solo mothers.

Because this group of non-users obviously does not represent the total population of New Zealand families with young children, it should be stressed that the data on these non-user families must be used as case study material. It would not be wise to generalise from this section of the chapter.

Although not statistically significant, the mobility of the families played a large part in leaving many of these children without pre-school education.

Table 7.6.      Years in the Suburb of Newlands by Pre-school Users/Non-users

	<u>Non-user</u>		<u>User</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Less than 1 year	8	29.6	6	13.0	14	19.2
1 to 2 years	4	14.8	6	13.0	10	13.7
2 to 5 years	7	25.9	13	28.3	20	27.4
5 or more years	8	29.6	21	45.7	29	39.7
	27	99.9	46	100.0	73	100.0

$\chi^2 = 4.52$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p > 0.05$ .

I did not specifically ask the families who had recently moved where they had come from, but I recall that many were new immigrants, particularly

from Great Britain, and this could account for the large proportion, 30 percent, of these non-users, who were not fully informed about the range of pre-school services available in their suburb, when the interviewer asked the parent to describe the local pre-school services. Thirty-nine percent said they had wanted their child to attend kindergarten, but had missed out on this because they had moved into the district in the last year or two, and the kindergarten was too much in demand to accept transfers. If they knew about playcentre, they had generally decided against playcentre education because it was "not organised enough". Eleven percent of the non-users had chosen to use playcentre, but when their children began attending, they found that they or the child did not feel happy there and they withdrew. Such families have no second chance to try an alternative 'public' service because of kindergarten enrolling and waiting list procedures. A further eighteen percent of the families gave a variety of reasons for non-use ranging from having a handicapped child to having a child who was not accepted because he was not toilet trained.

This picture of thwarted desire for playcentre and free kindergarten education by a large proportion of non-users may not be typical of all non-users, particularly in low SES areas. In low SES areas the waiting lists are short, because the families here often do not understand the 'waiting list game'. The shortness of the waiting lists is a blessing for parents not attuned to the middle-class enrolment and waiting procedures. In Wellington, fortunately, there are not too many cases of higher SES families bringing their children from the outer suburbs into inner-city pre-school centres in an effort to shorten the time on waiting lists. High SES families using inner-city kindergartens occurs to a greater extent in Auckland, according to Barney (1975). The lack of children from high SES families attending low SES pre-school centres in Wellington are probably a result of:

- parents do not know of the shorter waiting lists in inner-city pre-schools;
- the pressure for kindergarten places is greater in Auckland, because it has been the subject of greater urban drift;
- inner-city kindergartens are across-town in Wellington from most high SES suburbs; that is, they are not on the way to either parent's place of work;
- many families feel that the transition from pre-school to school will be easier if the child attends the pre-school centre near his future school.

The turnover of children in low SES kindergartens is just as high as in kindergartens with very long waiting lists. The children are being admitted mostly between 3 and 4 years of age, yet they are only averaging two terms of kindergarten attendance before they drop out. This is a problem that needs further research.

A large proportion of non-users, 48 percent, said they never walked down to the area of Newlands where all three pre-school centres were situated close to the shopping centre. Only 15 percent of the families who attended playcentre or kindergarten in the same suburb never walked to the shopping centre, and yet there was little difference between the users and non-users in their proximity to the pre-school centres. About 20 percent of the non-user mothers did not drive a car (a similar proportion was found amongst users), but a further 20 percent of non-user mothers only had the use of a car occasionally, whereas only 6.5 percent of those attending pre-school services were in this position (possibly because the wives had a better reason for using the family car once the children were attending a pre-school centre). It seems, therefore, that more non-user mothers were without a car more often than pre-school participants, and when this is coupled with their reluctance to walk, getting to and from a playcentre or kindergarten becomes a problem. From intuition, I would say that this problem of transport could be a universal one for non-user families in any district. Joining a car pool usually happens after the child has been attending a pre-school centre for a few weeks. Mobile units, similar to that operated by the Y.W.C.A. in Potone, offer one solution where transporting children is a major problem, although many educationists feel that the parents (mother) ought to be picked up too wherever possible.

#### Differences between Playcentre and Kindergarten User Families

The main characteristics distinguishing families who used playcentres and free kindergartens included:

1. There was no statistically significant difference between playcentre and kindergarten fathers' SES.
2. Participation in sports and recreation clubs and voluntary organisations was related to choice of pre-school organisation. In the playcentre sample a large proportion attained a medium social participation score; whereas the 'joiners' who had high social participation scores and those with low social participation scores tended to use kindergarten far more. This may indicate either that the very involved members

in the community avoid playcentre because they could not commit themselves to any more voluntary work, or that those who are involved in the playcentre movement have less time left for voluntary work outside the movement. At the local level, it is probable that the former explanation applies. Bradley (1973) has suggested that parents participating in voluntary organisations, such as playcentre, require greater levels of verbal and organisational social skills in order to fulfil their membership obligations - for example, of parent - helping during the children's programme and serving on the centre's administrative council.

Table 7.7. Parent Social Participation Score by Pre-school Affiliation

<u>Score on Chapin Scale</u>	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
0 - 8	13	28.9	23	34.8	36	32.4
9 - 20	27	60.0	25	37.9	52	46.8
21 - 35	<u>5</u>	<u>11.1</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>27.3</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>20.7</u>
	<u>45</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>100.0</u>

$$\chi^2 = 6.46; \text{ df} = 2; p < 0.05.$$

As could be expected from other social participation studies, it was the families in the high SES suburbs who were in the very-involved categories (See Table 8.3; page 179). However, in the low SES suburb where most parents have not been socialized into voluntary group membership, the pre-schools have to work continually to get and keep committee members. A playcentre has, in addition, to motivate some members to train as supervisors. Also, special efforts are needed to get mothers and children along. Once there, parents in such areas enjoy playcentre as much as their children, if the high adult attendance rate can be taken as an indicator of enjoyment.

A majority, 52 percent, of non-users had low social participation scores, despite their relatively high family SES, which could indicate the non-use is related to lack of social skills. These parents may be unsure of enrolment procedures or diffident about their ability to fulfil membership obligations.

These statistics suggest that social participation may be an intervening variable between family SES and the pre-school service chosen. This variable could have the effect of weakening the correlation between high family SES and playcentre use. It is possible that families with upper



SES occupations who normally acquire the skills and the socialization which are associated with voluntary organisation participation (Roth, 1972; Bell and Force, 1956) are so involved in a variety of community groups that they choose kindergarten which involves fewer obligations. 'Soft' data in the form of conversations with pre-school parents during observations at play-centres and kindergartens support the hypothesis that social participation skills intervene between family SES and the choice between playcentre and kindergarten.

3. Recent geographic mobility and intended geographic mobility was far more common amongst playcentre users. It was this factor which emerged as the dominant influence on the decision regarding use of pre-school services, and on the choice between playcentre and free kindergarten.

Table 7.8.                      Parents' Years in the Suburb by  
   Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Less than 2 years	17	37.8	12	18.2	29	26.0
2 to 5 years	15	33.3	16	24.2	31	27.9
More than 5 years	<u>13</u>	<u>28.9</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>57.6</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>45.9</u>
	45	100.0	66	100.0	111	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 9.52; \quad df = 2; \quad p < 0.01.$$

Twenty-two percent of playcentre users had been in their suburb for less than one year and another 16 percent had lived there for between one and two years, whereas only 18 percent of kindergarten participants had arrived in their suburb in the previous two years. Kindergarten users were more settled - 58 percent had been in the same suburb for five or more years, which was the case for only 29 percent of the playcentre users; and the same proportion of non-users.

Although not statistically significant, there was a tendency for kindergarten users to feel more settled for the future than playcentre users. Seventy-three percent of kindergarten users had no intention of moving in the following twelve months, compared with 67 percent of playcentre users (See Table 8.4; page 180).

4. Eighty-two percent of playcentre parents see their own parents or in-laws infrequently or never (36 percent), whereas only 53 percent of

kindergarten parents visit their children's grandparents so seldom. These proportions were quite startling. This would indicate a lessening of physical ties with kin in Wellington since Miriam Gilson (1969) did her family survey and found, by comparison with these results, relatively strong ties with kin. I checked whether those children who saw their grandparents seldom or never were those whose grandparents had died or were living a considerable distance away, and found that this was the case. Obviously a great many young families living in Wellington are geographically mobile but playcentre attracts more such families than does kindergarten. This provides a further dimension to the description of playcentre as a 'family' pre-school organisation. As well as playcentre being for the whole family, it can also become something of a substitute for kin relationships. Witness one playcentre family who had their house burned down. It was mostly playcentre friends who cared for the children, donated clothing and household items 'to see the family right' after their misfortune. Another playcentre mother, involved in a car crash, was provided with baking, housekeeping help and transport to out-patients' clinics by a roster of playcentre parents in the weeks succeeding the accident, just as if she were kin.

5. A related finding was that playcentre families call on friends and family more frequently for day-time child-minding than do kindergarten families. This is probably partly a product of kindergartens being open for five mornings per week for older children, compared with the norm of three sessions for urban playcentre children. (The Federation Secretary had knowledge of only twenty-two groups in New Zealand offering four sessions per week in 1975.) Sixty-five percent of playcentre parents had their pre-school children minded at least once per week during the day, compared with 52 percent of kindergarten parents who called on neighbours and family as frequently. The higher rate of playcentre families calling on friends for child-minding during the day, is another aspect of the 'family' nature of playcentre.
6. The stronger ties of Wellington kindergarten parents with their extended family played a part in introducing these users to free kindergartens. No playcentre user in the sample joined that movement through family relationships. A large majority of playcentre families (71 percent) joined through friends and neighbours telling them about playcentre.

The only other notable source of knowledge about playcentre was publicity efforts.

Table 7.9.      Parents' Source of Knowledge about Pre-school Facilities by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Network contacts	32	71.1	30	45.5	62	55.9
Family	-	-	6	9.1	6	5.4
Reference	3	6.7	10	15.2	13	11.7
Publicity/publicly visible	6	13.3	12	18.1	18	16.2
Mixed	<u>4</u>	<u>8.9</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>12.1</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>10.8</u>
	<u>45</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>100.0</u>

$$\chi^2 = 9.49; \quad df = 4; \quad p < 0.05$$

Kindergarten participants learned about kindergarten and its enrolling procedures from a variety of sources: family, friends and neighbours, a reference by agencies such as Plunket, and by calling in after seeing it in passing (publicly visible). With reference to the last source of information, kindergartens are generally more visible to the community in their purpose-built accommodation than playcentres whose leaders have favoured using community accommodation. Nine kindergarten families (mostly migrants) enrolled after they saw the kindergarten in passing.

7. More kindergarten mothers were in paid employment (42 percent) than were playcentre mothers (36 percent). Also, 25 percent of the kindergarten working mothers had full-time jobs whereas only one playcentre mother in the sample had a full-time job.

Table 7.10.      Pre-school Mothers' Paid Work by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
No work	29	64.4	38	57.6	67	60.4
Part-time work	15	33.3	19	28.8	34	30.6
Full-time work	<u>1</u>	<u>2.2</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>13.6</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>9.0</u>
	<u>45</u>	<u>99.9</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>111</u>	<u>100.0</u>

$$\chi^2 = 4.35; \quad df = 2; \quad p > 0.10.$$

8. Although not statistically significant, the analysis of the data showed that, in Wellington city, the kindergartens catered for more non-

Pakeha\* families (13 families) than did playcentres (3 families). The difference in my data could be greater than would be found for the whole of Wellington city, because I interviewed thirty-seven parents in the suburb of Newtown where the majority of Wellington's non-Pakehas live.

A stronger relationship between different ethnic background and kindergarten use was found when those for whom English is a second language were studied. Only one playcentre user in the sample spoke a language other than English to her children, but 21 percent of the kindergarten sample spoke a language other than English - 6 percent of them having very little English. It could be difficult for someone with little English to fulfil such membership obligations as parent-helping in a predominantly Pakeha playcentre, although most playcentres are able to support a few families who cannot participate fully.

9. Many of the reasons given for choosing playcentre or free kindergarten were related to personal child-rearing philosophies. This is one characteristic which I did not ask about directly in this survey, but nevertheless it emerged as being a fairly important influence in the choice of pre-school service. When answering the open-ended question "Why did you choose playcentre/kindergarten?", many parents volunteered the information that they wished the pre-school service to reinforce their child-rearing practices. This is one area which could be examined in future studies.

Parents who believe that children should do as they are told seem to like kindergarten:

*I don't like the way my neighbours, who use playcentre, raise their children - the children are not controlled at home and I've heard they are not at playcentre (either). The children don't have to do as they are told.*

and

*My daughter had had a self-expression time in the (neighbourhood) playgroup but, by the time she was four, she needed more discipline than playcentre has.*

(Parent interviewees)

\* Pakeha is the Maori term for New Zealanders of European descent.

Parents who believe in more freedom for their children and the chance to learn self direction seem to like playcentre:

*I like playcentre. Kindergarten is too like school.  
Playcentre has more adults to help the children.  
(Parent interviewee)*

A great many parents seemed to choose kindergarten because they felt kindergarten discipline and organisation matched their home practices. Some were critical of the kindergarten teachers' handling of children, but a greater proportion were critical of playcentre discipline because it did not match their own philosophy of child-rearing which was fairly authoritarian. I was told about many incidences of children's behaviour in playcentres, which parents disapproved of. Sixty-five families had used playcentre at some stage and the reasons for choosing playcentre included liking the parent involvement and the less formal programme, desiring a younger entry to pre-school education, and getting company for their children.

Table 7.11. Parents Reasons for Preferring Playcentre

		%
Reasons related to child-rearing philosophy	Like parent involvement	27.0
	Want less formal programme	<u>4.5</u>
		31.5
Other	Younger entry	42.0
	Couldn't enrol at kindy	15.0
	Child's Social Benefit	6.0
	Referred	3.0
	Nearest	<u>1.5</u>
		<u>99.0</u>

Eighty-four families had used kindergarten at some stage and their reasons for choosing kindergartens were that it was organised and supervised in a manner that appealed to parents, that it had better equipment and activities, and because it gave the children a chance to mix with others of their own age.

Table 7.12. Parents Reasons for Preferring Kindergarten

		%
Reasons related to child-rearing philosophy	"More organised - more disciplined"	36.0
Other	Social benefits to child	18.0
	Better equipment and activities	14.0
	Nearest	12.0
	Referred	9.5
	Other	<u>11.0</u>
		<u>100.5</u>

Amongst the 111 user families, were 28 families who admitted having used each of the two pre-school services at different times. Seventy-five percent of these families had made kindergarten their first choice, but had gone to playcentre for a period because the child could start there earlier. Seven percent had chosen playcentre for an older child and felt that the kindergarten style of discipline would suit their younger child better. Both services had had 7 percent of their families switching from one type of service to the other because the child could not settle at the first form of pre-school tried. Quite a few parents mentioned the personality of staff members as a contributing factor to the child not settling.

No attempt was made to evaluate the personality types of pre-school staff members during the pre-school staff survey, and the sample of sixty-two was too small to generalise from. But the survey did provide data indicating some of the different characteristics of kindergarten teachers and playcentre supervisors, as well as indicating the satisfactions and dissatisfactions felt by the staff; information which can be useful for evaluating organisational performance.

#### PRE-SCHOOL STAFF SURVEY

The motivation to take on pre-school work, the length of experience of the staff in this type of work and the reasons for leaving add up to a picture of playcentre supervisors having an entirely different attitude to this work than kindergarten teachers.

Mothers who undertake playcentre training courses often do so without any intention of supervising, then find themselves being persuaded that their

services are needed by their playcentre. Sixty-nine percent of the playcentre sample started supervising because they had some training and their centre was short of staff; a further 20 percent chose to supervise because they wanted to be involved with their children's pre-school education; and 7.5 percent wanted to extend previous teaching training and experience. Equal proportions (35 percent) of kindergarten staff chose kindergarten teaching as a career because they wanted to work with young children or because they had earlier connections with kindergartens and liked the work. Eighteen percent of the sample had been thwarted in their desire to be primary teachers.

Seventy-four percent of the kindergarten sample had been teaching for more than two years, whereas only 28 percent of the supervisors had worked in a playcentre for that time. No playcentre staff had given more than ten years' service, but 17 percent of the kindergarten teachers had taught for at least ten years.

Table 7.13. Staff Years of Experience by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Less than 2 years	28	71.8	6	26.1	34	54.8
2 - 9 years	11	28.2	13	56.5	24	38.7
10+ years	-	-	4	17.4	4	6.5
	39	100.0	23	100.0	62	100.0

$$D = 0.46; \quad X^2 = 12.25; \quad df = 2; \quad p < 0.01$$

Similarly, 50 percent of the kindergarten Head-teachers had held that position for five or more years, but no playcentre Supervisors had been head of the supervising team for that length of time.

Playcentre Supervisors and Assistants also intended to leave their positions in a shorter time, because they did not regard them as careers, although 46 percent of the playcentre sample informed me that they would like to continue working with pre-school children if there were opportunities to do so. The supervisors said they intended leaving because their children were starting school (21 percent), because another trainee wanted supervision experience (21 percent), because they were pregnant (18 percent), or to take up paid employment (18 percent).



None of the playcentre staff were explicit about being dissatisfied with their work. The high turnover of staff seems to be more a product of the playcentre mode of functioning (parents running their own co-operative pre-school centre for their own families) than of dissatisfaction with their role. The seven kindergarten teachers leaving in the foreseeable future gave miscellaneous reasons. Two of them were critical of the kindergarten service - it paid poorly, and the work conditions meant that ideals could not be fulfilled.

There were remarkable similarities in the feelings of satisfaction expressed by both playcentre and kindergarten staff. The  $\chi^2$  test revealed that the two types of staff were nearly uniform as regards feelings of satisfaction.

Table 7.14.                      Job Satisfaction Felt by Staff by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Very high	11	28.2	8	34.8	19	30.7
High	21	53.9	11	47.8	32	51.6
Moderate	<u>7</u>	<u>18.0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>17.4</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>17.7</u>
	39	100.1	23	100.0	62	100.0

$\chi^2 = 0.30$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p > 0.1$ .

The three main sources of satisfaction for kindergarten teachers came from working with children (64 percent), meeting other adults through this work (27 percent), and job freedom (9 percent). Seventy-one percent of playcentre supervisors felt that working with children gave them most satisfaction; and meeting and working with other adults was important too (23 percent). Sixty-five percent of both types of staff said they felt a strong commitment to their work, but 'family' was named as their main life interest by all playcentre staff and by ten kindergarten teachers.

The staff were asked which aspects of their work were most important to them. For kindergarten teachers, a happy relationship with the other staff ranked highest and good physical working conditions ranked second. For playcentre staff, by far the most important consideration was the fact that playcentre work could be combined with family responsibilities; and a harmonious relationship with other staff was ranked second.

The survey gave staff the opportunity to suggest changes to the ways playcentres or kindergartens are administered. Most playcentre staff said that the playcentre administration should not be changed. The most frequently mentioned changes desired were that supervisors and administrators should forge closer links and that more men should participate in playcentre activities. On the other hand, more administrative changes were proposed by kindergarten staff. Twenty-seven percent of them wanted the Department of Education to take over kindergarten administration. An equal proportion (27 percent) of the staff wanted the professional to be given greater discretion in the running of kindergartens, and wanted improved staff to children ratios.

When asked to specify how the association could assist more:

- kindergarten teachers asked most frequently for improved secretarial services (31 percent);
- playcentre supervisors asked most frequently for more frequent, supportive visits from association personnel (53 percent).

In specifying how Government could assist local pre-school centres more:

- kindergarten teachers asked most frequently for finance for equipping and running kindergartens, and for paying staff (41 percent);
- playcentre supervisors asked most frequently for financial help towards sites and buildings (37 percent).

It is interesting that the ways that staff members of both organisations would like Government to further assist are partly at variance with the views of pre-school volunteers regarding Government assistance, and this will become clearer in Part II. This suggests that each of these two groups of pre-school personnel may interpret the performance of the State-voluntary organisation partnership, after certain strategic choices have been made, in rather different ways.

#### PRE-SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS SURVEY

This was the last survey, chronologically, to be conducted. During 1975, 44 volunteers were interviewed personally and 118 volunteers responded to the same questionnaire sent to them in the post. The satisfactions and frustrations felt by the pre-school volunteers who administer the playcentre and free kindergarten movements are one criterion for evaluating organisational performance, and this topic was explored in the questionnaire.

More importantly this survey was conducted to find out the characteristics of the people who guided and directed the four strategic choice processes discussed in Chapters 8 to 11.

Studies of decision-making suggest that there are two types of variable which influence leadership behaviour:

- Situational variables, and
- Personal attributes (including values) of the leaders.

Vroom and Yetton (1973) argue that neither of these are sufficient on their own to explain leadership behaviour. Child (1972) and Hage and Dewar (1973) argue that, as a dominant coalition are able to manipulate their organisation, some attention should be paid to defining who comprises the dominant coalition.

#### Characteristics

When comparing playcentre volunteers with kindergarten volunteers, it was found that the former group were younger. The kindergarten sample had fewer respondents in the 20 - 29 years age group, than did playcentre volunteers, and greater proportions in their 30s and 40s. As Roth (1971) found that the peak age for participation in voluntary work in New Zealand was 35 - 44, but with men having a high level of participation in the 25 - 34 age group also, it seems that kindergarten volunteers are following the New Zealand pattern. The extent of male-female participation will be influenced by the greater proportion of men on kindergarten committees. Fifty-nine percent of the kindergarten volunteers were male, compared with 12 percent male volunteers in the playcentre sample - a difference which is statistically significant (See Table 10.1, Chapter 10, p.210). When sex was related to the level of involvement (level in the hierarchy), it was found that for both organisations combined, a constant male proportion of 35 percent held at local and association levels, but dropped at the national level to 19 percent.

The high proportion of male kindergarten volunteers must influence decision-making behaviour. I would argue that many kindergarten decisions are influenced by men valuing 'good business practice' and gaining satisfaction from the tangible outcomes of kindergarten activities - establishing new kindergartens, adding new equipment and improving the bank balance. Playcentre leaders are less worried about bank balances, and I sense that this is because the committees are dominated by women who tend to value the

educational processes, which enable children and their parents to learn together, more highly than tangible rewards such as buildings.

The playcentre movement attracts more volunteers in the younger age group (who generally have fewer organisational skills and/or are less interested in voluntary work), because of the co-operative nature of the organisation. Deny Garrett, Director of the Continuing Education Division of the Department of Education, speaking at the 1975 Annual General Meeting of the Wellington Playcentre Association, felt that the playcentre movement was doing the task of encouraging young mothers to develop their confidence and leadership skills too well with the result that the movement was losing its potential leaders to other jobs in the education and welfare fields. Playcentre members agree, particularly association members; and the data presented in Chapter 8 shows the extent of the turnover of one category of voluntary workers - playcentre supervisors - whom I have designated as staff in this study. The movement attracts younger members, but it also loses many of them early.

As might be expected from the ages of the volunteers, playcentre volunteers tended to have younger families. Equal proportions of both movements' volunteers had at least one pre-school child (74 percent); however, the playcentre organisation had far more committee members with all their children under 5 years old. Of the 25 percent of both kindergarten and playcentre volunteers who had no pre-school children, most of the kindergarten members had adult children, whereas playcentre volunteers had predominantly school-age children.

Table 7.15.      Pre-school Volunteers Family Composition by  
Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
All pre-schoolers	20	23.5	3	4.5	23	15.2
Some infants, some pre-schoolers	14	16.5	9	13.6	23	15.2
Some infants, some pre-schoolers, some school	8	9.4	14	21.2	22	14.6
Some pre-schoolers, some school	20	23.5	23	34.9	43	28.5
All school	17	20.0	7	10.6	24	15.9
All/some adults	<u>6</u>	<u>7.1</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>15.2</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>10.6</u>
	<u>85</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>151</u>	<u>100.0</u>

$\chi^2 = 18.57$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.01$ .

N.B. Eleven volunteers had no children.

The playcentre volunteers tended to have larger families than ordinary playcentre families. Eight percent of the playcentre families in the earlier survey had four or more children, but 22 percent of the playcentre volunteers had a family of this size. There was no difference in the size of families between the kindergarten volunteers and ordinary kindergarten families.

Less than 50 percent of the female kindergarten and female playcentre volunteers had paid employment, and female SES ranking of earlier employment was the same in both organisations, as was the male volunteers' SES ranking based on their present occupations. To obtain a more complete picture of committee members' SES ranking, I combined data on the male volunteers' job rankings with the data on the female volunteers' husbands' job rankings. With the combined rankings it was found that kindergarten volunteers' family SES ranking was higher (although not significantly) than ordinary kindergarten families; but that the playcentre volunteers' family SES rankings matched the ordinary playcentre families' SES rankings.

Table 7.16. Male Occupational Status by Pre-school Affiliation

	Playcentre				Kindergarten			
	Parents		Volunteers		Parents		Volunteers	
		%		%		%		%
SES 1 and 2	27	62.0	58	66.7	33	50.0	47	63.8
SES 3 and 4	15	33.0	25	28.7	24	36.4	27	36.2
SES 5 and 6	2	5.0	4	4.6	9	13.6	-	-
	44	100.0	87	100.0	66	100.0	74	100.0
Playcentre			D = 0.06		Kindergarten		D = 0.14	
Samples:			X <sup>2</sup> = 0.40		Samples:		X <sup>2</sup> = 2.35	
			df = 2				df = 2	
			p > 0.8				p > 0.1	

Hatch and Mocroft (1977), reporting on a British national survey investigating how many and which people participate in voluntary organisations, say:

*... voluntary effort in the social services rightly consists of the well-off helping the less well-off ... But, in thinking about the future, especially with reference to where untapped potential may lie, there is a case for giving particular attention to voluntary organisations that transcend class differences.*

*Organisations for handicapped children seem to come into this category ... Their members are mostly the children's parents. (Ibid, p.24)*

Both kindergarten and the playcentre voluntary movements fit Hatch and Mocroft's category of voluntary organisation for the future, but it is the playcentre organisation which does not differ at all in the SES rankings of volunteers and ordinary users.

Most of the playcentre volunteers were in the income bracket of \$6000 - \$9999, whereas kindergarten volunteers had a more scattered range of incomes with higher proportions in the lower and higher income brackets (i.e. \$3000 - \$5999, and \$10,000 and over, respectively) than the playcentre volunteers. There was a strong bias, for both groups of volunteers, towards having higher incomes than ordinary parents - more than could be expected from the rapid inflation rate in the year between the two surveys which made comparability difficult. It is hoped that by using only four income groupings, some of this difficulty has been overcome. As a yardstick, it is worth noting that the male average annual income in 1973-74 was \$3776.5, and in 1974-75 it was \$4309, an increase of 14 percent.

Table 7.17.

Male Income by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>				<u>Kindergarten</u>			
	<u>Parents</u>		<u>Volunteers</u>		<u>Parents</u>		<u>Volunteers</u>	
		%		%		%		%
\$0 - \$5999	12	28.6	9	11.0	25	40.3	11	15.1
\$6000 - \$9999	23	54.8	46	56.1	28	45.2	32	43.8
\$10,000 +	<u>7</u>	<u>16.7</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>33.0</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>14.5</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>41.1</u>
	<u>42</u>	<u>100.1</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>100.1</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>73</u>	<u>100.0</u>
	Playcentre	D = 0.16			Kindergarten	D = 0.27		
	Samples:	$\chi^2 = 2.83$			Samples:	$\chi^2 = 10.12$		
		df = 2				df = 2		
		p > 0.1				p < 0.01		

The main distinguishing feature of the volunteers was that they belonged to the group of people in New Zealand who were very active in voluntary organisations. Their social participation scores were considerably higher than the 'ordinary' pre-school families.

Table 7.18.                      Social Participation by Pre-school Affiliation

<u>Chapin Score</u>	<u>Playcentre</u>				<u>Kindergarten</u>			
	<u>Parents</u>		<u>Volunteers</u>		<u>Parents</u>		<u>Volunteers</u>	
		%		%		%		%
0 - 8	13	28.9	5	6.0	23	34.8	1	1.4
9 - 19	27	60.0	35	41.7	25	37.9	31	43.1
20 +	<u>5</u>	<u>11.1</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>52.4</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>27.3</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>55.6</u>
	45	100.0	84	100.0	66	100.0	72	100.0
	$\chi^2 = 26.4$				$\chi^2 = 28.95$			
	df = 2				df = 2			
	p < 0.001				p < 0.001			

As the Chapin Scale (1970) gives the mean score of occupational groups I and II (Professional, and Managerial and Propriety) as 20, and there are over 60 percent of the pre-school volunteers in occupational groups I and II, the high proportion of high participators was expected. The very small proportion (4 percent) with a score of 8 or less was also expected, as only 3 percent of the volunteers or their husbands had semi-skilled occupations; the latter occupational group having a mean score of 8 on the Chapin Scale. Thus the pre-school volunteers had characteristics associated with voluntary work, but how did they become involved with play-centre or kindergarten committees?

#### Reasons for Undertaking Voluntary Work

Playcentre members tended to join the committee because of personal requests by someone who is or was already committed (75 percent), whereas only 41 percent of the kindergarten volunteers joined the committee because of a network contact. The majority of kindergarten committee members either volunteered, usually at Annual General Meeting time (27 percent), or attended the A.G.M. and found themselves elected onto the committee (24 percent).



Table 7.19.                      How Volunteers First Joined a Committee  
by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Personal approach	65	74.7	31	41.3	96	59.3
Attended A.G.M.	7	8.1	18	24.0	25	15.4
Volunteered	8	9.2	20	26.7	28	17.3
Other	<u>7</u>	<u>8.1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8.0</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>8.0</u>
	87	100.1	75	100.0	162	100.0
	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

$\chi^2 = 21.33$ ;  $df = 3$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

On the basis of observational data, and the pre-school families survey where 71 percent enrolled their children at playcentre because of network contacts, this difference was predictable. Thus, a co-operative organisation such as the playcentre movement, whose aim is "working towards providing community services for promoting good family relationships" (NZPCF Constitution, 1972), is more likely to attract families via personal networks and is more likely to obtain increased commitment via personal requests than via the less personal organisational mechanisms which caused kindergarten parents to undertake committee membership.

What motivated the volunteers to work for the pre-school movements? The majority said they wanted primarily to be involved in their own children's pre-school education; this was true of both playcentre and kindergarten volunteers.

Table 7.20.                      Volunteers' Primary Reason for Joining a Pre-  
school Committee by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
To be involved in childrens pre-school education	46	52.9	40	53.3	86	53.1
To meet others	19	21.8	2	2.7	21	13.0
Just said 'Yes'	9	10.3	6	8.0	15	9.3
Help to the community	7	8.1	10	13.3	17	10.5
Do something for the pre-school centre	5	5.7	11	14.7	16	9.9
Other	<u>1</u>	<u>1.2</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>8.0</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>4.3</u>
	87	100.0	75	100.0	162	100.1
	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>	<u>      </u>

$\chi^2 = 20.35$ ;  $df = 5$ ;  $p < 0.001$ .

Following the pattern of the more personal way the playcentre organisation functions, there was a higher proportion (22 percent) of the playcentre sample who joined to meet others, than was found in the kindergarten sample (3 percent). The longer-staying members tended to have joined a pre-school committee for adult companionship and presumably got it. Those who joined because they wanted to do something for the community and in particular for their pre-school, tended to have been pre-school volunteers for a shorter time and said that when they had no more children at the pre-school centre, they expected to move onto other community voluntary organisations.

Once they had joined a committee, the majority of the playcentre sample (57 percent) held more than one position, compared with only 31 percent of the kindergarten sample. This may be a product of the greater diversity of playcentre positions, and the normative behaviour of members not holding any one position for too long. Thirty-three percent of the playcentre volunteers had given more than five years service; whereas only 23 percent of the kindergarten sample had given that length of service.

Table 7.21. Volunteers' Years on a Pre-school Committee by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Under one	12	14.0	15	20.0	27	16.8
1, and less than 2	33	38.4	24	32.0	57	35.4
2, and less than 5	13	15.1	19	25.3	32	19.9
5, and less than 15	24	27.9	10	13.4	34	21.1
15 +	4	4.6	7	9.3	11	6.8
	86	100.0	75	100.0	161	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 0.11; \text{ df} = 4; p > 0.05.$$

A large proportion of the pre-school volunteers intended to resign from the pre-school committees in less than 2 years - 44 percent indicated this intention. The main reason given for leaving reflects the primary motive for joining (to be involved in their children's pre-school education) in that 55 percent were leaving once all their children were at school. Only three kindergarten and two playcentre volunteers said they were leaving because they felt dissatisfied with pre-school voluntary work. The higher the level of involvement, the longer the anticipated service in the future.

One third of the local members expected to resign in less than one year, and only 16 percent envisaged staying with this kind of voluntary work for more than five years. Five years or more of further service was anticipated by 41 percent of association members and by 62 percent of national members. Thus, the expected future involvement reflects the trends in the years of service shown in Table 7.21, Chapter 7, p.149.

There are positive relationships between length of service, level of satisfaction and level of involvement. Commitment builds up with years of service. Many of today's highly committed volunteers would probably not have stayed with the playcentre or kindergarten organisation to accumulate feelings of satisfaction and commitment, had it not been for the years they spent at local level because they had several children. This is reinforced by data which shows that all playcentre volunteers with four or more children have high satisfaction and ten of thirteen kindergarten volunteers with the same number of children also felt high satisfaction. With demographic changes tending towards smaller families, and with long waiting lists enforcing shorter periods of kindergarten education for many children, I predict that the kindergarten movement in particular may have increasing difficulties in finding personnel in some associations who are willing to commit themselves to higher levels of involvement. More will move onto other voluntary work than when families were larger.

Why did some volunteers become further involved in the playcentre or kindergarten movement? Over 30 percent of both kindergarten and playcentre members said that they became more involved because there was a shortage of volunteers. This was particularly true at local level. Forty-three percent of the playcentre involved members said they became more deeply involved because they were 'hooked' on the movement, and 28 percent of the kindergarten volunteers gave a similar response. Probably more playcentre volunteers were 'hooked' because a greater proportion of them said they felt a high or very high level of satisfaction with their pre-school voluntary work - 86 percent compared with 70 percent of kindergarten volunteers (See Table 10.2; p.214). Female volunteers were more likely to express a feeling of high or very high satisfaction, and far more playcentre volunteers were female. All the volunteers who admitted a low level of satisfaction were male.

Table 7.22.

Volunteers' Satisfactions by Pre-school  
Affiliation

	Playcentre		Kindergarten		Total	
		%		%		%
Companionship	37	23.0	24	20.3	61	21.8
Value to children	35	21.7	14	11.9	49	17.6
Personal satisfaction	30	18.6	21	17.8	51	18.3
Involved in children's education	15	9.3	15	12.7	30	10.8
Learn about pre-school education	13	8.1	3	2.5	16	5.7
Improve own pre-school	11	6.8	16	13.6	27	9.7
Staff appreciation	1	0.6	11	9.3	12	4.3
More pre-school places	-	-	3	2.5	3	1.1
Other	19	11.8	11	9.3	30	10.8
	161	99.9	118	99.9	279	100.1

$\chi^2 = 19.28$ ;  $df = 8$ ;  $p < 0.05$ .

N.B. These statistics are based on how many times each satisfaction was mentioned, (each respondent was asked to name two satisfaction), not on how many respondents gave a particular answer.

Adult friendship was the satisfaction most often mentioned by all volunteers, particularly at association level. Those who joined to meet others - all women - had a higher proportion of well satisfied members. Although no males joined for adult companionship, 21 percent of the male volunteers mentioned that the finding of friends was a major source of satisfaction. Neither movement appears to deliberately foster friendships to retain their voluntary members, but the playcentre movement is very aware that good human relations lies at the heart of their remaining a viable parent co-operative pre-school movement. Some of the actions of kindergarten committee office-bearers have constrained volunteers from forming friendships. The most noticeable action in this respect observed during my field work in 1975 was the provision of tea and biscuits before or after a meeting was stopped.

Turning to the frustrations which may be contributing factors in causing people to feel less satisfied and therefore to leave, it is ironic that the main frustration for both kindergarten and playcentre volunteers was parent apathy, manifested in the form of few people being prepared to serve on the committee, and lack of support for fund-raising efforts or working parties to maintain the pre-school centre. There were differences though

in the other frustrations felt by playcentre and kindergarten volunteers. As will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 10, Government bureaucratic behaviour and the kindergarten movement's own rules frustrated kindergarten volunteers (See Table 10.3; page 214). Second to parent apathy in playcentre volunteers' list of frustrations came problems to do with accommodation and/or personnel at the local level. Running a co-operative venture requires harmonious and efficient team-work by many people at the local level, and it is little wonder that there were resentments about people who did not pull their weight. Bureaucratic behaviour, such as "too much 'red-tape'", was only mentioned for 13 percent of the frustrations recorded.

Only five volunteers admitted intending to leave their pre-school movement because they were dissatisfied with the voluntary organisation; three of these were local members, one was an association member and one was a national member. There was no common complaint amongst these five. Only one member of the four volunteers who said they felt very dissatisfied was remaining on a committee. He had chosen the 'loyalty option' (Hirschman, 1970) - his local committee was struggling to remain in existence and he felt no-one else would do the work should he leave.

Three of the four strategic choices that are discussed in Section II mostly involved national level members in the decision-making - lower level members were able to influence the process during the implementation stage, particularly if they were playcentre members who had avenues open them to voice their disapproval or dissent. For this reason, a description of volunteers who were involved at national level compared with association and local level members is pertinent.

The volunteers who were on committees at the highest level in the organisations' hierarchies were characterised by their being older, by many no longer having pre-school children (but having more children), and by their having been a committee member of their voluntary organisation for a longer period than lower level members. Nine national members had served on a pre-school committee of some sort for fifteen or more years.

Table 7.23. Volunteers' Years on a Pre-school Committee  
by Level of Involvement

<u>Years</u>	<u>Local</u>		<u>Association</u>		<u>National</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%		%
Under 2	77	72.6	7	24.1	-	-	84	52.2
2 - 5	25	23.6	7	24.1	-	-	32	19.9
5 - 20	4	3.8	15	51.7	26	100.0	45	27.9
	106	100.0	29	99.9	26	100.0	161	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 108.6; \text{ df} = 4; p < 0.01.$$

Higher level members were also more willing to serve longer in the future than lower level members. The willingness to continue working for a pre-school voluntary organisation is related to the amount of satisfaction these involved people felt. More of the higher level members felt a high level of satisfaction from working for the pre-school organisation than did lower level members.

Table 7.24. Volunteers' Level of Satisfaction by  
Level of Involvement

	<u>Local</u>		<u>Association</u>		<u>National</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%		%
Very high	26	24.5	13	46.4	16	64.0	55	34.6
High	52	49.1	9	32.1	8	32.0	69	43.4
Moderate	25	23.6	5	17.9	1	4.0	31	19.5
Low	3	2.8	1	3.6	-	-	4	2.5
	106	100.0	28	100.0	25	100.0	159	100.0

$$\chi^2 = 17.88; \text{ df} = 6; p < 0.05.$$

The high satisfaction helps to explain why the playcentre organisation, despite its oft-repeated call for a continuous flow of new blood, tends towards oligarchy; and why the kindergarten organisation has even stronger oligarchic tendencies. The latter organisation's members, once they have given five years' service, have a history of very long service.

#### Decision-making

Most of this chapter has been concerned with the characteristics of people connected with the playcentre and free kindergarten movements. However, the questionnaire for pre-school volunteers included a question about what sort of decision-making they felt predominated. The information given in their replies makes a suitable bridge between the survey data about the

people, and the observational data about the strategic choice processes that are precipitated by, and affect all the types of people surveyed.

With the exception of kindergarten association personnel, the majority of every type of pre-school volunteer said that consensus decision-making predominated in their committee activities. Looking at the different levels in the organisations' hierarchies, more kindergarten local committee members perceived that consensus decision-making occurred than did playcentre local volunteers; whereas at association and national levels, the majority of playcentre volunteers said consensus decision-making prevailed, but large proportions of the kindergarten volunteers said that most decisions were not made by general consensus. They were made by an inner-core - an oligarchy. These differences were not statistically significant using the Chi-square test, even within each level of the organisation. The data did not suit any other statistical test.

Table 7.25. Type of Decision-making by Pre-School Affiliation

	<u>Local</u>				<u>Association</u>				<u>National</u>				<u>Total</u>			
	<u>Play-</u>		<u>Kinder-</u>		<u>Play-</u>		<u>Kinder-</u>		<u>Play-</u>		<u>Kinder-</u>		<u>Play-</u>		<u>Kinder-</u>	
	centre		garten		centre		garten		centre		garten		centre		garten	
	%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%	
Con-	23	41.1	26	54.2	7	53.8	5	33.3	12	70.6	4	50.0	42	48.8	35	49.3
sensus																
Mixed	11	19.6	4	8.3	3	23.1	3	20.0	4	23.5	1	12.5	18	20.9	8	11.3
Olig-	22	39.3	18	37.5	3	23.1	7	46.7	1	5.9	3	37.5	26	30.2	28	39.4
archic																
	56	100.0	48	100.0	13	100.0	15	100.0	17	100.0	8	100.0	86	99.9	71	100.0

Between level:  $\chi^2 = 3.15$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p > 0.1$ .

Between organ-  
isation:  
 $\chi^2 = 1.49$   
 $df = 2$   
 $p > 0.1$

### CONCLUSIONS

Much of the data from these surveys of pre-school families, pre-school staff and pre-school volunteers substantiates what is known intuitively by the decision-makers in the State-playcentre organisation and State-kindergarten organisation partnerships. It provides background information for future strategic choices, as well as background information for the writer and readers of this study to evaluate the four strategic choice processes chosen for closer examination in Chapters 8 to 11, using my adaptation of Child's model (1972) outlined in Chapter 3. To recapitulate briefly, the model



shows that environmental variables (environmental conditions, resources, interorganisational relationships, and clientele) are not a direct influence on changes to organisational variables: (structure, organisational size, programme or allocation of resources). The strategic choice process, whereby decision-makers decide on long-term goals and the means for implementing such goals, intervenes. The model is a cyclical one to portray the interaction of variables through the time period of the strategic choice process. In actual fact, as the preceding two historical chapters indicate, few strategic choice processes fit into a finite time period. Processes, like history, keep on going on.

The next four chapters could be said to be an examination of history in the making. Each chapter is devoted to describing and analysing a different strategic choice process. Chapters 8 and 9 concern strategic choice processes which occurred in the playcentre movement - the internally initiated decision to improve the monitoring and standards of supervision in the Wellington Association is studied in Chapter 8; and Chapter 9 analyses the process whereby Government gave the playcentre movement free sites, and buildings subsidies. The two strategic choice processes concerning the kindergarten movement were both political decisions. Chapter 11 analyses the decision to integrate kindergarten and primary teacher training; while a less significant strategic choice, providing sessional grants to kindergarten and administration grants to associations, is examined in the previous chapter, Chapter 10.

#### The Selection of Strategic Choice Processes

At this point it would be appropriate to describe the rationale underlying the selection of the four particular strategic choice processes, examined in Part II, from amongst other decisions made by the two organisations alone or in partnership with the State during the mid-1970s.

Any strategic choice process has, it will be recalled (see p.11), two elements - the choice of a major goal, and the selection of a plan of action to implement that goal. For this reason I needed to focus on major strategic choice processes AND on processes which were more or less implemented by the time I had finished the field work.

The criteria used for assessing whether or not a strategic choice was a major one were: did the voluntary organisation and/or Departmental leaders find the decision significant enough to focus upon it in an important public address; did the decision and implementation take up many hours of voluntary

time to plan and execute; and did the strategic choice have more than one long-term consequence for the organisation. All four of the strategic choice processes evaluated in Chapters 8 to 11 fulfilled at least two of these criteria. In addition, because I had come to appreciate the extent of State involvement in the decision-making by the time I had completed studying the history of the two movements, I decided to select, for each voluntary organisation, one internally initiated and one pre-dominantly State initiated strategic choice process. That I could not find an internally initiated strategic choice process in the kindergarten movement that met two of the above criteria, is an interesting commentary on the State - kindergarten organisation relationship.

## PART II

### THE PRE-SCHOOL MOVEMENTS AND THE ROLE OF STRATEGIC CHOICE

*"The complex tangle of motives prompting public decisions, the unforeseen consequences of their enactment on private lives appeared to me as part of the English landscape ... This corporate action is based ... upon the recognition of one fundamental truth about human nature - we are not only single individuals, each face to face with eternity and our separate spirits, we are members of one another." (Holtby, 1936, pp.6-7)*

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### RAISING THE STANDARDS OF PLAYCENTRE SUPERVISION AND MONITORING STANDARDS

#### SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications of supervisors has been an ongoing concern of playcentre personnel since the late 1940s. There was a difference of opinion in 1948 between Gwen Somerset (newly elected as the Federation's first President) and association personnel in several localities. Christchurch leaders, in particular, had functioned on the assumption that asking parents to learn more about child development could kill the voluntary spirit of the movement. Although the Wellington Association had been offering some lectures for parents through the mid 1940s, its leaders told Gwen Somerset that she would ruin the movement when she mooted the idea of a 20-lecture supervisor course. Gwen Somerset replied: "If it's as weak as that, it deserves to be ruined".\* To the surprise of everyone, about 100 people came to this supervisors' course and others attended parent education sessions which included the 'Winter course'. Supervisor training had taken off. The continued success is apparent from the number of certificates issued around New Zealand in 1974. There were 1095 Helpers' Certificates, 371 Assistant Supervisors' Certificates, 304 Supervisors' Certificates and 118 National Supervisors' Certificates awarded that year.

#### THE STRATEGIC CHOICE PROCESS: RAISING AND MONITORING STANDARDS OF SUPERVISION IN WELLINGTON

It would be appropriate to note here that while the training schemes in different associations have a common core, requirements and monitoring of standards differs from association to association.

In 1973, the Wellington Association released a new draft to their Supervisor Training Manual, and during 1974 trainees were able to supply the Training Team with feed-back to enable them to assess the presentation and the success of its re-structuring, in terms of the effects the new Manual had on trainee motivation and supervision performance. The Training Team in The Wellington Association comprised the Director of Training, the

\* Personal communication, 1974.

Education Officer, the President (ex officio), the Field Officer and one or two co-opted tutors.

This new Manual (which changed the standards expected of trainees doing the Wellington Association Supervisor Certificate, and encouraged far more parents to train), and a successor to the position of Director of Training were the events precipitating the Association's decision to set standards of supervision and to monitor them more closely.

The Director of Training in 1971 commented at the Association Annual Meeting that the growing stability of staff was most noticeable. She supported her statement with figures showing that 33 of the 47 groups had qualified supervisors and within a month or two, 7 more groups would have reached this level. The 1973 Constitution gave the Training Team the right to reject centres' choice of supervisors (see p.93), but no criteria were given. How did the decision to monitor standards set to specific levels come about? The Training Committee Report for the year 1973-74 describes the reasons for the decision:

*... after much thought and discussion, we recommended to the Executive that they should uphold minimum standards of training in centres from the beginning of the next year. We felt that this was very important for the health of centres. With the growth in the number of trainees\* we felt this was the time to make this move - all centres had the potential to meet the requirements with steady work from their trainees during the year. The centres who perhaps have had to struggle to meet this requirement have already found, we think, renewed vigour and the need to work together and support each other within their groups - two very important features of a healthy playcentre. (WPCA Ann. Rpt., 1974)*

The earlier method of monitoring standards of supervisors and assistants was via each centre having a Liaison Officer to advise the centre about both administration and educational matters. These officers were generally women who had had playcentre experience as a supervisor or office-bearer of a local council and had progressed up the hierarchy to act as the link person (gatekeeper) between local personnel and the Association Executive. With the restructuring of the Association into six areas, necessitating the election of six Area officers and with the decrease in numbers of women volunteering to fill these positions because

\* In 1972, 31 Helpers Certificates were awarded. In 1974 there were more than 180!!

they are moving out into the work force once their children were attending school, the number of Liaison Officers was dwindling in the 1970s. Expectations about standards were increasing but the overseeing of standards was weakening; and the Training Team felt concerned at these developments. For some years, centres had had to have their choice of Supervisors and Assistants ratified by the Association Executive, but the system was far from foolproof. Some centres failed to send in the credentials of their proposed staff, and the Association Secretary often failed to communicate the decision to ratify until well after the beginning of term, giving the impression that Association personnel were not worried about monitoring standards.

However, concern about the standards of supervision began to mount in October, 1973. A letter from one large playcentre, Karori, which ran several sessions but could not get volunteers to train for the role of Supervisor\*, or get a volunteer to take on Presidency of the local Council, reached the Association Executive about the same time as the Executive were discussing standards for the National Playcentre Certificate in preparation for the imminent Federation Education Sub-committee meeting. The Association Executive discussed Karori Playcentre's difficulties at some length and proposed a 4-pronged attack:

1. Give the Liaison Officer more support to enable her to support the centre more effectively;
2. Visit and advise the centre that the same individual could not be supervisor and at the same time be President;
3. During the same visit, try and persuade more mothers to go on to higher training; and
4. Offer more tutoring help to facilitate this.

However, after further discussion, the Executive decided that visiting the playcentre may have overtones of an inspection, and of 'handing down' rules. During the past year or so, the Executive had been working hard to overcome the attitude that the Executive were dictators - a feeling which an earlier Executive seemed to have engendered. The playcentre history revealed a pattern of conscious efforts being made to keep it a people's movement. The 1973 Executive decided therefore to offer help but not to implement the second and third proposals. Instead a letter was sent, stating that the same individual could not be President and Supervisor, and pointing out that

\* Supervisor with a capital 'S' refers to the head Supervisor.

it was hoped that more parents would take on responsibilities.

Association Executive personnel were very sensitive to the dangers of overloading one person - caring for a family, supervising and training was a heavy load for most mothers to cope with, without adding presidential tasks. On many occasions during my field work I saw Area Officers and/or Liaison Officers ask local centre personnel to give their trainee supervisors more support.

At the Federation's Education Sub-committee in October, a few days later, considerable discussion took place on the subject of the National Supervisors' Certificate, and particularly on the desirability of Supervisors transferring from association to association. The transfer of qualifications became a central issue in this strategic choice process.

At another national meeting that term, the National Executive half-yearly meeting, a Standing Committee member presented the results of some internal research into playcentre problems. The four major problems in her report all touch on the area of standards of supervision to a greater or lesser extent:

1. Finance. Playcentre trained leaders are leaving the movement to take up better paid work because of rising costs of living. Therefore finance is needed at Association level to pay for Field Officers, Directors of Training, Liaison Officers ...

(Without these key leaders, associations were finding it difficult to motivate, train and then monitor the standards of supervisors.)

2. Advisers. Part-time playcentre trained advisers are urgently required, also more departmental pre-school advisers ...

(Both types of advisers could assist with monitoring standards.)

3. Introductory talks. A strong concern about the quality of introductory talks was expressed ... Because average family size is being reduced to two children, less time for involvement at playcentre level is available, therefore parent education should begin at an earlier stage.

(It was concerning about standards, it will be recalled from Chapter 5, that led the Wellington Association's to making Introductory Talks obligatory in 1954. From my first-hand observations of a number of Introductory Talks there is a definite relationship between the quality of Introductory Talks and



the number of parents who participate in the Helpers' courses, which is the first stage in training to be a supervisor. Thus Introductory Talks could be described as the key to future success.)

4. *Training.* Training, beginning with the Introductory Talks, received a great deal of attention. Recommendations included: (a) having confidence in each Association's standards, (b) having an agreed core of interchangeable units in the training, (c) that the assistance of part-time advisors is required to help maintain standards ...

(NZPCF Nat. Exec. Mins., 1973)

(Concern here is with both standards and monitoring of standards.)

From the discussion following the presentation of this report, the National Executive formulated a recommendation that "Government provide finance for each Association to employ part-time Field Officers ... nominated, appointed and paid by Associations in and through Departmental resources" (WPCA Council Mins., 1973).

The playcentre movement sees the role of the Field Officer (termed Training Officers in later submissions to Government) as crucial to the continued maintenance of the playcentre organisation - maintenance in the sense of keeping groups functioning, and maintenance by ensuring that standards are monitored. Such a role has received attention in recent early childhood literature. Millie Almy (1975) argues that early childhood educators (facilitators and advisors to groups of early childhood teachers) are vital for the continuance of quality early childhood programmes in the future. Karnes et. al. (1975) after assessing the effectiveness of various forms of leadership for Headstart programmes, propose a new role and structure for early childhood programmes. The new role is that of a 'para-professional educator manager' and the incumbent co-ordinates a team of individuals who undertake both family work and teaching at early childhood sessions. That is, the teacher, the administrator and the community worker are one and the same person - just as is often the case in the playcentre organisation - with support and guidance and refresher training given by a manager (Field Officer in playcentre terminology) assigned to every eight or so groups.

Until such time as Field Officers are employed, however, the movement must maintain itself with over-worked volunteers, which can result in inadequate

monitoring of standards. There was a lengthy discussion about the role of Liaison Officers and Area Officers by Wellington Association Executive members late in November 1973. These officers have, amongst other things, the task of overseeing standards and reporting to the Training Team; but some officers, particularly the Liaison Officers, seemed to require sanctions to ensure that they could successfully persuade playcentre parents to replace tatty equipment, to present a vital play programme for the children and to attend parent education courses. Adequate financial rewards to Liaison Officers and Area Officers are not possible, given the financial situation of the playcentre Association. Many women who would make admirable Area Officers are lost to the movement when paid work attracts them into the other forms of employment. With more money for training and liaison work, the Area Officers functions could be expanded to those of Field Officer; so that the organisation could function in the way Karnes et. al. suggested in their discussion of para-professional educator managers.

Because playcentre believes that a turnover of personnel is beneficial to the vitality of the movement and because turnover is inevitable in a voluntary organisation concerned with families with small children (who grow up), the organisation must gear itself to continually generating new leaders. This is why the introduction to playcentre is seen as the key to the movement's maintenance. Not all local playcentre personnel recognise the connection between effective Introductory Talks and smooth systems-maintenance. However, many members did make comments such as:

*We have had a meeting to set guidelines about how to introduce new mothers. We have arranged three talks - one in the playcentre as a workshop, one coffee-morning talk and one at the Supervisor's home with the President and Liaison Officer there too. I don't think it matters if we put people off by insisting on these talks - it will select them out. (Staff interviewee)*

If the Introductory Talks are enjoyable learning experiences, there is a greater probability that the parents will become involved in further education courses which in turn pre-disposes him/her to take on leadership positions. Present-day leaders are well aware of the need for constant regeneration. Earlier leaders were happy about long service given in the early 1950s, but had the foresight to see the value of Introductory Talks even before turnover of staff began to worry leaders (see pp.90-91).

*This continuing educational programme with many parents at different levels of training is the only possible way to have a playcentre which is really*

*working well both for the children and parents ... (Playcentre) needs to be a place where when a Supervisor retires for one reason or another there is always someone ready to take her place. I would like all delegates to ... encourage their playcentres to plan for the future now by encouraging their parents to start with Helpers' Certificate work - in fact, start before that with discussions with new mothers. [- my emphasis] (WPCA Council Mins., 1974)*

The ideal of someone ready to take the Supervisor's place does not work out in practice in all Wellington areas, although it did in the Marlborough Sub-association of the Wellington Association. The Wellington South Area Officer reported that that Area had many new graduates at the beginning of 1974 which she anticipated would result in improvement in the quantity and quality of supervision. But, by contrast, the Coast Area Officer reported that most centres there were staffed by supervisors who are still trying to complete their training, and the Wellington West Area Officer had several centres having difficulties in finding suitable supervisors. One of these was Karori playcentre, mentioned earlier. It was still having supervision problems which precipitated the Association Executive into formally asking the Training Team to investigate the position of supervisors who have been given temporary approval only by the Executive because their level of training was regarded as being too low. Many such supervisors were told they could only be temporary supervisors, but no one kept a record of their subsequent progress.

The retiring Director of Training said at the next Training Team meeting that the Association had no sanctions to impose on those temporary supervisors who did not progress with their training, and if sanctions were introduced it might entail upsetting a group of families who were happy with their temporary supervisor. She suggested that the most appropriate tactics might include a letter giving temporary approval but stating that it was playcentre policy to have trained personnel; therefore the trainee was requested to attend a specified training activity. If no progress was made after one term further letters should be sent; one to the supervisor expressing concern, and one to the centre's council asking them to look for someone else. Doubts were expressed about whether this volume of paper-work could be maintained without having a Training Team secretary.

Three pro-forma letters were drafted. The third letter to the centre

councils did not suggest that they find a new supervisor; instead it read: 'Please would the centre assist the trainee to attend \_\_\_\_ courses.' These were agreed to by members attending the April Executive meeting. The meeting also considered minimum standards for supervisors and decided that several months' warning was needed before raising minimum standards. The Field Officer\* was currently advising a playcentre about starting a new group and felt strongly that the present minimum, the Helpers' Certificate, was not high enough as the standard for supervising. The idea of group supervision for centres with inadequate standards was floated and the difficulties of this tactic discussed. The decision was left open - no decision was arrived at at that time.

Three days later, Training Team members met with two of the Auckland Association's training personnel who were visiting Wellington on a 'learning exchange' trip. The Auckland visitors described their practice of asking a playcentre to move into group supervision when they lost a supervisor and could not replace her with someone who had an Assistant's Certificate. The Auckland members said there was more and more consensus about this practice because it took the pressure off early trainees to overload themselves by supervising and training simultaneously, and because it improved the public image of playcentre if the supervisors had reached a certain standard. The Field Officer said that the Wellington Executive had discussed such a proposal but had had doubts about its practicality.

Group supervision began to be suggested by Executive members to playcentres having supervision difficulties from that date forward. By mid-April the details of implementing the pro-forma letters of approval and checking on approvals at the end of term were finalised; and the idea of minimum standards seemed to be accepted by the Training Team without their seeing any need for further discussion in representative meetings. Informal discussion had resulted in a decision to 'recommend' minimum standards. What these minimum standards should be and when they would be enforced was decided upon by the Training Team. The details were announced as policy, without democratic decision-making, at an Education meeting (held two or three times each year to enable Executive members and tutors to plan the adult education programme) on 18 April, 1974, the day after the Training Team had met. The announcement read:

\* This Field Officer became the next Director of Training.

*As from February 1975 approval to supervise in centres will be given only to those applicants who have completed the work for at least an assistants certificate ... Approval to assist in centres from this date will be given to only those who have completed at least Part 2 of the manual. Permanent approval will be given to those with current supervisors certificates. The alternative to this for centres without enough qualified people is for the centre to be run by group supervision. (WPCA Educ. Comm. Mins., 1974)*

An Executive member asked whether the proposal was open for discussion. One Training Team member, displaying her 'real' leadership position\* replied: "No. This is a decision, we must stand firm and have no bandying about." The tactic of not allowing discussion regarding certain decisions was a characteristic of this emerging leader at this time. At a later date when a new proposal concerning Area boundaries was being discussed at an Executive meeting, a member challenged this same person for creating a 'them up there' and 'us down here' situation by her tactics, and she then agreed to allow centres to discuss a new proposal before Council made a decision.

Two or three questions concerning the details of implementing the minimum standards policy were put to this person and she proffered tentative solutions which were, presumably, 'off the top of her head' as another Training Team member said, as an aside to me, that the Training Team had not thought of these contingencies. The general reaction by the 'educators' present was that the policy would give 'playcentre the shot in the arm' it needed.

A few days later the Education Officer made the same announcement to the Association Council meeting, prefacing it by saying: "The following recommendations were made by the Training Team and confirmed last Friday night by the Education Committee." I feel that it was a decided euphemism to say that the proposal was 'recommended' to the Education Committee.

#### Consequence 1: Reactions against the method of implementation

Reactions were being felt by the Executive by early May. Karori playcentre, most affected by the minimum standards of supervision policy - a centre

\* The nominal Director of Training tendered her formal resignation later in the meeting because her other commitments had not allowed her to lead the Training Team actively for several months.

with several groups and few supervisors and assistants with training - was reported as reacting adversely and objecting to the undemocratic procedures used to introduce the policy. They questioned whether the Association personnel had constitutional rights to make rules about supervisor qualifications. Other playcentre groups were also vocal in their criticisms of the implementation of the policy.

The Association's Executive decided that some Training Team members should meet with parents from Karori playcentre to discuss supervision. The Editor of the Association Newsletter wanted to focus a newsletter on training and supervision, and in particular on group supervision, and decided to use the Karori playcentre meeting as a source of copy.

As an aside, it is interesting to note that the centres which did not have enough trained supervisors were mostly in upper SES suburbs, where there were many professional parents who, while wanting to participate in their child's early childhood education, were not willing to commit themselves to attaining playcentre qualifications, about which they often made patronising comments. These centres were critical of the 'rules' on three counts:

1. The method of introducing the 'rules' was undemocratic;
2. The introduction of the 'rules' was being rushed; and
3. The 'rules' meant that some staff, who were 'good' supervisors from the group of parents' point of view, would have to give up because they lacked the right paper qualifications.

The third criticism is a perfect example of Lawrence's discussion (1966) of resistance to change. He says that "what employees resist is usually not technical change but social change - the change in their human relationships that accompanies technical change" (p.246).

At the meeting between Karori playcentre parents and Training Team members, the playcentre parents said that they agreed with the principle of having suitably qualified parents leading the sessions but felt their centre needed more time to reach the minimum standards of supervision, otherwise they would have to close one group and deprive children in the community of their early childhood education. The Association President suggested group supervision could be used to maintain roll numbers, but my diary records say that this was greeted by an angry mutter, with many mothers proclaiming that they had other commitments to fulfil. The chairman had to call for order. When pressed about the time problem, Training Team



members were reported as saying that "if the centre could prove that it had a good number of people in training, and that every effort was being made to get people to Part 3 in the minimum possible time, an extension of time might be considered" (WPCA Newsletter, June 1974). The Newsletter Editor commented "If this amount of flexibility is incorporated into the new regulations, they will probably be more acceptable to most centres" (Ibid). Reference is made in later Executive minutes to centres writing in for extension of time; so the flexibility did become a reality. Supervisors from centres which did not seek an extension of time, reported during interviews that they had had to rush to complete the requisite parts of the Training Manual.

The interaction at the Karori playcentre meeting reinforces Lawrence's contention that resistance to change stems more from reluctance to change in human relationships than from a reluctance to make technical changes. My comment is that if this sort of discussion had been permitted when the policy was introduced, a lot of ill-feeling engendered by the authoritative approach to the strategic choice would have been avoided and yet the same rise in standards achieved. Even non-Training Team Executive members felt that the Training Team had acted in a 'closed' authoritative manner.

Consequence 2: The issue of cross-crediting other qualifications assumed greater importance

Several parents at the Karori playcentre meeting raised the issue of recognition of Kindergarten Diplomas, Teachers' Certificates or overseas qualifications for playcentre supervising and received a reply which many parents challenged during the meeting. For example, one parent said that playcentre was laying itself open to charges of exclusiveness if the leadership was not more accepting of other qualifications, and the Association President said that she did feel playcentre was for a certain type of family - a sentiment increasingly expressed by playcentre leaders during the course of my field work. On being further pressed to justify the non-acceptance of other qualifications, the Training Team members laid the blame for no solution to this problem at the feet of Federation. This was not completely accepted because some parents at the meeting knew other associations were more accepting of other qualifications. However, it may be recalled that all earlier attempts to introduce national standardized training had been defeated at Federation conferences.

The Newsletter Editor sought reactions to this issue and found that some people felt that the policy of non-acceptance of other qualifications was too inflexible. Other members felt that playcentre training had a lot to



offer that was different for parents qualified for other types of teaching - the playcentre training was necessary for working in a playcentre having a wider age range of children and functioning as a team of parents supervising together. Two former teachers had these comments to make during the pre-school staff survey:

*Playcentre training is more practical and more specific than teacher training. I was interested to learn more about working with parents.*

and

*The training was terrific. I could combine family with advancing my career. I am a primary teacher, and feel anything I do in education is advancing my career (by) filling in the gap before I return to teaching.*

One former nursery school teacher felt it added little to her training:

*The training is very good, but it covers much the same material as the Nursery School Association Certificate.*

(Staff interviews, 1975)

This issue was raised again in July at an 'Open Forum' meeting where parents are asked to air their views on problem areas. The Director of Training designate replied that in other educational institutions the parents are not so involved, whereas playcentre is a group co-operative and the supervisor's role is quite a bit different. Playcentre training therefore (and particularly the practical training) is geared more towards learning more about adults working with adults than other training schemes.

Members from another high SES playcentre raised the issue by letter again later in the second term, arguing that with smaller families today it was unrealistic to ask mothers to duplicate educational training when they would only be involved in playcentre for 2-4 years. This playcentre asked for far more exemptions from training requirements for teachers and kindergarten teachers.

Although the Training Team said that they would give some concessions for other training and tried to give the appearance of being flexible, it was common knowledge that, generally, the only concession was exemption from the Child Development course if their other training was relatively recent. Six months later I found, during interviews of staff members, that considerable resentment was felt by many staff members about Association inflexibility over cross-crediting. It should be noted that the pre-

school staff sample was drawn after standards of supervision had been raised, so those people with other 'teaching' qualifications, who had not completed any parts of the Training Manual, would have resigned from supervising. Present staff were commenting on these resignations, and felt that cross-crediting of a greater proportion of the training should be allowed. A feeling of alienation persists - particularly between high SES playcentres and Association Executive members - over this question. Gwen Somerset commented\* that mothers in high SES suburbs have for years displayed a pattern of unwillingness to do further training. She said that some visitors from American co-operative pre-schools might shake educated mothers up, for these are the very mothers in America who give up everything to run parent co-operative pre-school centres.

Yet another letter about the minimum standards regulations, the low level of pay and the lack of acceptance of other qualifications reached the Executive at the end of 1975, a year after the 'regulations' were introduced. In the long letter of reply, a Training Team member said:

*Playcentre supervisors, kindergarten teachers and new entrant teachers would all welcome regulations which would enable them to move from one organisation to another, we are sure, but this is not yet accepted practise.*

*Your assumption that playcentre supervisors are somehow more easily replaceable underestimates both the role of the supervisor as a model for parents as well as children, and the standard and bias of her training.\*\**

Obviously this issue is not one which will die until some formula is devised for easier cross-crediting of qualifications. However, the playcentre movement is in the weakest position at present to negotiate such a policy because of the oversupply of primary and kindergarten teachers (see p.230).

### Consequence 3: Reaction to group supervision

Some parents who had been training and supervising simultaneously, reacted favourably: "Training and supervising is too much" (Staff interviewee). Ten percent of the interviewees volunteered such an opinion. However, the idea of group supervision if a playcentre has inadequately trained members when a supervisor leaves, was greeted with displeasure by parents in many centres. The Association Newsletter reported that:

\* Personal communication, 1974.

\*\* Letter sent by the Training Team to Karori playcentre, November 1975.

A survey of about 20 Wellington centres showed varied reactions ... only two of the 20 centres unequivocally approved the new measures. These were Makara and Cashmere. Makara had had group supervision in the past and felt that it could function again in this way, although there would be some drop outs. Cashmere felt that although it would lose quite a number of families ... the centre would be a tighter, more enthusiastic centre because of (group supervision). ... Most centres were strongly opposed to group supervision. It was felt that mothers would not come along for a variety of valid reasons, as well as apathy. Mothers with babies needing sleeps - and some with a third pre-playcentre child as well - could not participate. Other mothers were unwilling to accompany their four year olds as they felt it would be a backward step in preparation for school, rather than a gradual weaning ... Moreover many mothers felt that the value to their mothering in general, of a break from their children, was great.  
(WPCA Newsletter, June 1974)

Expressions of opposition to the idea of group supervision were commonly heard at local level during the next few months. Not too many negative statements filtered up to the Association level, until one mother wrote a letter asking the June Executive meeting to consider the effects of group supervision. She outlined the disadvantages to families of group supervision and concluded that public interest in playcentre would be reduced because of group supervision. This letter was acknowledged, but no action came out of the discussion. The neutral responses to local criticisms resulted in further grumbles about Association personnel's techniques of turning a deaf ear to local members criticisms.

Several centres adopted the practice of group supervision at some stage during 1975 and found that it had the disadvantages and advantages quoted in the Newsletter article cited above. One centre was most enthusiastic about the variety of new activities put out for the children as a consequence of all mothers planning the sessions. The Director of Training reported:

Nine centres working in group supervision for some part of the year (1975-76). One centre, though having sufficient qualified people to be able to have supervisors, have decided to stay in group supervision as they feel it suits them best. The reaction in other centres has varied from 'very enthusiastic' to 'pretty difficult to maintain'. (WPCA Ann. Rpt., 1976)

As all but one of these centres have returned to ordinary supervision when a trainee has attained the required standard of training, it would seem that the disadvantages of group supervision outweigh the advantages. The re-allocation of human resources and the new approach to the programme is only accepted as temporary change in Wellington, although Auckland Association now have many centres choosing to maintain group supervision.

An oft-suggested solution to supervision problems is to increase the remuneration to a worthwhile amount.

Consequence 4: The debate about group supervision versus retaining supervisors via higher pay

Higher pay was a popular solution for playcentre parents in low SES suburbs judging from the response at the Open Forum by Porirua personnel to the call for well-paid supervisors, and also from parents in more affluent suburbs; for example, "As someone who believes 'a labourer is worthy of his hire', I find the remuneration payable to supervisors extremely degrading" (P.C. Journal, No. 35, 1976). But, higher level members have resisted the idea of paying supervisors a higher wage for the following reasons:

1. Because the cost to families would increase (unless Government paid) to the point where many could not afford playcentre; and
2. Because they fear that 'professional' pay may increase the social distance between the parents and the leader of the children's session, to the detriment of the learning process of the whole family that now takes place. Mothers may tend to be less co-operative about helping the supervisor.

In the words of Gwen Somerset:

*The usual trained pre-school teacher or expert may admit parent involvement up to a point, but the limit is soon reached. Parents may mix paint, help to tidy and clean, or raise money, but they may not challenge the lay-out of equipment, or the programme. They must not be considered as decision-makers; they may not discuss educational points of view, priorities or make suggestions on techniques used in a pre-school. They are not trained ... There is a fence that says 'this far and no further'. (P.C. Journal, No. 36, 1976)*

And in the words of a local supervisor:

*If supervisors received professional rates of pay some might stay permanently at Playcentre. This would*

*change the unique educational structure of Play-centre with its gentle transition of mothers becoming parent helpers, assistants and supervisors - a structure which both emphasizes the mothers' role in pre-school education and prevents their seeing supervisors now and teachers later as the strict authority they fought shy of as children.*  
(Ibid)

On the whole, however, there is little doubt that local centre families would like to slow down staff turnover and see higher pay as a solution to the high turnover. Sixty-nine percent of the supervisors surveyed in 1975 said they began supervising because their playcentre was short of staff; and thirty-three percent of the sample felt that supervisors should be paid more. Half of these commented that higher pay should slow down the loss-rate of supervisors. The responses mentioning pay were answers to open-ended items:

- (a) 'Would you like the Government/Association to offer more assistance to playcentres?' and
- (b) 'Have you any other comments you would like to make about playcentre supervising?'

On the other hand, some local and most Association personnel see dangers in staff not moving on. Auckland Association is sufficiently concerned about these dangers to have a rule limiting the period of supervision to three years.

The one playcentre in Wellington which decided to pay their supervisor a 'professional' wage has been no more successful in slowing down the turnover rate, because the same human circumstances such as pregnancy or geographic mobility have still caused loss of supervisors. However, I am willing to hypothesize that a higher wage would slow the turnover rate from causes related to supervisors seeking better paid work once their children start school. Whether this is desirable is a moot point amongst playcentre members.

My analysis of staff turnover suggests that a slowing-down of turnover would be beneficial to the children's programme. In 1975, of the twenty-nine fully-recognised playcentres in the Wellington region, only three centres had absolutely no change of staff. Eleven groups (out of forty-six) had no change of Supervisors, but only six groups had no new Assistants during the whole year. Between Term 1 and Term 2, eleven of the forty-six playcentre groups had a change of Supervisor and seven of these

were 'new' in the sense that they had not previously been the Assistant, although most would not be a completely new face to the children. Between Term 2 and Term 3, fifteen of the forty-seven groups had a change of Supervisor and nine of these were 'new'.

Table 8.1: Turnover of Wellington Playcentre Association Supervisors

	<u>Between Terms 1 &amp; 2</u>	<u>Between Terms 2 &amp; 3</u>
'New'	7	9
'Promoted' from Asst. Spvr.	3	6
Change to group spvn.	1	1
No change	32	29
No approval form sent in	3	3
TOTAL NO. OF GROUPS:	<u>46</u>	<u>47</u>

At the beginning of the second term 1975, thirty-three Assistant Supervisors were new to this role, but this stabilized a little later in the year to having twenty-three new Assistants approved for the forty-seven groups in Term 3.

Consequence 5: Shortage of leaders

Because of feelings of alienation (expressed during informal conversation with the researcher) created by the Association implementation of minimum standards of supervision and because local centre personnel had to give more time and energy to maintaining the work of centres to these standards, there was a dearth of local level members willing to take on Association level positions at the Association's annual general meeting in the third term of 1974. A shortage of volunteers at Association level means that tasks have to be re-allocated and extra loads given to existing members; which has the compounding effect of putting-off prospective leaders who have only a limited amount of time and energy to give to the Playcentre Association. When playcentre liaison and training members kept a diary to collect data for the Playcentre Federation's case to Government, many found they were spending 40 - 50 hours per week doing playcentre voluntary work. With little financial compensation for the time and low travelling expense reimbursements, it is little wonder that the organisation has difficulties in attracting and keeping volunteers in leadership positions, particularly if they have qualifications which can earn them many thousands of dollars if they gave their time and energy to paid employment.



The need for Government grants to pay playcentre leaders to handle parent education and supervisor training is a high priority need, but if Government persists in giving both the kindergarten and playcentre organisations grants that make the organisations more equitable, then the Playcentre Federation case may be delayed because the kindergarten movement's case for Supervising Head Teachers is neither so necessary nor so well-formulated as the playcentre case for 'Training' Officers (See Chapters 5 and 6).

#### Consequence 6: Change in standards of supervision

One of the tertiary educationists very involved in the playcentre movement once said that "If you are training people to be responsible for parents and children, then Associations must decide on certain minimums. In which case, you must be prepared to tell people 'This is not good enough'." He said that he believed in putting restrictions around adults as well as children to give security.

These were the principles by which the Wellington Association was attempting to give centres minimum standards which would give trainees security from pressure to overload themselves, and the playcentre movement security of status. What were the standards in early 1974 which made Training Team members say 'This is not good enough; we need to increase restrictions on who can supervise'?

Analysis of available Term 1, 1974 records indicates that the standards themselves and the monitoring of the standards were inadequate. Only sixteen of the twenty-nine playcentres in the Wellington region sent in a letter or form to obtain Association-level approval of their Supervisors and Assistants, and 75 percent of these sixteen centres did not get a reply from the Association secretary until the term was one month old, which made the approval procedure rather meaningless. Of the twenty-three Supervisors working in these sixteen centres, seven had a Supervisors' Certificate, ten were part-way through their training, two had not started training and four did not indicate their qualifications. This picture of approximately two-thirds of the supervisors being not fully qualified probably indicates a skewed sample, as the 1975 figures showed that a majority of missing approval forms pertained to supervisors who met full approval requirements under the Association's new regulations.

Of the thirty-two Assistants for whom the sixteen playcentres sought approval in 1974, only four had completed their Assistants' Certificate



(or higher qualification). Fifteen of the remaining Assistants had not completed any section of the Supervisor training. Again it is likely that many of the Assistants who did not get on the records had completed their Assistants' Certificate and did not feel compelled to seek approval.

In Term 2, 1974, (after the Association's new regulations had been publicised) nineteen playcentres forwarded Supervisor approval forms to the Association Executive and replies were sent back to the playcentres before term began. Eighteen of the thirty-one Supervisors had completed their training and only one had not undertaken any training. Only eight of the forty-eight Assistants working in Wellington Playcentres had completed their Assistants' Certificate but there were fewer assistants (nine) who had not completed any parts of the training manual.

Perhaps because the turnover of supervisors had stabilized by the third term, 1974, only fifteen playcentres sought Association Executive approval of their supervisory arrangements (and many for only some staff). Formal monitoring had deteriorated, and it is not possible to comment on standards from this number of approval forms. It would seem, however, that the number of Assistants with no training had dropped to four. By the end of 1974 the Training Team were happy with the standards of supervision for the first term of 1975 as indicated on the approval forms in for ratifying at the December 1974 Executive meeting. The few playcentres whose staff did not quite meet the minimum standards were to be allowed a few more weeks 'grace' as they were striving to fulfil the Association regulations. In reality, flexibility was maintained except with regard to cross-crediting other educational qualifications.

Analysis of Term 1, 1975 approval forms, shows that thirty of the forty-six supervisors were fully trained, eleven had an Assistants' Certificate (the new minimum standard) leaving only five not satisfying the minimum standards. The Assistants, however, were not so well trained; but as the Training Team were commending playcentres on their efforts, it would appear that there was less pressure on playcentres to reach minimum assisting standards. Twenty-four Assistants satisfied the regulations, but a further twenty-seven did not; and seven or so Assistants had not sent in approval forms. By Term 2 the standards had deteriorated slightly. Seven Supervisors had not completed the minimum qualifications and thirty-five of the sixty-four assistants were at a level of training below Part 2

(the minimum). The trend stabilized in Term 3 when nine Supervisors were below the minimum standards, and only thirty-two of the sixty-nine assistants did not reach the Assistants' minimum standards.

Table 8.2: Standards of Supervision - Wellington Playcentre Association (1975)

	<u>Term 1</u>	<u>Term 2</u>	<u>Term 3</u>
<u>Supervisors' Qualifications</u>			
Group supervision	0	1	1
Less than minimum*	5	7	9
Assistants' Certificate	11	12	12
Supervisors' Certificate	30	26	25
No return	1	2	-
	<u>46</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>47</u>
TOTAL NO. OF GROUPS:	46	47	47
<u>Assistants' Qualifications</u>			
None*	3	5	7
Part I	24	32	25
Part II	12	19	25
Part III	6	7	11
Part IV	6 ) 12	1 ) 8	
No reply	7	-	1
	<u>58</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>69</u>
TOTAL NO. OF ASSISTANTS:	58	64	69

\* Includes those with other qualifications, not recognised.

To summarize, the new regulations led to a considerable increase in the numbers of fully qualified Supervisors, and to a decrease in those with very inadequate training. The only apparent change in Assistants' qualifications was that far fewer people were assisting with no training at all, but a large proportion did not meet the minimum standards for assisting.

The Director of Training reported in late 1975 that the Training Team felt:

*that the requirement for minimum standards for supervision ... (had) gone a long way to boosting the standards in the centres. All centres have made an effort to increase the number of trainees in the centres, and to have all members sharing in the responsibility for maintaining standards in their centre.*

She reinforced this by following with a statement of ideology:

*... because Playcentres are co-operative groups, the strength of the centre is dependent on the contribution of all its members. (WPCA Ann. Rpt., 1975)*

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

How did this strategic choice process affect the performance of Wellington playcentres and the Wellington Playcentre Association?

The criteria for assessing the effects of strategic choice processes stated in Chapter 4 were:

1. Organisational:

- (a) Is the changed type, quality and or quantity of service what is desired by families?
- (b) Did the changed structure and/or mode of operation keep the organisational personnel happy?

2. Environmental:

Did the strategy help make pre-school education available to a wider range of social groups?

Before assessing the changes brought about by the decision to increase the minimum standards of supervision, I intend re-stating the nature of the strategic choice process, describing which variables in the conceptual framework (see Figure 8, p.45) were interacting in the process.

Concern about the standards of supervision in playcentres began to increase in late 1973 and early 1974. The new training Manual was being received favourably by most trainees and yet some centres were having difficulties in motivating parents to train as supervisors and with keeping supervisors. Many centres were operating with inadequately trained staff. In Term 1, 1974, two Supervisors and fifteen Assistants had not completed any sections of either the old or new training scheme before taking on supervisory responsibility. Association guidelines were seen as inadequate for maintaining standards of supervision, so formal rules were introduced. The sanction for non-compliance with the minimum standards requirement was group supervision (although the Association's dominant coalition described it as an alternative, not a punishment). In order to monitor the requirement, procedures for Association ratification of the playcentres' choices of supervisors had to be streamlined at the same time. The strategic choice discussed here, and the new Training Manual, both had the effect of

increasing the length of training for women before they began supervising in centres in the Wellington Association and of improving the evaluation of Supervisors. Peter Dinniss (1974) says that such changes indicate a trend towards professionalism in early childhood education in New Zealand. The rule and the means of implementation were decided upon by a dominant coalition, the Association Training Team, without consultation with playcentre representatives. This action created awareness of status differences not always manifest in playcentre functioning.

The organisational variable central in this strategic choice process was re-allocation of resources. An earlier change in the technology (the new Training Manual for those using playcentre's adult education programme) heightened members' awareness of standards of supervision, and it was intended that an outcome of the strategic choice process was an improvement in the quality of the children's programme. It can be hypothesized that the strategic choice may have inhibited the immediate-future growth in scale of the Wellington Association. No structural change occurred.

The re-allocation of resources involved the Training Team members asking local playcentre supervisors to invest time into increasing their knowledge via training. To achieve the goal of higher standards of supervision, the Association Executive introduced a sanction for those centres who did not comply, as they could not offer the reward of higher pay which many local people saw as the way to improve standards.

Environmental variables are difficult to disentangle from organisational variables in the decision to improve standards of supervision. There were two forms of threat to the decision-makers (environmental illiberality) in the situation existing in 1973-74. The first was a threat to the public image of playcentre if too many playcentres had untrained supervisors. This was implied in some of the Auckland visitors' comments. The second threat was that paid employment was wooing too many supervisors too rapidly into the work force. This threat was not overcome by the chosen strategy. Inadequate funds from Government grants and/or from parents' fees narrowed the choice between rewards and sanctions to the latter option.

It is not known whether the time resource involved meant a re-allocation of members' time already given to playcentre work (organisational variable), or an investment of more time per week in playcentre work (environmental variable). It was hoped that one of the pro forma letters sent to play-

centres regarding approvals would encourage centres to relieve trainees of other responsibilities while they completed their training. For Training Team members, monitoring standards was an additional task. These volunteers had to spend more time dealing with approval forms, and their reward was a purposive one: they saw the improved standards of supervision in playcentres.

I now wish to evaluate the process analysed in this chapter. The type of service was not altered by the decision and it is only possible to hypothesize that the quality and quantity were changed by the decision to raise the minimum qualifications of supervisors.

It is generally accepted that trained people, on the whole, are better educators than untrained people. I stated in Chapter 1 that this research does not make any evaluation of the effects of the programmes (adults' or children's) on the personnel, so I will accept the premise that trained personnel improve children's sessions and hypothesize that there was an improvement in 1975 when more trained supervisors led the sessions.

Nine centres worked in group supervision at some stage during 1975-76 and as the number of children on the roll of a group in group supervision must be lower to allow more space for more adult helpers, the number of playcentre places must have dropped, perhaps by as many as 100 places. This consequence was a matter of concern at the Karori playcentre meeting. It is also possible that some new groups were not started because there were not enough trained staff to meet the new requirements.

In the long term playcentre members were satisfied with the strategic choice. However, at the time when the rule was being introduced there were mixed feelings expressed. Parents in centres who were not easily able to comply with the requirements were not happy; neither were individual members who held other teaching qualifications which were no longer acceptable. It seemed to these individuals (and their fellow-parents at their centre) that the dominant coalition were refusing to cross-credit qualifications mostly on ideological grounds. Association personnel, on the other hand, were happy - they anticipated improved standards in centres and were able to observe this happening. Trainees, who were finding coping with training and supervising simultaneously was too great a burden, were happy that they could not be asked to supervise until they had completed at least the Assistants' Certificate.

*It is bad that mothers are called upon to supervise while they are training. (Staff interviewee)*

*I would like playcentre Supervisors to be trained before they supervise. It is difficult to both train and supervise. (Staff interviewee)*

*I don't think people ought to go into playcentre supervising until they are ready. It is hard to finish training while you are working. (Staff interviewee)*

Did the strategic choice to increase the minimum standards of supervision in the Wellington Playcentre Association make playcentre available to a wider range of social groups? I doubt it. The number of places would not have increased and the new requirements probably made systems-maintenance of playcentres in low SES suburbs more difficult. Data from the pre-school families survey and the pre-school volunteers survey indicate why. Only fourteen percent of the parents in the low SES suburb had high social participation scores and forty-seven percent had low social participation scores.

Table 8.3. User Parents' Social Participation by Type of Suburb

Chapin Score	High SES		Medium SES		Low SES		Total	
	%		%		%		%	
0 - 8	3	10.3	16	34.8	17	47.2	36	32.4
9 - 19	12	41.4	25	54.3	14	38.9	51	45.9
20+	14	48.3	5	10.9	5	13.9	24	21.6
	29	100.0	46	100.0	36	100.0	111	99.9

$\chi^2 = 20.9$ ;  $df = 4$ ;  $p < 0.01$ .

In addition, those parents with low social participation scores were more likely to use kindergartens. Although playcentre appears to be better (but not significantly) at motivating people who do not have the characteristics associated with participating in voluntary organisations, to get involved in playcentre training and/or administration, it is very much more difficult in a playcentre in a low SES suburb to get enough people to commit themselves to such tasks. Playcentres in inner-city, low SES suburbs have human resource problems which are compounded by the high geographic mobility of the families. Forty-one percent of the Newtown pre-school families said they may move in the next twelve months, compared with thirty percent of the middle SES suburb families and ten percent of the high SES suburb families.

Table 8.4.      User Parents' Plans to Move in the Next Twelve Months  
by Type of Suburb

	<u>High SES</u>		<u>Medium SES</u>		<u>Low SES</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%		%
Not moving	27	93.1	30	65.2	22	61.1	79	71.2
Plan to move	<u>2</u>	<u>6.8</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>34.8</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>38.9</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>28.8</u>
	29	99.9	46	100.0	36	100.0	111	100.0
	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

$\chi^2 = 9.4$ ;  $df = 2$ ;  $p < 0.01$ .

Asking low SES families to commit themselves to doing more training to meet the new requirements is asking a good deal, and it is probable that those who train will end up supervising in another suburb. I suggest, therefore, that the increased minimum qualifications for supervising would mean that playcentres in low SES suburbs would experience greater systems-maintenance difficulties as a result of this strategic choice unless more support and leadership was forthcoming from the Association.



## CHAPTER NINE

### BUILDING SUBSIDIES FOR LOCAL PLAYCENTRES

Accommodation for playcentre sessions has been a problem for many playcentre groups from the very first years, but has not occupied much of association and Federation leaders' time (relative to the time spent on parent participation, supervisor training and parent education), until after Government announced free sites for playcentres, and Scheme A and B subsidies\* for playcentre buildings, in 1973.

#### HISTORY OF THE STRATEGIC CHOICE

Prior to the late 1950s there was only occasional mention of buildings for playcentres in playcentre records, and the Golden Kiwi was looked to as a source of funds. At the last Standing Committee meeting for 1958, it was decided that information should be collected about playcentres' own buildings.

In 1959 there was an upsurge of interest in buildings by Federation members. Gwen Somerset wrote a paper entitled "Building Your Own Nursery Play Centre" and drew up a specimen plan at the request of Standing Committee. She recommended that Government be approached for building funds for those centres not able to find practicable community accommodation. Standing Committee also asked associations whether or not Government ought to be approached for assistance with building projects. A buildings policy was mapped out at the 1960 Federation conference, which recommended:

1. That the playcentre does not build where there is already a pre-school service;
2. That the playcentre does not build where suitable community buildings are available;
3. That Federation supports any association's request for a grant; and
4. That playcentre buildings not be exclusive of other use.

A case to Government was developed by Standing Committee and circulated to

\* Scheme A subsidy: a 4:1 subsidy for a new building or buying suitable premises.

Scheme B subsidy: a 4:1 subsidy (maximum \$5,600 from Government) for re-locating or renovating premises such as surplus classrooms.

all associations early in 1961 for comment. The amended case was presented to the Minister of Education who, later that year, announced that there would be no help for playcentre buildings. Federation leaders changed tactics to actively seeking to bring the playcentre movement and its method of functioning to the attention of church management committees and local authorities. Articles were prepared for church publications and for Municipal Associations' newsletters. Approaches were made to the Minister of Housing for 'community houses' to be set aside in new housing areas which could be used for (among other things) playcentre sessions. This, too, was turned down by Government late in 1961.

During the 1960s, attention turned away from buildings to the problems of a leadership shortage created by the very rapid growth rate in those years. Time and energy were primarily devoted to maintaining standards - training and finance were the problems mentioned again and again in the records of the 1960s. Several playcentres in the northern part of the North Island were building their own buildings, but generally playcentres operated in community accommodation. A further case was put to Government in 1966 for assistance with buildings (and for increased maintenance grants) but Cabinet ruled that this be deferred. After that year, the National Executive dropped the requests for buildings in their cases to Government, and concentrated on requesting grants to pay playcentre leaders for the organisation's liaison and training programme.

In 1970, the playcentre movement's leaders prepared and presented its submissions to the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education. Of the thirty-five recommendations made for and on behalf of the Playcentre Federation, only two directly refer to buildings:

*4(b) That, in view of the dwindling supply of redundant prefabricated buildings, the Education Department produce a low cost shell building suitable for pre-schools on school property or other sites, to be maintained and run by the parents of the pre-school children.*

*4(c) That the building subsidy of 2 to 1 be extended to cover all buildings.*

(P.C. Journal, No. 18, 1970)

Presumably the latter recommendation refers to the Federation's desire for playcentres to receive the same buildings subsidy as did the free

kindergartens at that time. Overall, the Federation placed little emphasis on buildings in their submissions. Five playcentre associations also sent in submissions, as did some playcentre volunteers, and it is possible that their submissions devoted more space to accommodation, for the Report of the Committee of Inquiry (1971) discusses playcentre buildings at some length:

*Relatively few playcentres own their buildings and even fewer have had them built to pre-school specifications. In general, policy has favoured the renting of premises which avoids the side-tracking effects of extensive money-raising and significantly reduces the delays before a centre can be opened. But suitable halls are often hard to come by in new housing areas; and in old localities, where playcentres are well-established and stable, parents are often conscious of a need for buildings designed particularly for pre-school purposes. Thus there is a growing desire for playcentres to have their own premises. In the light of this modification of policy, which is already apparent in the purchase and conversion of old houses, it seems appropriate to provide for centres to develop in this direction, especially if the money-raising can be substantially reduced so as to interfere as little as possible with the parent education and participation programmes which are so much a feature of playcentre activities.*

*The Committee is firmly of the opinion that affiliated kindergartens and playcentres are in need of greater State support, particularly at the stage when they are being established. It can see no compelling reason to continue the two distinctive schemes of support and believes there should be one system of State assistance to accommodate both organisations. [my emphasis] (Hill Report, 1971)*

The Hill Report then went on to outline several new forms of State support. The proposals included: loan finance for pre-school buildings; the use of Education Board architects to draw up plans and supervise building contracts; Departmental help with plans and subsidies on re-locatable buildings; maintenance of kindergarten and playcentre buildings, grounds, fences etc. by Education Boards; an improved "co-ordinated programme ... to ensure the setting aside of pre-school sites in planning new urban sub-divisions" (Ibid, p.108); and additional assistance for establishing pre-school centres in "areas of particular need where communities could not provide the services required" (Ibid, p.78).

A year after the publication of the Hill Report the Labour Party came to

power and proceeded over the succeeding three years, to implement the majority of the recommendations in the Report; although many of them were modified during the consultative process between the Department and the voluntary organisations.

#### THE STRATEGIC CHOICE PROCESS

In October 1973, Cabinet approved a new pre-school buildings policy, and in November 1973, the Minister of Education announced that Government would provide pre-school sites for recognised free kindergartens and playcentres, and would grant building subsidies to playcentres. The Wellington Association President told the November Council meeting:

*Provision of sites for pre-schools, both playcentre and kindergarten, will be the responsibility of the Government, and a building subsidy of \$4 to \$1 will be available. This is welcome news. However, it does not mean every playcentre will build as most are functioning satisfactorily in different types of premises. I have spent some time trying to get further details, but did not get far. However, it is fairly clear that:*

- (i) sites are not readily available in Wellington,*
- (ii) playcentres will need to be open for six ½-day sessions per week to qualify for the subsidy.*

*(WPCA Council Mins., November 1973)*

By February 1974, each playcentre association had received a Circular from the Department of Education, but the Wellington Executive felt that every centre ought to have a copy. Meanwhile, the Association Treasurer sketched in the contents to delegates at the February Council meeting:

*Sites may be provided with existing school or new school sites. Appears that the Department is prepared to buy sites. Can use surplus school buildings in Wellington city ... 4 to 1 subsidy on a new building or purchase of a building. A loan from State Advances available. Must be used for 6 half-day sessions a week, by two groups at least; balance of time to be used for parent education etc ... For additions and renovations, there is 80 percent subsidy. Can borrow from the State Advances. All these aids are qualified 'If funds available'.*

*Areas of special need to qualify must have insufficient or no facilities for pre-school, average income of the area low, housing dense in urban areas or isolation problem in rural areas. These areas could qualify for a building provided free of cost.*

*Existing buildings. In 1974/75 Education Boards should assume responsibility for (maintaining) these.*

(WPCA Council Mins., February 1974)

During question time, Executive members said that as maintenance of schools was not up to date, they 'would believe in Board maintenance of playcentres when they saw it'. The President was also pleased to see that the buildings would be for rolls of 20 or 25 which indicated that the Department was going along with the playcentre policy of pressing for a maximum group size of twenty-five children. Later the Wellington Executive and other playcentre personnel were to realise that the unintended consequence of this building size was that no space was allowed for the parent education tasks of the playcentre programme. Centre delegates raised the question of playcentres owning premises, then going into recess. The President stated that a playcentre would not get a subsidy unless it could prove that it will remain in existence for at least ten years.

The details of this Circular had not been negotiated by the Federation, although the National Advisory Council for Pre-school Education (NACPSE) had recommended that playcentres receive equal subsidies to those given to free kindergartens, and Government may have felt that this was tantamount to being a negotiated decision. Like the kindergarten leaders (see p.112), playcentre members do not perceive such decision as negotiated. Both organisations insist that policy must be made by their respective conferences, and certainly not by an advisory committee where their representatives are outnumbered. The lack of direct negotiation gave rise to feelings of apprehension about the relationship between the Department and the playcentre organisation. The Federation's Dominion Advisor said, at an informal gathering of Wellington and Hutt/Wairarapa Associations' personnel in 1974, that now memos were being handed down by the Department which were not initiated by nor discussed with playcentre leaders before being made public. This an example of environmental illiberality (Child, 1972). Federation leaders felt helplessly obliged to accept Government aid, particularly if it 'made the lot of local playcentres easier'.

Consequence 1: A Change to the Usual Pattern for Strategic Choice Processes Involving Government Funding Occurred

The Central Districts Association's remit to the Federation conference, 1974, "That Federation relay the dissatisfaction of the playcentre associations

with the Memorandum and attempt to re-negotiate terms" brought into the open all the festering dissatisfaction playcentre members felt about the whole strategic choice process. There was a surge of murmured agreement when a delegate said that one unnegotiated Circular Memorandum slipping through, could lead to 'many things being pushed onto playcentres'. This Memorandum was regarded by the members as a test case in the organisation's fight to remain autonomous. Prior to the 1973 Buildings Memorandum, the only other Memorandum pertaining to playcentres in the previous five years had been negotiated. A motion from the conference floor was passed giving Standing Committee power to block the implementation of unnegotiated Circular Memoranda, until they had been discussed and approved by constituent associations. Such action is a common response to environmental illiberality, according to Child (1972).

It would seem that because the playcentre movement followed behind the kindergarten movement by a couple of decades in getting Government financial assistance for buildings, Departmental officers assumed that practices which had been operating satisfactorily for some time for kindergarten buildings could be adopted for playcentre buildings. The prevailing attitude tended to be that plans, loan conditions and so on should suit playcentres, if they were workable for kindergartens. Kindergarten volunteers were consulted when the Department were working out the details of a pool of pre-school plans held by Education Boards for new pre-school buildings, long before playcentre volunteers were invited to join discussions. That kindergarten personnel were consulted at an earlier stage in deciding on the details of implementing a strategic choice, appears to be partly habit and partly the result of a Union Executive member also being a Board architect.

That there was a pattern of using precedents established for the kindergarten movement showed up very clearly in the discussions with, and in the written communications from, the Department about buildings-related issues raised at the 1974 Federation Conference. Two examples are useful here:

- (a) Federation representatives asked Departmental officers about playcentre's rights in respect of buildings constructed under the loan-subsidy scheme, and were told:

*... no playcentre ... shall be:*

- (a) *Disposed of without the consent of the Minister of Education, or:*

- (b) be mortgaged or rented to any other organisation for profit.

These conditions have applied for many years to Kindergartens and have not created any difficulties. The first condition is covered by Section 5(8) of the Education Lands Act 1949 which is to be amended this year to apply the same condition to subsidised playcentre buildings.

(Letter from the Department of Education, July 1974)

- (b) Federation representatives requested that the terms of the loans for playcentre buildings be negotiated as the terms that were laid down without any consultation were unacceptable. The Departmental reply was:

As none of the usual mortgage security is required for pre-school loans and the playcentre committees may, in some instances lack permanency, the decision was taken to limit loans to Controlling Authorities only. This is the position with Kindergartens and the Department considers that it must also apply to Playcentres. The Department could only support the granting of loans strictly in accordance with the requirements of the Government's approved scheme as stated in the policy circular issued to associations.

(Letter from the Department of Education, July 1974)



Scheme B subsidies were granted to playcentres (but not to kindergartens) so that playcentres could renovate their own buildings or community buildings for which they had sole use for at least ten years' tenureship.

Consequence 2: Standing Committee misinterpreted Constituents' wishes because the usual Consultation had been foregone.

At the Federation annual conference in 1974 it became apparent that there was division of opinion (or rather a breakdown of communication) between Standing Committee members and association delegates about the acceptability of certain clauses in the Departmental Circular regarding State aid for pre-school buildings. For example, the National Executive meeting preceding conference proposed a recommendation that Clause 8(ii) (making associations the guarantors of the State Advances loans) be reviewed with the Department, as delegates found it unacceptable in its present form. What is important here is that Standing Committee had accepted it. Conference passed the National Executive recommendation.

Associations wanted to be circularized, so that the whole organisation knew what was happening, before any Memorandum was accepted. There was considerable implied criticism, in the long debate, of Standing Committee's actions regarding the buildings Memorandum. That such a long debate was allowed to take place, enabling members to thoroughly explore the whole issue with several new motions and amendments being proposed from the conference 'floor', is an indication of the democratic functioning of playcentre conferences. (By way of contrast, free kindergarten conference chairman's insistence that 'formal rules of debate' be adhered to, meant that many issues of principle were only discussed at tea breaks.) The Treasurer defended the Committee, and stated that telegrams and letter gave Standing Committee the impression that playcentre members were in favour of the Memorandum. From a sociological perspective, this presents a case for a systematic survey of associations' views - a self-selected sample is often a biased one because usually only those people who feel strongly volunteer opinions. Those with mixed feelings (which I suggest predominated for this issue) usually refrain from commenting.

The issue discussed as the fourth consequence shows why Association members had mixed feelings about buildings subsidies. They felt negative because they anticipated that local members would re-allocate their time away from the task vital for the maintenance of playcentre as a parent

co-operative movement dependent upon parents training to become supervisors. But they had positive feelings that buildings specially for playcentre use would mean that local members would no longer have to endure the drain on their time and energy caused by bringing out and packing away equipment before and after most sessions, as is the case when community accommodation is used. Thirty-nine percent of staff frustrations were concerned with working conditions.

Table 9.1. Frustrations Felt by Pre-school Staff by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Job conditions	18	39.0	13	48.0	31	41.9
Human relationships	15	32.0	8	29.0	23	31.1
Child-related aspects	10	21.0	6	22.5	16	21.6
Other	4	8.0	-	-	4	5.4
	<u>47</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>100.0</u>	<u>74</u>	<u>100.0</u>

NOTE: This table is based on the number of times a frustration was mentioned.

The types of conditions which irritated supervisors were related to their working in rented accommodation, whereas kindergarten teachers frequently mentioned the poor adult to child ratio.

*Parents don't pull their weight. They avoid the chores at clean-up time. (Playcentre staff interviewee)*

*I can't set out activities the day before. (Playcentre staff interviewee)*

*A lot of time is wasted setting up and stacking away. (Playcentre staff interviewee)*

Also, when asked to rank aspects of playcentre work which were most important to the supervisor personally, twenty-two percent ranked good physical working conditions in first or second place. All this data indicates that playcentre buildings are seen as a desirable goal by many local playcentre members which association members are well aware of.

### Consequence 3: Standardized Plans do not Suit Local Playcentres' Diverse Needs.

Local centre and association personnel had, by conference time, realized the disadvantages of Education Board's architects providing plans for pre-school buildings. The main objections were predictable from the history of the movement:

- (a) Standardized plans could not cater for the diverse needs of playcentres in different areas; and
- (b) The plans did not allow space for parent work. Those centres with many parents staying at children's sessions found everyone feeling very cramped.

Standing Committee was again criticised for not circularizing the Building Brief to all associations. Conference agreed that Federation appointed members should ask for consultation with the Department over building plans.

Consequence 4: Local Centres Re-allocate Resources to the Detriment of the Adult Education Programme.

During the time that centre members are raising funds, planning the building, helping with renovations, decoration and the laying out of the outdoor play area, there is an upsurge of parent commitment - both in terms of individual time commitment and in terms of involving more parents, particularly fathers. However, expression of this commitment tends to be via a shift of effort from parent education and training activities to buildings-related activities, not via an increased input of time and effort to cover all activities.

When the playcentre moves into its own accommodation, there is an upsurge of interest in playcentre education by local parents. Enrolments boom, but the side-tracking of efforts away from education and training in earlier months usually leaves a dearth of mothers qualified and willing to supervise at the children's sessions. Shortage of staff has plagued all playcentres who own buildings in the Wellington Association for several years after they have moved into their own premises. The Wellington Association's President commented to me, during the week of the 1977 graduation ceremony, that there were few or no trainees graduating from the local centres who were involved in buildings. Two centres which had moved into their own premises 4-5 years ago were starting to have reasonable groups of trainees complete their certificates, but, in the interim, had been struggling to find supervisors to meet the enrolment demands. Members' time re-directed to buildings-related activities is only one factor of several which appear to be associated with buildings-ownership and staffing difficulties. The greater number of families in playcentres with their own buildings seems to lessen parents' motivation to train and supervise - it is easier to 'leave it to someone else' when you know there are many families on the roll.

Also, centres with their own buildings tend to be situated in high SES areas where many mothers feel that former educational qualifications should exempt them from doing playcentre training before supervising. However, the Association will not accept this line of reasoning, as was explained in Chapter 8.

Consequence 5: Voluntary Leaders have been further burdened.

In 1975, Wellington Association leaders were very heavily burdened with activities for the playcentre movement. Reference was made earlier to information collected to support the Federation's case for Government-paid, playcentre-employed training officers to relieve playcentre volunteers and to better service playcentres. It showed that many association leaders up and down New Zealand were working 40-60 hours per week in return for a nominal honorarium and a low mileage allowance.

To use the example of Wellington association's President to illustrate the point, she devoted time in 1975 to:

1. Administrative tasks

- liaison activities with the Regional Office of the Department of Education;
- liaison activities with Federation committees;
- conducting Association Council meetings four times per year, and implementing Council decisions;
- arranging and conducting the Association's monthly Executive meetings, and implementing decisions;
- attending an Area meeting in each of the six Areas once per term to meet local members at their level;
- attending District Pre-school Committee meetings about once per term, and actioning any recommendations from that Committee (including going along to further sub-committee meetings);
- attending some meetings of other groups in the field of early childhood education; e.g., informal playgroups such as that formed in Aro Street, Family Life Education Council, Association for the Study of Childhood, Wellington Pre-school Association, University Extension courses, and so on.

2. Education tasks

- attending Education Committee meetings about once a term and assisting with the implementation of recommendations;

- attending, as an ex officio member, monthly Training Team meetings, and assisting with the implementation of their tasks;
- attending and helping to conduct about three of the six Area Training meetings held locally each term;
- tutoring (and marking the assignments of) some advanced trainees;
- tutoring (and marking the assignments of) two or more Helpers' groups;
- assisting with the running of several training workshops (meetings at which trainees can explore themselves the range of possibilities for play activities with, say, water);

### 3. Other tasks

- arranging and conducting meetings to review Association finance two or three times per year;
- overseeing, in a supportive way, the running of the equipment shop;
- overseeing, in a supportive way, the operation of the publications depot;
- attending and helping arrange social functions;
- attending at least one Supervisors' Association gathering per year;
- visiting local playcentres regularly;
- receiving and making dozens of phone calls each week.

In 1977, the Wellington President (a successor to the President whose tasks are described above) devotes much less time and energy to Education tasks, because she does not have training and supervising experience. However, she is involved in many buildings-related tasks, including the following:

- preparation and presentation of a Buildings Report for the Executive and Council meetings;
- attending a meeting on buildings held by all associations in the central region of New Zealand once per year;
- attending the Buildings Sub-committee meeting at Conference;
- meeting with City Council members, Board architects, Board maintenance officers, the Association solicitor about mortgages, Pre-school Advisers, and Regional Office personnel as required;
- handling additional phone calls; the present President estimated that about 3-4 hours per week had been devoted to telephone discussions about buildings in March, 1977;
- visiting buildings in progress about three times per week.

These tasks take about 6-8 hours per week. The President and one other

Association officer now devote a portion of most Saturdays to inspecting the progress on buildings - a further encroachment on voluntary members' family time. There are at least two Association members other than the President also involved with buildings-related tasks.

Time given by Association leaders to buildings-related tasks may diminish in a few years when most Wellington centres that can meet the subsidy criteria and want a specially designed building will be well settled into the pattern of managing a capital asset as well as two educational programmes - one for children and one for adults.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The strategic choice to grant playcentres free sites and buildings subsidies was an outcome of the Labour Government implementing a recommendation in the Hill report that the State assist playcentres to have their own premises. This recommendation was partly stimulated by Federation cases to Government in the early 1960s and submissions about buildings to the Committee of Inquiry, and partly stimulated seemingly by the Hill Committee's desire to see Government implement 'one system of State assistance'. Because the majority of playcentres operate in rural areas and because modification of pre-fabricated classrooms for playcentre use had been successfully functioning for several years, an additional Scheme B subsidy for renovating existing buildings was also granted.

Two organisational variables changed as a result of the political decision to give playcentres State assistance for buildings. The structure of Federation, associations and some local councils changed. Federation added another national sub-committee comprising three Buildings Officers (one for each region) for most of its work but adding association buildings officers at the meeting prior to conference. Most associations added a Buildings Officer to their executive committee or, in some instances, added a buildings committee. Those playcentres working towards getting their own building set up buildings committees also.

For all these units in the playcentre organisation, a re-allocation and an additional input of time resources was involved. In a discussion of organisational variables, the re-allocation of time is of concern. During meetings at all levels in the organisation an increased proportion of time was given to the discussion about criteria for buildings subsidies, the building code, and progress being made with buildings. So as not to



keep members in meetings any longer, other tasks were given less time. At local level, it was particularly noticeable that playcentre members were giving less time to parent education tasks (indicated by very few trainees) and more time to buildings-related tasks, if they were planning a building. No change occurred to the programmes for either adult education or child education; but the scale has been influenced by the strategy - more playcentre places have been created.

With reference to environmental variables, the strategic choice to make State assistance available for playcentre buildings meant volunteers had to increase their input of time resources. More parents are reported to have become involved on local committees (often more men) and additional members have been co-opted onto association executive committees and, for many individuals, extra time has been given to buildings-related tasks; for example, to the Saturday morning building progress inspections in Wellington. Parents also increased their input of financial resources to raise their proportion of building costs. Environmental conditions were also changed. I have noted that the unnegotiated Circular Memoranda, which posed a threat to parent decision-making (central to the movement's ideology), was a very clear example of the condition termed environmental illiberality. Environmental variability prevailed until all the procedures and relationships for implementing the strategy were established, and the many new interrelationships with other organisations needed to obtain buildings has added to the complexity of the playcentre organisation's environment. Negotiations with the Department of Education, Education Boards, local authorities, the Ministry of Works and individual builders are all necessary to obtain pre-school buildings.

What has this strategic choice meant for the playcentre organisation's performance? The type of service has been changed in a sense for those playcentres with their own buildings. Although no discussions have taken place about changing programmes, I sense that there will be some changes to the activities because the equipment does not have to be packed away after each session. I hypothesize that outdoor play equipment will improve for many centres. Once a building is operational, it is obligatory that a playcentre is open for six half-days if a Scheme A subsidy has been given, which means that the number of pre-school places may increase and there may be more sessions for the children on the roll. It is hypothesized that the quality of the children's session suffers for



a number of years, during and immediately following the building process, because parents' time and energy has been diverted away from training.

Members satisfaction with the strategic choice was another criteria for assessing the performance of the organisation. Parents and staff preferred working in their own building, although they would sometimes find fault with the architectural design of the building. The volunteers were less happy. The burden of the buildings-related tasks has fallen largely on the shoulders of volunteers, particularly association volunteers, who must cope with most of the interrelationships with other organisations mentioned above. They also felt most strongly that the ideology was threatened - that the principle that parents are the best educators of their own children would not be lived up to during the time energy was spent on building-tasks.

Will a wider range of social groups benefit from playcentre as a result of the decision that Government should provide assistance for playcentre buildings? I wish to hypothesize that they will. Fourteen percent of the pre-school families surveyed said that they chose kindergarten because it provided better equipment and activities. Those playcentres with their own buildings will be more attractive to parents who desire better facilities.

The pre-school family survey also indicated that mothers with commitments additional to their family commitments, such as paid or voluntary work activities, preferred kindergartens (See Tables 7.7, p.133 and 7.10, p.136). There are fewer obligations for parents to participate in kindergarten activities, nor are expectations as high as those held by playcentre members, as can be seen from the table below:

Table 9.2. Maximum Level of Parent Involvement by Pre-school Affiliation

<u>Maximum Involvement</u>	<u>Playcentre</u>	<u>Kindergarten</u>
	%	%
None	-	23.0
Parent-help	46.3	39.7
Local committee or early training	25.4)	27.7)
Committee office or later training	26.8)	9.6)
Association or national committee	1.5)	- )
	<u>100.0</u>	<u>100.0</u>

$$x^2 = 22.8 \quad df = 4 \quad p < 0.01$$

Once a playcentre is operating in its own building, the obligation mothers hated most - the packing away of heavy equipment - is reduced to something easily managed. To get the equipment put away, most centres run a roster for cleaning and packing up in addition to the parent helper roster. It is the former task that is strongly disliked, and it diminishes once the building is operational. Also, a centre in its own building is more likely to offer more sessions once its parent education programme is re-established and producing an adequate supply of supervisors, which is also attractive to mothers who have many commitments.

In the next chapter I will turn to the kindergarten movement to examine Government's decision to help the kindergarten movement by granting it money to help with running costs.

## CHAPTER TEN

### THE SESSIONAL GRANT TO KINDERGARTENS AND THE ADMINISTRATIVE GRANT TO ASSOCIATIONS

These grants were announced by the Director of Special Duties (Department of Education) at the 1974 Union conference with next to no negotiation with the Union Executive about the forms of assistance. The initiative lay very much with the Department of Education, particularly with regard to the former grant. Several approaches had been made for assistance to associations. There is a strong parallel that could be drawn between this action whereby the kindergarten movement received assistance with running costs, when they had a case before Government for Supervising Head Teachers, and the action whereby the playcentre movement received assistance with buildings, when they had a case before Government for Field Officers.

#### THE HISTORY OF THE SESSIONAL AND ASSOCIATION GRANTS

This area of concern has fairly recent origins. One of the remits passed at the 1970 conference was a request that the Department should allocate funds to help establish offices in large associations. The Minister replied that this was a matter for the Committee of Inquiry into Pre-school Education. The Union's submissions included a recommendation: "That the Department of Education provide financial assistance to offset expenses incurred in general administration" (NZFKU Submissions, 1970). The preamble to this recommendation is ambiguous as to whether such a grant should be for kindergarten committees and associations, or just for associations; but seems to propose assistance at both levels:

*The Union does not suggest that the State should meet all costs involved in kindergartens as this would destroy the voluntary contribution to their development which is a measure of the movement's strength, but with growing awareness of the value and insistent demand for the establishment of kindergartens, the Union considers the time has come when the State should assume some responsibility for direct running costs and administration.*

*Associations act as agents for the Crown in the work of establishing kindergartens and incur heavy expenses thereby. It seems reasonable, therefore, that the Crown, as virtual owner of each kindergarten, should make some contribution towards the costs involved in its functioning.*

*Associations act as agents for the Crown also in the work involved with teachers' and students' fortnightly salary payments and deserve to be compensated to some degree for the expenditure incurred.*

(NZFKU Submissions, 1970)

I have heard Departmental officers say in recent years that they use the Hill Report (1971) as their 'bible'. What, therefore, did the report have to say regarding administration costs? Recommendation 4.4 which is the relevant statement recommends "that State assistance towards the running expenses of the centre be available to any pre-school which meets the prescribed requirements" (Ibid, p.107). The Report's discussion on State support provides the clue as to why administrative assistance took the form it did - it talks of assistance to playcentres and kindergartens on "a more equitable basis" (Ibid, p.76). Following the publication of the Playcentre Federation's submissions to the Committee of Inquiry, the Union President, opening the 1971 conference, expressed anger at the implied criticism of the kindergarten approach contained in these submissions, and envy of the State aid given for playcentre association work (administration, liaison and training). She felt there were inequities in the apportioning of the pre-school vote because kindergarten liaison work was not supported. However, in the author's view, the extra \$10,000 granted to the playcentre organisation in 1971 for liaison work would be a similar amount to four Supervising Head Teachers' salaries paid for by Government.

Dialogues between the Union and Government of the mid-1920s and 1947-48 (see Chapter 6) began repeating themselves in the 1970s. The 1971 conference also passed a very specific remit regarding running costs which contrasted with a remit passed at the previous conference asking the Union to commit itself to the goal of pre-school education for all 3 and 4 year old children whose parents want it, and suggested that eventually Government should bear (amongst other things) a per capita cost towards running all types of pre-schools. It asked that "the Department accept responsibility for approximately:

- (a) 50 percent of direct running costs with an annual capitation grant of \$6.00, and
- (b) \$100 per kindergarten to associations for administration costs" (NZFKU Ann. Mtg. Mins., 1971). The Minister again deferred any decision because the matter would be dealt with by the Hill Report. The second part of this remit was proposed and carried again at the 1972 conference and directed to the Director-General for attention. He suggested an alternative

tactic whereby Education Boards help with some mechanical administrative tasks without assuming control. This tactic was put into operation for salary payments, several months later. The Minister was also presented with a remit asking that there should be increased grants for administration. Help to local committees in the form of a grant for cleaning and gardening costs was the recommendation forwarded to the Director-General from the following year's conference.

In 1973 the Union Executive expressed concern that in some areas there was a deficit between donations and expenses. The President's opening remarks to the conference that year outlined what she had said to the Educational Development Conference (E.D.C.) Working Party on the Organisation and Administration of Education about kindergarten administration. The President had informed the E.D.C. group that the kindergarten volunteers had reached 'an almost impossible situation' with money raising. Although the volunteers expected to retain some financial involvement, the President had recommended that more State support was needed for buildings, for association administration and for Union administration before the kindergarten service could expand much more. Note the omission of any recommendation about Supervising Head Teachers, which was supposed to be a top priority request.

At the 1974 Union conference, the announcement was made that help would be given for kindergarten administration. The kindergarten sessional grant parallels the maintenance grant given to playcentres, and the playcentre and kindergarten associations grants are matched. A one-off grant was also given for setting up a permanent Union office in Wellington. At the time of the announcement the Director of Special Duties said that he hoped this grant would provide the opportunity for the kindergarten volunteers to formalize parent involvement in the childrens' programme. Playcentre Federation Standing Committee members congratulated the kindergarten members on achieving a more equitable situation with regard to their running costs.

#### IMPLICATIONS

The grants were given by the Department:

- (a) To obtain more equitable funding for the kindergarten movement in line with maintenance and association grants given to the playcentre movement;
- (b) To relieve pressure on kindergarten local committees and associations; and

(c) To encourage parent involvement in the childrens' programme.  
One of these objectives was not accomplished by the strategy.

Consequence 1: Equitable Funding

The strategy of granting funds to help run kindergartens and assist associations with administrative costs did place the two main pre-school movements on a more equitable basis. The Playcentre Federation leaders recognised this in their reaction of congratulating the Union Executive via the media.

Consequence 2: Relief to the Voluntary Organisations Financial Resources

To those associations and local committees who were running into financial difficulties or difficulties in raising a committee because fund-raising was too onerous, the grants gave relief.

However, in the Wellington Association it could be said that the grant may be needed only in some years by the three inner-city kindergartens (Petone, Wellington South and Newtown) which have displayed a pattern of difficulties in maintaining a local committee at times. Only one of these was in a critical state in 1973, and this situation was overcome in 1974 with some management advice from an Association Executive member delegated this special duty.

With Education Boards taking over responsibility for major maintenance of kindergartens after April 1974, the two greatest costs in running kindergartens were cleaning and equipment, which were higher for Grade 2 kindergartens, so it could be argued that these two kindergartens in the Wellington Association, and Petone/Wharehoa, needed extra financial assistance for these purposes. Examination of the Wellington Free Kindergarten Association's Statements of Receipts and Payments during the years of my field work, indicate that all but one local committee had been able to pay all their expenses and still have a healthy bank balance at the end of the financial year. The combined bank balance for all twenty kindergartens committees and the five establishment committees at the end of 1974 (the year in which the sessional and association grants were first given) amounted to \$58,528.00. In addition the Association had accumulated funds of over \$9,500 which would be more than sufficient to help one or two local committees each year if they ran into financial difficulties.

It would seem therefore that the kindergarten committees and the Association

itself in Wellington could not be described as experiencing pressure on financial resources. I think it would be fair to say that this picture could be generalised to a large majority of kindergarten associations in New Zealand. The association administration grant enabled some associations to pay for administrative help and thus relieve the president, secretary and treasurer who were doing many time-consuming mechanical tasks voluntarily. In Wellington, the extra grant gave the Association Executive the confidence to move the Association office to very well-appointed rooms from some rather dingy, crowded and unsafe (earthquake risk) premises.

Some associations attempted to retain a portion of the sessional grant and divert it towards the prime objective of the voluntary organisation: new sites and buildings. The Department of Education has reprimanded such associations and have refused to listen to Union members' requests that some of this grant would be better spend on buildings. Treasury personnel are reputedly sympathetic to such diversions of funds during the recession, but any such proposal has so far been vetoed at Departmental level. The alternative way of getting extra funds for sites and buildings from these grants, is for the Union to levy kindergartens for such purposes, but a motion of this effect at the 1976 conference was lost. It would seem that associations would rather do this at association level. Many associations, including the Wellington Association (see p.119), already operate an establishment fund receiving monies from local committees each year. Wellington's fund appears not to be used as effectively as it might because the 'good business' objective is over-riding and the fund has been invested and only a small proportion is spent each year.

Consequence 3: No Voluntary Organisation Effort to Increase Parent Involvement in the Childrens' Sessions

When the Director of Special Duties announced the sessional and administrative grants, he made a plea that consideration be given to persuading parents to take a greater share in the childrens' programmes:

*Perhaps the time has arrived when there would be advantages in having a formal requirement that one or two parents should be involved as mother helpers in all sessions at all kindergartens. I believe the movement could do itself a service ... The adoption of a formal roster system ... would establish in the minds of parents that, when they join up with the kindergarten movement, they are not only sharing in the management of the kindergarten, they are sharing with other parents and the teachers in the carrying*



*out of healthy programmes for their children.  
If this arrangement were formalised it could lead  
to the kindergarten movement making an even  
bigger contribution in the field of parent educa-  
tion. (Pinder, 1974)*

The Officer for Pre-school Services also said at the same conference that if administrative chores were taken off kindergarten administrators' backs, then a parent education programme might be developed. The Departmental officers believed that most kindergartens had mother helpers most days, but wanted to see this practice extended. Whether the parent education was just to take the form of parent helping or was to include talks to parents akin to the Introductory Talks obligatory for playcentre parents is not clear. If such talks were instituted, an accompanying strategic choice would have to be taken; namely, who should lead the parent education sessions - the teachers, or parents, or people from tertiary institutions, or a combination. Each alternative has implications:

(a) Teachers.

"If kindergarten teachers are to become involved in this difficult and sensitive task a great deal of thought must be put into this part of the training. Selection, length of training and methods will have to be carefully re-assessed. Is it realistic to expect girls straight from school, after two years of training, to be very successful in involving parents? Should we be trying to train more mature people? Why only women?" (Bell, 1974)

(b) Parents.

My survey of pre-school staff revealed that 35 percent of Wellington kindergartens averaged less than one mother helper per session. The structured observations in kindergartens supported this, when it was found that for one-fifth of the kindergarten sessions visited, no parent helper was present (See Appendix 4). Twenty-three percent of the parents of kindergarten children interviewed during 1974 had never been involved in any way in the kindergarten sessions or with administration tasks. These data show that there is plenty of room for expansion of parent helping - both in terms of numbers of sessions, and in terms of proportion of parents. In addition, parents could become leaders of parent discussions; but who would train them?

The plea by Departmental personnel for greater parent involvement in the session to develop parent education echoes the pleas made in the 1960s for kindergarten parents to make more use of adult education facilities for

parent education (see Chapter 6). Neither plea has had any great effect. The increase in kindergarten parents' attendance at adult education classes and the growth in general public awareness of the importance of the early years could just as easily be attributed to diffusion effects from play-centre practices and to kindergarten teachers' efforts. To my knowledge, the suggestion that a formal parent helpers roster be adopted as policy has never been seriously discussed by the Union Executive, and definitely not by conference.

It takes more than a Departmental request to formalize such a policy, and the Union is generally reluctant to impose policy on its constituents. An exception was when several policy changes were made undemocratically with the introduction of the Union's Standard By-Laws. Early drafts were circulated, but the final draft was bull-dozed through at the 1975 conference for a 'trial year'. When the trial year was up associations were told:

*Following its unanimous adoption at last year's Conference it replaces all individual Association By-laws. Additions may be made to meet local needs, but must not negate any section of the said By-Laws. No portion of the By-Laws may be deleted. (NZFKC Executive Report, 1976, p.3)*

If democratic procedures are followed to introduce parent helper rosters, some association will have to propose a remit about formalizing parent helping and have it passed at a Union conference. It took nearly a decade from the time compulsory parent involvement in Introductory Talks was mooted in the playcentre movement before it was accepted at a Federation conference; so I do not anticipate any rapid adoption of such a policy by the kindergarten movement, especially as I believe that most kindergarten parents are inclined to leave all educational tasks to the teachers.

(c) Personnel from Tertiary Institutions

This would have the effect of making the parent education sessions mostly theoretical, rather than discussing children that the adults (tutors and parents) are relating to frequently. It could make parents feel that experts 'know best', which can denigrate parents.

Consequence 4: Compounded Parent Apathy

The strategy of giving grants to help with administrative costs was implemented at much the same time as the strategy of Education Boards taking over major maintenance was implemented. These two strategies together seemed to have dampened voluntary workers' enthusiasm to the point

where many are leaving (or not joining) kindergarten committees on an increasing scale. Instead of voluntary workers re-allocating their time and energy to working with children in an educational way, kindergarten parents are opting (partially or fully) out of working for the kindergarten movement. One of the reports presented to the 1976 Union conference talks of the "apathy (that) exists among parents, teachers and the public at large when it comes to providing high quality pre-school experience" and mentions problems such as:

*Difficulty in getting sufficient people to make themselves available for local committees in some areas;*

and

*Difficulty in many areas in raising funds to build and maintain good kindergartens;*

and

*Disappointed staff in some areas due to lack of support.*

(NZFKU Ann. Mtg. Mins., 1976)

Feelings of disillusionment with parents who did not want to become involved in the kindergarten movement were expressed by many voluntary workers interviewed during 1975. For example, 23 percent of the frustrations mentioned by the interviewees were related to parent apathy. Comments such as:

*I find it frustrating the lack of attendance of committee members in projects involving labour;*

and

*Committee members who don't pull their weight are frustrating in kindergarten work;*

and

*The unwillingness of people to get involved is frustrating. Only a small number of people turned up at this year's A.G.M.*

(Volunteer interviewees)

endorse comments in the conference report cited above.

What causes parent apathy?

The report cited above suggested that money spent on promotional and educational work would result in fuller and wiser understanding which in turn would spark off greater participation. The implication that I read into this is that the kindergarten dominant coalition believe that lack of understanding about kindergarten education produces parent apathy. I

would argue that the cause of parent apathy is far more complex, and involves factors at three levels of analysis.

1. Societal

- (a) There is an increase in the number of women with pre-school aged children joining the work force. Combining work and family commitments leaves little time for voluntary work (see p.30).
- (b) In New Zealand in recent years, the number of different voluntary organisations has proliferated. The kindergarten movement has to compete now with many 'worthy causes' to attract resources in the form of membership and funds and land.
- (c) The New Zealand general public did not buy into the simplistic ideas that early childhood education will solve social problems of inequality; that early childhood education will give New Zealand children an intellectual boost over other children. Because of this, society does not value early childhood education as highly as other educational priorities: neither Government nor the general public support groups working in this field as much as early childhood groups desire.
- (d) However, the general public (including many parents) often believe that the kindergarten service is totally State run, and therefore members of the public feel that they need not assist kindergartens in any way. Money spent on 'educational and promotional activities' could well help to persuade the public that a small amount of community assistance is needed to maintain kindergartens and a great deal more is needed to establish a new kindergarten. It could also help to persuade parents that their participation in the childrens' sessions is an important activity that benefits both the pre-school centre and the family itself.

2. Organisational

- (a) Kindergarten members, over the years, have expected the Government to provide more and more funds for all areas of functioning (see p.122)
- (b) Government's underlying premise for giving funds to pre-school organisations seems to be that funding should be on an equitable basis. Extra funds have been granted to achieve equity, without any need for the funds being proven.
- (c) The above two practices have resulted in a very high level of State support with accompanying State decision-making. There are now very few administrative tasks left for voluntary members

and only a few minor decisions made and implemented within the organisation; that is, without consultations with and approval from Departmental officers (see p.123). Local committees decide on social activities, fund-raising activities and how to spend the funds, and they decide on the maintenance proposals to forward to the Education Boards for consideration. Association office-bearers oversee staffing and any problems arising in this area, and negotiations with other parties over sites and buildings. Some associations' personnel may participate in training meetings. The whole Association council generally only ratifies office-bearers' actions after events and may involve itself in occasional social activities. Union Executive members spend a great deal of time liaising and negotiating with other organisations, particularly with the Department of Education.

The kindergarten organisation's members have had the procedures for attaining the main objectives (establishing new kindergartens and maintaining existing kindergartens) removed from their grasp. Members are left with co-ordinating administrative tasks and with expressive tasks, and with the possibility of being more active in the educational task area. Co-ordinating tasks provide little in the way of instrumental satisfactions. Social activities giving expressive satisfactions are not frequent occurrences in the kindergarten movement these days and several kindergarten committee members complained to me that they attended meetings for months without getting to know fellow committee members - these were meetings characterised by office-bearers not bothering with a tea break because they did not recognise the value of time spend on informal discussion. Dispensing with sharing supper was an unfortunate and unnoticed change to Council meetings which occurred when the Wellington Association acquired new offices and ceased to meet in kindergartens. Organisers and chairmen of conferences and seminars who fill the time with agenda items also gravely undervalue the importance of time for an open exchange of ideas. The practice of over-organising gatherings was often observed at all levels in the kindergarten movement. The possibility of more active parent involvement in education tasks has not been actively explored, except in isolated instances; for example at Petone kindergarten.

- (d) The kindergarten leaders have a narrow conception of what early childhood education is all about. Despite protestations from the voluntary organisation's leaders about the substantial amount of parental involvement they have, the reality of the situation is that parent involvement is not as pervasive as they claim. The time of greatest involvement is viewed by Union leaders as critical:

*Parent involvement is the life blood of the kindergarten movement. In fact, it is the only way we can grow. The addition of another kindergarten must be at the request of parents. (Simpson, 1970, Foreword)*

The high value placed on this form of parent involvement - establishing new kindergartens - matches the goal given highest priority - the goal of growth. After establishment is achieved, only some parents become involved in committee work; only some help at the children's sessions often with little preparation as to what they should do and often spending a lot of time in the kitchen; only some parents get to a pre-entry group which in the majority of Wellington kindergartens is a one-off gathering of children and their mothers before being admitted to the afternoon session with thirty-nine other children; only some families are visited in their homes; and Mothers' Clubs "run especially for mothers" [my emphasis] (Hataitai Kindergarten Ann. Rpt., 1958), have been wound up in most suburbs because of lack of interest. Thus parent involvement is very hit and miss, and not likely to have as great an impact on family life as a well-planned, developmental approach to parent education as is implemented by playcentre associations, (McDonald, 1973). The lack of mention of working with parents in the 1974 Recruitment Statement for kindergarten teachers is an excellent indicator of the child orientation of kindergarten personnel.

The focus on the children is, however, unwavering. The free kindergarten movement's motto is "He who helps the child helps humanity" (Socrates), and the helping of the child has been the key-note to the organisation's approach to early childhood education since the founders were spurred to start free kindergartens by the sight of 'underprivileged' children playing on the

streets. Groups of parents and community organisations work hard to secure kindergartens for the children in the area. Working with children in kindergartens is mentioned far more often than working with parents in reports about kindergarten activities. For example, three of the four educational aims presented in the Union's submissions to the 1971 Committee of Inquiry focussed on the child:

1. *To provide a sound basis for social, emotional, intellectual and physical growth.*
2. *To provide a wider environment outside the home, especially designed as a 'child's world', not an adult establishment with pre-school equipment.*
3. *To employ trained teachers to work with children in a skilfully-planned environment with carefully chosen equipment designed to challenge and extend children and help them to realise that they are all individuals but must learn to live with one another.*
4. *To encourage parent participation in the programme in order to gain full understanding of the child and to serve his needs.*

(NZFKU Submissions, 1970, p.9)

Kindergarten teacher training curricula have placed very little emphasis on parent involvement. Although this has improved in recent years, it is still a comparatively minor component in the curriculum.

Despite the fourth aim and the increasing emphasis on parent involvement during training, there were still 23 percent of the parents in my sample of kindergarten parents who could be described as being untouched by the kindergarten early childhood programme (See Table 9.2, p.195).

### 3. Individual

- (a) Quite a number of parents believe that kindergartens are State run. (I found that one local committee President was expressing this belief even after she had held that office for two months or so.)
- (b) Only some parents have the characteristics of voluntary organisation joiners. I will summarize the results of studies cited in more detail in Chapter 2 to illustrate this point. Overseas, Babchuck and Booth (1969) found that membership participation was associated with being male, upper or middle-class, married, and owning a home. Komarovsky (1949) also found an association between high socio-economic status and membership in voluntary associations, while Foskett (1955) isolated educational



level as the most significant variable in participation scores. In New Zealand, Roth (1971, p.4) found that 45 percent of her sample did not belong to any voluntary organisations. Other both-sex samples in different New Zealand communities, such as Masterton, have found that about 30-40 percent of the population were non-joiners, so the total female sample of *Urban Women* (Society for Research on Women, 1972) must have slanted the proportions drastically, because a high 63 percent of their sample were non-joiners. It would appear that New Zealand men participate far more in voluntary work than do New Zealand women. In Masterton, 23 percent men and 36 percent women were non-joiners (Robb and Somerset, 1957).

The kindergarten dominant coalitions at Union and Association levels do not seem to understand that many of the parents using the kindergarten service will have neither the social participation skills nor the motivation to participate in any voluntary activities and even fewer would be motivated to join a kindergarten committee. The 16 percent of families in my Wellington pre-school families survey where the father was ranked at level 5 or 6 of Elley-Irving's socio-economic status scale (1972) would probably tend to be non-joiners, because Chapin (1970) found that families with the father in Occupation level V had a mean score of 8 and Occupation level VI had a mean score of 4 - both low social participation scores. A further proportion of parents will have heavy commitments to other voluntary organisations and will not be interested in further voluntary work. VandenBerg (1965) found that many Hamilton residents would have liked to take part in more activities. All but four were prevented from extending their activities by personal reasons - nothing the organisations could do would have increased participation in those organisations. Social participation patterns vary from suburb to suburb, and I found that the proportion of families with low social participation scores on Chapin's Scale was considerably higher (46 percent) in the low socio-economic area. It is not surprising therefore that low socio-economic suburbs have more difficulties in getting and maintaining a kindergarten local committee, particularly as the kindergarten service attracts a greater proportion of families with low social participation scores and also attracts a higher

proportion of families with high social participation scores (See Table 7.7, page 133).

Additional administrative help from association level members may be needed to help local committees in low socio-economic areas, and the association administration grant should help the association to perform this function.

- (c) More kindergarten volunteers than playcentre volunteers said they felt a moderate or low level of satisfaction. More kindergarten volunteers join pre-school committees because of 'altruistic' motives. Twenty-two percent of playcentre volunteers joined the committee to "meet other adults" whereas only 3 percent of kindergarten volunteers joined for this purely 'egotistical' reason. This difference can be partly explained by high geographic mobility rates of playcentre families, but is mostly explained on the basis of McMahon's (1974) findings that more males join voluntary organisations because of 'altruistic' motives. Fifty-nine percent of the kindergarten volunteers in my sample were male whereas there were 12 percent in the playcentre sample.

Table 10.1. Volunteers' Sex by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Male	10	11.5	44	58.6	54	33.3
Female	<u>77</u>	<u>88.5</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>41.0</u>	<u>108</u>	<u>66.6</u>
	87	100.0	75	99.6	162	99.9

$X^2 = 42.54$ ;  $df = 1$ ;  $p < 0.01$ .

Many men expressed their reason for joining a kindergarten committee in a similar vein to those voluntary members who said:

*I joined because the committee needed more male members to keep the equipment up to scratch;*

*and*

*I heard they needed a Treasurer, so I offered;*

*and*

*To establish a kindergarten in our area.*

The majority of kindergarten volunteers said that they first joined a kindergarten committee to be involved with their children's

pre-school education. As most of the remaining interviewees had children who would enjoy the benefits from establishing a kindergarten or improving existing facilities, it would be fair to say that even when the motive was expressed primarily in terms of altruistic motives; for example, "to raise money for a new kindergarten", that the motive was in fact a mixed altruistic-egotistical one.

The altruistic element did show through more amongst kindergarten volunteers than amongst playcentre volunteers, and kindergarten volunteers had expectations that instrumental goals would be achieved. However, there are very few administrative instrumental tasks left for kindergarten volunteers because of the high level of State involvement and this affects the feelings of satisfaction that volunteers derive from their efforts on behalf of the kindergarten movement.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Government's decision to give sessional grants to kindergartens and administrative grants to associations seems to have partly been the result of Union leaders making recommendations to Government that some State aid for administrative costs was a necessity; but mostly the result of the Labour Government implementing Hill Report (1971) recommendations. These latter recommendations appear to be based on the ideology that the two major pre-school movements ought to be on a more equitable funding basis - a political ideology which, I believe, has not been in the best interests of either the kindergarten or the playcentre organisation.

All kindergartens were given a sessional grant regardless of need, and associations were likewise given a pro rata administrative grant. This strategic choice (coupled with the decision that Government, through agents in the form of Education Boards, should undertake major maintenance of kindergarten buildings) has led to an even greater decline of parent participation in the voluntary sub-system of the kindergarten movement, largely because there are few sources of satisfaction left for volunteers. An intended consequence from the strategic choice - greater involvement in parent education activities - has not occurred to any noticeable extent because of the grants. It is more probable that any increase in parent education activities are a product of efforts by some staff members.

The variables most affected by this strategic choice process were environmental variables in the form of input of resources. In place of parents and volunteers giving greater amounts of time and money (two forms of resources coming from the environment) to ensure that kindergartens and associations run smoothly, Government now supplies funds to facilitate systems-maintenance. Granted shortly before the New Zealand economy took a downward turn (an environmental condition), these funds were not accompanied by the introduction of any formal Regulations, although it was hoped that parent education activities would increase. The strategy was neither stimulated by nor had any later influence upon non-monetary, inter-organisational relationships. It could be hypothesized that kindergartens in low SES areas would have had far greater difficulties in maintaining their equipment had this grant not been given, unless associations had offered running cost grants or the donations from parents had risen. Parents quickly learn the norm for voluntary donations even when the amount is not stated explicitly, and the amount expected for donations will influence the clientele of the kindergarten organisation (and the playcentre organisation which explicitly charges fees), despite kindergarten teachers not sending a note home to parents who may have difficulty in finding a donation.

Organisational variables: scale, programme and structure were not affected by the new grants, apart from there being a guaranteed amount of money available to local kindergartens which could be (but not necessarily is) spent on play equipment to maintain the programme quality. Once again, allocation of resources is the variable changed by the strategic choice. Kindergarten leaders hoped that some of the funds from these grants could have been explicitly re-directed towards new kindergartens; however, this was not permitted by Departmental officers. Some associations have, in essence, accomplished re-allocation of funds by levying existing local committees and setting aside part of the contribution for new kindergartens.

Members' time, energy and knowledge have not been re-directed as a result of the strategy, but there has been a change in the rewards which motivate volunteers' performance. As stated earlier, this strategic choice and the following strategic choice of Government assistance with buildings maintenance meant there were few tasks left from which volunteers could derive satisfaction. Thirty percent of the volunteers interviewed (who, it must be remembered were all committed to the degree of taking some office) said they gained only moderate or low satisfaction from their

involvement in the kindergarten voluntary organisation.

Table 10.2.      Felt Level of Satisfaction of Volunteers by  
Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Very high	17	23.3	38	44.7	55	34.6
High	34	46.6	35	41.2	69	43.4
Moderate	19	26.0	11	13.0	30	18.9
Low	3	4.0	1	1.2	4	4.1
	85	100.1	73	100.0	158	100.0

$$x^2 = 11.18; \text{ df} = 3; p < 0.05.$$

Why was the level of satisfaction lower among kindergarten volunteers? Examination of expressions of frustrations felt by kindergarten voluntary workers indicates that inability to achieve objectives because other parties have more power is a frustration that was mentioned often and in very strong terms. Members were not achieving the instrumental goals of the organisation as they expected. Government bureaucratic behaviour (21 percent) and the kindergarten movement's own bureaucratic behaviour (13 percent) was felt to be frustrating, particularly by local committee members who experience little local autonomy. The parent apathy was the other main frustration mentioned. Lesser frustrations which have been combined into the 'Other' category include turnover of personnel, lack of time, and general public misunderstanding.

Table 10.3.      Frustrations Felt by Volunteers by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
Parent apathy	26	23.4	36	24.5	62	24.0
Relationship with Govt.	23	20.7	9	6.1	32	12.4
Local problems	17	15.0	35	23.8	52	20.2
Own organisation's bureaucracy	14	12.6	10	6.8	24	9.3
Finance	9	8.0	6	4.1	15	5.8
Other	22	20.2	51	34.7	73	28.3
	111	99.9	147	100.0	258	100.0

N.B. This table is based on how many times a frustration was mentioned; not on how many respondents gave a particular answer.

It would seem that one third of the frustrations were related to a feeling of powerlessness to achieve instrumental goals because of Government or the kindergarten movement's bureaucratic behaviour. Volunteers complained, for example:

*I find frustrating the endless delays in the building of new kindergarten because of 'red tape'.*

and

*The entire structure of the kindergarten movement. For example, the local committees, through the Association, through the Union and to the Department, is frustrating.*

and

*Since coming under State jurisdiction, personal initiative seems to have been undermined.*

and

*The encroaching dead bureaucratic hand of the Education Department is frustrating.*

(Volunteer interviewees)

Thus, many of the frustrations come from a thwarting of instrumental objectives of the committees and from a thwarting of personal motives for joining. Where, then, were satisfactions derived from? Table 7.22 (p.151) lists all the frequently mentioned sources of satisfaction. The main source of satisfaction came from the expressive function of the kindergarten voluntary movement - from adult companionship with other volunteers. This indicates the instrumental-expressive nature of the free kindergarten movement. The second most-often-mentioned satisfaction was derived from achieving the instrumental goal of improving the kindergarten.

The next largest category consisted of satisfactions derived from participating in a community activity. Volunteers expressed this by saying they gained satisfaction from:

*Being able to assist people outside the family circle.*

and from

*... helping with the running of the kindergarten and being able to participate.*

and from

*Working as a community group towards a common goal.*

(Volunteer interviewees)

Edwards and Booth (1973), who adopt an exchange theoretical framework, propose that exit from all types of organisations (whether they are instrumental, instrumental-expressive, or expressive) occur as a result of

asymmetrical exchange. Hirschman (1970), however, says that the tendency to exit is a more complex issue than exchange theory implies, particularly when organisational loyalty is present. Do these frustrations outweigh the satisfactions and cause members to leave kindergarten committees? It would seem not. Only three kindergarten volunteers interviewed (all men) said they intended resigning in the next year because of their dissatisfaction with the kindergarten organisation, and there was no common complaint about the organisation made by these men. One other kindergarten volunteer who described his satisfaction as low said that he would remain a member because his local committee was struggling for members and he felt that no-one else could take on the extra commitment of representing the local committee on the Association council. Except for the three exceptions cited above, the kindergarten committee members interviewed stayed on the committee for the period their children attended kindergarten sessions, regardless of the frustrations felt. However, as soon as this 'reward' or 'exchange' (the service enjoyed by the children) ceased, those who felt less satisfaction generally resigned. Much higher proportions of pre-school volunteers who expressed high satisfactions (a direct reward to the volunteer) were prepared to give at least two more years of service than were moderately satisfied members. As most members of committees in the upper levels of the kindergarten hierarchy admitted a high level of satisfaction (derived from friendships and the satisfaction of opening new kindergartens), it can be anticipated that turnover of membership will be at a much slower rate amongst Union members; and conversely a fairly rapid turn-over rate amongst local committee members is expected, particularly with the demographic trend towards smaller families. The data confirmed this.

For the voluntary organisations systems-maintenance, the concern should not be for the small proportion of parents willing to serve on local committees, which is a normal pattern, and an adequate pattern when one considers the tasks left for local volunteers to cope with. The concern should be with how to attract members across the bridge between local committees (when their children's attendance at sessions is the reward and seeing the kindergarten run smoothly also gives rewards) and association councils where the main reward was found to be adult friendship. Wellington Association does little now to foster this gratification from fellowship, except for the annual social function. Members of the Council, which is primarily an instrumental group, also



expect to see instrumental objectives fulfilled; but this gratification eludes most Wellington Council members because:

- (a) A small group of the Association Executive undertake most of the tasks;
- (b) Council meeting minutes are not circulated to local committee representatives until about a week before the next Council meeting. Presumably this practice is to save postage because a notice and agenda for the next meeting is included; but it effectively stops democratic discussion of association affairs before the next Council meeting.
- (c) Wellington Council members do not participate in any educational tasks, as these are dealt with by the Supervising Head Teacher (and all the Council members are called on to do is to adopt her report and ratify appointments) and by Early Childhood Advisory Committee to the Teachers College Council. No parent education had been planned or implemented by the Council at the time of writing.

The Wellington Free Kindergarten Association President commented in 1974 that roughly 50 percent of the Wellington local committees were "taking no part in the running of the Association" (WFKA Ann. Rpt., 1975). At that Annual Meeting when she made this comment, no more than 30 were present, which is a sharp contrast to the 100 or more who went to the Playcentre Association's Annual Meeting that same year. My analysis of attendances at Council meetings between the Annual Meeting in 1974 and the Annual Meeting in 1975 showed that an average of 35 percent of local committee representatives came to Council meetings whereas establishment committee representatives averaged a 50 percent attendance, indicating a greater interest in Council business being shown by establishment committee representatives. This is not surprising as 30 percent of 1974-75 Council agenda items (including correspondence items) were related to new kindergartens, which is a high proportion considering that establishment is only one of Council's tasks. Also, from the questions raised by establishment committee representatives at these meetings, much of the communication about the progress of new kindergartens between the Association Executives and establishment committees occurred 'formally' at the Council meetings (in contrast to the more frequent 'informal' communication that was a feature in the Wellington Playcentre Association).

The foregoing discussion has partially answered one of the questions used for evaluating the performance of the pre-school voluntary movements after

a strategic choice has been implemented. It has indicated that the volunteers (apart from committee members in kindergartens in low SES areas) were not happy with the changes stemming from the sessional grant; but have found the association grant beneficial. Fund-raising tasks, which gave satisfaction, were no longer so necessary nor so rewarding. Staff in kindergartens which were experiencing difficulties in raising sufficient funds for equipment and consumable materials found the grant a great help, but for most staff members local funds were already adequate.

Neither the type nor the quality of kindergarten education was directly affected by the sessional and administrative grants. Some establishment committees may be assisted, by association re-direction of funds, to reach their monetary target faster. Reaching this target is one criterion for a place on the buildings priority list, and gaining a place is only the beginning of a very complex process to open a new kindergarten (Appendix 5 gives some indication of the buildings process.) Most kindergartens' programmes would have been improved by the input of funds.

Did this strategic choice make kindergarten education available to a wider range of social groups? I would argue that it did not. No changes occurred to any of the aspects of kindergarten functioning which are related to non-user or user parents choice of kindergarten. However, it could be hypothesized that grants may have held down costs, so that families who were concerned about the voluntary donations and contributions to fund-raising efforts did not drift away. The data from Barney's surveys (1975) and from the pre-school families survey (see Table 7.4., p.129) indicates that low SES families are already under-represented on kindergarten rolls.

The last chapter in Part II of this thesis examines the long history, the complex strategic choice process and the many existing and likely consequences arising from the decision to integrate kindergarten teacher training with primary teacher training in New Zealand.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### THE INTEGRATION OF KINDERGARTEN AND PRIMARY TEACHER TRAINING

This chapter shows more clearly than the preceding three chapters that organisations are 'flow systems' which need to be analyzed through time (Sofer, 1973).

The integration of training was a far more complex event than the grants given to kindergartens and associations to cover running costs. Much more space therefore will be given to looking at this choice and its implementation and implications. Much of the material in this chapter is based on Wellington experiences as more data was available to the writer about the Wellington situation.

#### INTEGRATION OF TRAINING

The history of the kindergarten movement, described earlier, indicates a consistent pattern of strategic choices aimed at increasing Government involvement by asking frequently for more and more public money. There have been two periods when the Union Executive has had doubts about this pattern of decision-making. The first was when the 1947 Report of the Consultative Committee was published and the leaders doubted that a complete State take-over was the best decision for the future. The second period includes the contemporary situation. Doubts are felt about the extent of Government involvement which has grown rapidly after the Hill Report was published in 1971. Union members fear that this might 'sound the death-knell' of the voluntary movement. That their fears have been partially realised, is indicated by the alienation of many volunteers, described in Chapter 10. Let me review the history of kindergarten training.

In the early years there was an ambivalence of feeling about integration depending on the leader in power. The first Wellington kindergarten was set up in 1906 as an experimental one and after three years the Association's leaders approached the Minister of Education to incorporate kindergartens with the State education system. This was refused, although the Minister suggested that the kindergarten trainer ought to be a staff member of the Government Teachers' Training College. Members in the

deputation disagreed; they felt that this might undermine the philanthropic idea underlying the movement. However, this rationale contradicted their very reason for waiting on the Minister!

The pressure on Government to take over some of the training tasks started only five years later. At the time when the Union was first established in 1913, it was hoped that the Government might conduct student examinations. However, Miss England, a member of the Association's Council was appointed voluntary examiner for those years.

When the Taranaki Street building, which housed the Wellington Principal and trainees as well as a kindergarten, was being planned in 1917, Government was approached to help with the costs. Government proposed a grant of £600 in return for ownership of the property, which the Council refused. Once again the chance to let Government take responsibility for some aspect of training was passed up because the Association's leaders feared a complete take-over.

By the early 1920s there was much talk about the time when kindergartens would be attached to public schools; but the pendulum of opinion swung back again when the next Wellington President was elected to office in 1925. She felt that kindergartens should never be taken over by local body or central government. After the Union was re-established in 1926, Government agreed to award a certificate to graduates in addition to the kindergarten association certificates. No other Government action occurred for years.

1941 saw the introduction of Government-paid student allowances, after a delegation of Union leaders had met the Minister and asked for assistance to improve the staffing situation. Government from that date determined student quotas and controlled student qualifications.

The Bailey Report of the Consultative Committee on Pre-School Educational Services (1947) recommended that Government should eventually take responsibility for training kindergarten teachers. This might be accomplished by:

- (a) Association training centres changing to State training centres; or
- (b) Special departments being attached to Training Colleges to train kindergarteners; or
- (c) Establishing independent pre-school training colleges.

None eventuated. However, in 1948 Government agreed to pay full-time lecturers' salaries and to give a grant towards part-time lecturers' pay. That same year a national training syllabus was drawn up in consultation with the Officer for Pre-school Services. Christison (1965) reports that by 1949 Government had assumed over 90 percent of the costs of training. The voluntary organisation's dominant coalition felt that their movement was "recognised as part of the education system of New Zealand" (WFKA Ann. Rpt., 1948). Gone were the feelings of threat about the extent of Government aid and control, and this was largely due to better Department/Union communications effected by the Officer for Pre-school Services.

The Campbell Report on Recruitment, Education and Training of Teachers (1951) suggested that the training of pre-school teachers should be the responsibility of some training colleges. However, the Department of Education was not ready to accept such a proposal, nor were the kindergarten movement's leaders. The North Island training associations were putting considerable pressure on Government to provide new kindergarten training accommodation in the 1950s. Obviously the Union Executive was not happy with proposals for integration. Government procrastinated, but late in the 1950s agreed to buy training premises for Auckland and Wellington Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges, thus postponing any decision about integration.

The Union submissions to the 1961 Commission on Education proposed affiliation of Kindergarten Teachers' Colleges with Teachers' Colleges. This recommendation arose from the Union Executive report on national training to the 1959 Union conference, which stated that the ultimate aim was integration with Teachers' Colleges. In 1960 the Union conference passed a remit asking that Government take over the control of Kindergarten Colleges. The Department of Education countered this request with a proposal that one or two colleges should transfer control to a Regional Council of Management for a trial period. With a nudge from the Union, the Wellington Association asked to pilot this scheme and, in 1965, administration of training in Wellington was handed over to a Regional Council. Other Kindergarten Colleges re-constituted their Education Committees into broader-based Boards of Studies. These changes resulted in closer ties with neighbouring universities and Teachers' Colleges being made, because Professors of Education and Teachers' College Principals were members of the new administrative groups. This change gave these

people considerable knowledge of the administration of kindergarten training prior to integration being finally accomplished ten years later.

The Union's conference in 1970 again passed a remit which included another request that training be integrated. The Minister replied that a proposal of such magnitude could not be commented upon. Few major decisions were considered at that time because the Committee of Inquiry Into Pre-school Education was still deliberating. The Union's submissions asked for the "merging of the Kindergarten College and Junior Section of the Teachers' College" (NZFKU's submissions, 1970); and Recommendation 7.1 in the Hill Report (1971) endorsed this proposal:

*It is recommended that the training of pre-school teachers be carried out in special departments of primary teachers' colleges. (p.111)*

*Kindergartens in New Zealand* (Lockhart, 1975) provides a succinct summary of the final events culminating in integration of kindergarten and primary training throughout the country:

*In 1973, pre-school units were established at North Shore and Hamilton Teachers' Colleges, and in 1974 one at Palmerston North Teachers' College.*

*A working party on teacher training for early childhood education was held at Hogben House in May, 1974. The major tasks of the working party were:*

- (a) To study the implications of the proposal to integrate the present kindergarten teacher training programme with primary teacher training, and make recommendations about the administrative and professional procedures that would be necessary to achieve this.*
- (b) To consider the proposal to extend the kindergarten teacher training course by one year and make recommendations on the nature and organisation of such a course.*

*Consideration was also given to related issues - selection procedures, probationary year (etc) ... Teacher training resources and pre-school resources available ... were taken into account ...*

*Following the Hogben House working party, preparation for the integration began to proceed at local and national level ...*

*Planning, however, was hindered by the delay in the decision regarding staffing and the consequent advertising of the Senior Lecturer and Lecturers' positions.*

*In the course planning, as much integration as possible with Division A was provided for, but the particular early childhood elements ... were retained within the 2-year course ...*

*The unit is known as Division E - early childhood education ...*

*Therefore the control of the training has been transferred from the Kindergarten Associations to the Teachers' College Councils and provision has been made for representation on (this) Council. An Advisory Committee on Early Childhood Education has been established in each college and all interested parties are represented. So this integration marks the end of an era.*

(Ibid, pp.109-110)

This bland reporting in no way conveys the tensions felt by many parties as a result of the way integration was finally implemented. Let me look a little closer at the actions involved in the decision-making and implementation process.

#### THE STRATEGIC CHOICE PROCESS

Many groups affected by the Government decision to implement integration were not kept informed. These included the staff and students in the Kindergarten Colleges, Union and association volunteers\*, N.Z.F.K.T.A., Teachers' College staff and the Teachers' College Councils.

The Union President's opening remarks to the 1974 conference expresses the frustration felt by such interested parties very strongly:

*... many of the changes taking shape are what we have asked for in submissions over many years - the strong objection is our non-involvement in the mechanics as to how these shall be implemented.*

*The worst example is the integration of Kindergarten and Primary Teacher Training. We have looked*

\* Only the Union, and Auckland, Christchurch and Dunedin Kindergarten Associations had any part in the integration strategic choice. Wellington Association had handed over control to the Regional Council of Management. Integration was only mentioned twice in Wellington Association minutes in 1974, although my own records show that brief comments were made at one other Association meeting. Therefore, most kindergarten volunteers were not involved in this strategic choice process.



forward to this for years ... (On) 1st August, 1973, Mr Ken Hayr our spokesman on teacher training asked the Minister what he had in mind for kindergarten training as we would like a definite indication (my emphasis) ... (In November) we were told that integration would take place in February, 1975 - but that the Minister must make the announcement. In March of this year nothing had been announced nor had any indication been received by the Union Office and time was running out.

(NZFKU Ann. Mtg. Mins., 1974)

The President went on to describe how she herself started discussion with existing Kindergarten College staff because "the people most concerned were being ignored". Later in the conference, an Auckland delegate asked the Officer for Pre-school Education whether kindergarten associations (the controlling authorities) would be consulted about new schemes. The Departmental officer replied that consultation occurs when the Department has decided that a new proposal was feasible. My comment here is that if Departmental resources have been devoted to evaluating a scheme, the project must be fairly well advanced before consultation begins. This pattern of negotiation and the fact that the Department is one step closer than are the voluntary organisations for gaining Treasury approval for new projects, weights the 'partnership' rather heavily in the Department's favour for getting its way. Not unnaturally, tension exists in this partnership and was frequently mentioned in Departmental/Union consultations in 1974, because the Union Executive was striving to be THE senior partner.

The process of deciding on the details of how to integrate took place on two fronts after mid-1974:

- (a) The official, national process was that the Hogben House working party report was circulated for comment to obtain submissions about the means of integration.
- (b) Simultaneously, but reaching decisions faster, were interim advisory committees meeting in various centres and making recommendations for the Department of Education.

The official 'front' involved a wider range of groups and could be described as more democratic, but was too slow in its actions given the short time left to implement the strategic choice.

#### January - June, 1974 : The Strategic Choice Process.

The events in 1974 prior to July need to be described at this point.

Members of the National Advisory Council on Pre-school Education (N.A.C.P.S.E.) including three Union representatives, had been forewarned in November 1973 that integration would take place in February 1975, but were told that this decision was confidential. By early March 1974, no announcement had been made, nor had any of the interested parties been consulted. The Union President decided she ought to start informal discussions with some Kindergarten College personnel. This precipitated an invitation being extended to the Departmental Senior Inspector of Teacher Training to talk to Wellington Kindergarten College staff and students. The Senior Inspector of Teacher Training was under the impression that integration would be phased in, one or two colleges at a time. The Minister had made a statement to the media about integration, and proposed that an interim committee be set up. Some of those involved in primary training met to consider the implications of integration to them, but apparently the Principal of Wellington Teachers' College, a key person involved in Wellington, was completely surprised by the Minister's announcement.

No official letters to confirm the decision were ever received by the Union, Teachers' Colleges, Kindergarten Colleges or their administrative committees. The Union delayed their own actions by sitting on their dignity awaiting notification. This was not the only instance of delay that I came across stemming from kindergarten members feeling offended and taking their time about acting because 'proper' procedures were not adhered to.

Foreshadowing a later consequence of integration, there was discussion at the June Wellington Region Union Ward meeting of the future choice between a better ratio of adults to children in kindergartens or three-year training or more children into kindergartens. Many Ward members were uneasy about where the movement was heading, but felt powerless, as no provision was made in the movement's method of functioning for open discussion. Presentation of remits to conferences allowed only a narrow focus on topics and ad hoc change, and middle level participants (active association members) said at Ward meeting that they felt the usual pattern of organisational behaviour precluded broad policy decisions being made democratically.

Meanwhile, the working party had met at Hogben House in May at very short notice for the invited participants; some of whom felt that the guidelines produced had been devised by an inner core before the working party met.

The Working Party Report on Teacher Preparation for Training Kindergarten Teachers in Primary Teachers' Colleges, drafted by the working party, was stamped "Draft" and "Confidential" and circulated to a selected number of people in the field for comment. This "Confidential" stamp was to cause delays. Many Chairmen of various early childhood committees received the copy and felt that it was for their eyes only, as was 'proper' for confidential, draft papers.

July 1974 - January 1975 : The Official Strategic Choice Process

By July, most individuals and committees concerned with the integration of training had received the Working Party Report but frequently the comments called for were delayed by committees asking for permission from the Department for all members to read the 'confidential' report, which barely gave committees time to meet again and send back comments by July 31st. Comments were still being sent in August. The official process then entailed re-formulating the guidelines to produce the final Departmental report. On the basis of these guidelines, each Teachers' College was to develop its own course in detail. The new courses were to be put through Teachers' College Council machinery, then sent to the Director-General for approval. All parties other than Teachers' College personnel were seemingly excluded after commenting on the Working Party Report. The Union certainly felt excluded and complained of this at the N.A.C.P.S.E. meeting, August 1974. Kindergarten members, during discussion time at their conference, expressed concern in case the Union was not given the opportunity to be represented on Teachers' College Councils and/or Pre-school Advisory Committees to Teachers' College Councils. However, they felt that they could not press for action from the conference because integration was still a confidential matter.

July 1974 - January 1975 : The Less Official Strategic Choice Process  
(Wellington Activities)

In July, the Regional Council of Management with the support of the Union was planning to send a deputation to the Minister of Education. At the same time, the Teachers' College Council mooted the idea that an Advisory Committee should meet to work out more specific demands before seeing the Minister. This committee was given direct access to the Teachers' College Council, and had wide representation from all interested groups: K.T.A., N.Z.F.K.U., staff and students of both colleges and the Regional Pre-school Advisor and Inspector of Pre-school Training from the Department. The Regional Council of Management agreed to this tactic and deferred sending

a deputation. The two colleges' staff were very concerned that, with only six months left, the Kindergarten College Principal and staff and students did not know what would happen to them in 1975, and felt they must press for further decisions.

From the first meeting of the Wellington interim Advisory Committee held late in July recommendations about student quotas, selection committee membership, the length of the training course and the number and status of staff were sent to the Department of Education. Ten days later, at the next meeting, some of the recommendations had been approved by Departmental officers and there was clarification that the course length would definitely be two years. Several decisions related to the lecturers were made to forward to the Department. The Union representative came out strongly on the issue of 'protection' of existing kindergarten lecturers - a continuing concern of the Union. At this meeting, like the July Regional Council of Management meeting, there was a problem with committee members being denied access to the "Confidential" Working Party Report until the Department agreed.

The students' main concern at this time was that kindergarten training would lose its identity, and the emphasis would change in unwanted directions. They had a national joint meeting with students from other Teachers' Colleges (including those already integrated) to discuss their anxieties, and to make comments on the Working Party Report.

After one month of weekly meetings, the Advisory Committee had moved onto discussing curriculum and less urgent recommendations, some of which are still being negotiated by the Department and the Union and K.T.A. in 1975/76. Most of the more urgent recommendations had been dealt with by the Department without waiting for the revised Working Party Report. Wellington early childhood personnel were happy with the progress in comparison with other centres, especially as many Departmental Circulars echoed the recommendations forwarded by the Wellington interim Advisory Committee. Other centres were not so advanced, mainly because of the confidentiality problem and because of mail communication.

The refusal by Treasury to appoint Senior Lecturers immediately to get the course planning underway was received with dismay by all organisations, including the Department. One reason given for this delay was that a new salary scale had to be negotiated for kindergarten lecturers by yet another

committee: the Educational Services Committee. A Senior Lecturer was appointed late in October and during November she had to ratify many internal decisions.

Although the Union did not pass anything officially at their conference to the effect that it should have representation on Teachers' College Councils, this objective was persistently sought by the Union Executive. They were irate to find legislation to amend the Education Act, including clauses related to Teachers' College Councils, well advanced when they accidentally\* heard about the Bill and nothing could be done to ensure formal representation of the Union on these Councils. The clause allowing Minister's appointees had to be used for Union and K.T.A. representation\*\*. The other main concern of the Union Executive was for 'human dignity'. Members felt that the delays in appointing Teachers' College staff were proving very stressful to existing kindergarten lecturers. The announcements were not made until early December.

December and January were spent finalising the course, winding up the Kindergarten Teachers' College and helping those kindergarten lecturers who were not successful in gaining Teachers' College lectureships. A short-term group, known as the Safeguards Committee, was set up during the second week of December. This Committee had representatives from the Union, K.T.A. and the Department; and they negotiated to procure for those lecturers who lost their jobs:

- (a) a protected salary for two years, and
- (b) the chance to attend courses to bring their qualifications up to those of other Teachers' College lecturers.

Under pressure from the Teachers' College Councils, the Union and the interim Advisory committees, the Minister of Education wrote to Teachers' Colleges suggesting that each college have an Early Childhood Education Advisory Committee to the Teachers' College Council. Wellington's interim Advisory Committee was modified slightly in its membership and formalised.

\* Such accidental learning of events occurred many times during my study. It is an indication of the isolation of the Union President - both geographically and from the 'community' of early childhood personnel which kindergarten volunteers tend not to join.

\*\* The clause states: "One member or more as the Minister may determine to be appointed by the Minister on the joint nomination of such bodies representative of the interests of pre-school education as the Minister determines". (Education Act, 1964, p.63)

The Union had a representative on this committee and a co-opted member on the Teachers' College Council.

Thus by February 1975, the goal of integration, looked forward to for many years because it would relieve the pressure on organisational resources and provide a better training course for kindergarten teachers, had been accomplished. Many kindergarten members said to me that it should have been a happy occasion, but the rush and the lack of consideration for the people involved took the edge off the pleasure. Now, for all but a handful of individuals, kindergarten training no longer occupies voluntary workers' time, energy and skills. This handful of members act as gatekeepers to the communication flow between the Union Executive and administrative groups at the Teachers' Colleges.

#### IMPLICATIONS

The choice process was set in motion by requests from the voluntary organisation's leaders and by Government's agreement that existing resources for training were inadequate. Most of the tactics devised to implement the goal of integration were decided on by early childhood personnel outside the kindergarten voluntary organisation. How did this strategic choice affect organisational strategies, and environmental strategies?

#### Consequence 1: The Role of Volunteer Workers in the Training Sub-system of Kindergarten Organisation.

As has been indicated by the foregoing description of integration, the free kindergarten voluntary movement has virtually completely handed over training tasks to Teachers' Colleges; only a handful of kindergarten volunteers now give time and skill to this task. As one individual on a largish committee, each Union representative has little power to influence Advisory Committee and Teachers' College Council decisions. However most of the movement's representatives on these committees are Union Executive members, and the Union has been able to wield corporate power on at least one occasion\* because the Union still awards the Diploma

\* This occasion was when having a playcentre representative on the Advisory Committees was mooted. Liaison between the Playcentre Federation Education Sub-committee and Teachers' Colleges was envisaged as being useful for mutual professional growth by playcentre, K.T.A. and Teachers' College personnel, but Union members reacted jealously to protect their course. Playcentre educators maintained a relationship with kindergarten training decision-makers and lecturers by informal means since formal contact was vetoed.



to trained kindergarten teachers. Thus, the kindergarten organisation's involvement in training now includes:

- (a) Union representatives attending many meetings each year and reporting back to the President and Executive of the F.K.U., who, in turn, briefly report to association delegates at the Union annual conference; and
- (b) Some associations' leaders being in contact with lecturers and students about the practical training of kindergarten teachers.

#### Consequence 2: The Surplus of Kindergarten Teachers.

It should be remembered that the working party had two major tasks: to study the proposal to integrate kindergarten and primary teacher training; and to consider the proposal to extend kindergarten training to a three-year course. Only the first proposal has been implemented by Government, although most groups in the field recommended implementing some type of three-year course. The E.D.C. Working Party on Organisation and Administration was an exception, and thought a third year was not an immediate priority. The timing of integration with pre-school units being set up at North Shore and Hamilton Teachers' Colleges in 1973 and a further one being established at Palmerston North in 1974, while maintaining the same intake as the four Kindergarten Colleges, suggested that a boost in numbers of kindergarten teachers was planned for 1975/76. Such a boost in numbers could have been matched by one of several strategies to absorb these extra resources:

1. The introduction of three-year training;
2. A boost in the kindergarten building programme;
3. Allowing kindergartens to operate in community buildings;
4. An improvement in the ratio of teachers to children;
5. Employing kindergarten teachers in a greater variety of jobs, and/or
6. Reducing student quotas.

None of these strategies has been adopted on a large enough scale to use the surplus of kindergarten teachers in a way that will satisfy both organisational and societal goals. Therefore, in May 1976, there were 150 supernumeraries\* in the service with the prospect of hundreds more teachers graduating at the end of 1976. The Department of Education, attempting to protect these supernumeraries' changes of employment, has

\* Teachers paid by the Department, but not having permanent appointments.



recently gazetted new Regulations penalizing women wishing to return to kindergarten teaching after a break. N.Z.F.K.T.A. members, irritated by the lack of consultation and worried about the loss to the service of mature women, agreed in their 1976 conference not to apply for jobs if this Regulation is implemented.

There are six possible strategies which could alleviate the problem of a surplus of teachers created by higher retention rates and by this unforeseen consequence of the integration choice without its partner, three-year training:

1. Three-year Training

The Department of Education apparently meant three-year training to be coupled with the integration strategy because of the brief given to the Hodben House working party. Despite recommendations in favour of this strategy from the working party, N.A.C.P.S.E., Teachers' College Councils, the Union and other interested groups, agreement by Government to a three-year course still seems to be some way off. That is, I sense that Departmental officers and politicians differ over need for and the timing for introducing three-year training. I believe the main problem hindering its implementation is one of economics. In a period of recession, Government is not prepared to finance three-year training. Also, there are doubts about the added value of an additional training year, and uncertainty about the timing of a third year. For example, the third year may be more beneficial if it came after the teacher had been in the service for a year or two.

Should Government reach a stage in negotiations with interested groups where it could announce three-year, end-on training for the 1978 intake, the over-supply problem would not be overcome until 1980. The delays for economic reasons could provide time, I would hope, for unrushed course planning in contrast to the rush to integrate.

2. An Increase in the Building Programme

This seems to be a possible strategy which Government intended to couple with the increase in numbers of kindergarten teachers because in the three years that the Labour Government was in power, many measures were introduced, supposedly to help the voluntary groups speed up the building programme. These included provision of sites free of charge to the movement, improved building subsidies, the use

of the Education Boards' architectural services and a maintenance scheme, all to save voluntary funds. These tactics were designed to change the allocation of resources (voluntary organisation funds and voluntary workers' time and skills) to enlarge the scale of the service. However, the greater complexity of procedures to acquire sites, plan buildings and obtain permission to build (greater bureaucratization) has constrained the growth in scale to the same level as the 1960s. Therefore the approach to the market has remained unchanged in the sense that the demand from client families still outstrips the supply of places. During the period Labour was in power, the Union managed to obtain approval for most establishment committees to proceed soon after they had raised their one-fifth of the cost and submitted plans for Departmental approval. Now, with a change in Government, and a recession, the priority list is far longer than the number of buildings Treasury will allow to proceed.\*

None of these changes affected the structure of the movement, but one further scheme has potential consequences for the structure of some associations. Government introduced in the early 1970s a scheme whereby special areas could have a kindergarten free of charge to the community. After 1969, the Department of Education and the Department of Maori and Island Affairs sponsored these pre-schools in areas of special need. The Department of Education became sole-sponsor in 1973.

The free kindergarten voluntary movement moved, after World War II, from its philanthropic approach to provision, to a policy of providing kindergartens only when a group of parents are motivated to band together and raise funds, then negotiate with the Association, the Union and the Department of Education to get approval, then oversee the building and development. This inhibited families living in low SES areas getting kindergartens. Special-assistance kindergartens have helped fill the gaps, but associations complain about difficulties in obtaining and keeping local committees for such kindergartens. Association personnel blame this on Government beneficence, instead of recognising that these communities contain few people with the usual background and experience of voluntary workers; (see Chapter 10 on voluntary pre-school workers). It could well be that associations may have to supply leadership for administering such kindergartens, as

\* Since the time of writing, approval has been given for most kindergartens ready to build to proceed.

has occurred for Wellington's inner city kindergartens over recent decades, on occasions.

What happened to the proposed building boom? What has happened to the procedures for establishing a new kindergarten?

Initially the building boom was hindered mostly by procedural delays. The Officer for Pre-school Services described the change over the years thus: "The building programme was always perfectly simple. But building programmes are more complicated because even though you do have a greater amount of subsidy and the Government has taken responsibility for payment of the site, the programme itself is more complicated now" (NZFKU Ann. Mtd., Mins., 1974). However, the 1975-76 economic recession added a further delay in the buildings programme - a drastic shortage of funds - for example, only \$55,000 has been allowed for land purchase in 1976-77 in New Zealand (enough to buy about six sites at Wellington) - in comparison with the demands stimulated by the improved Government aid in 1973 for pre-school sites and buildings. The kindergarten dominant coalition are investigating other sources of sites and funds for sites because of this shortage.

The E.D.C. report on *Organisations and Administration of Education* describes and illustrates by use of a flow chart (Appendix 5) the stages in processing primary school proposals not covered by a prototype. If the site has been approved and developed, a new building takes between 108 and 124 weeks, half of which time is consumed inside the Education Board, the Regional Office and the Head Office of the Department of Education offices and half consumed in actual construction. All this is assuming that the building has been approved in the current year's capital works programme. With pre-school buildings, the procedure is even more complex because extra organisations are involved.

In recent years, Government has been setting aside pre-school sites alongside primary school sites in new housing areas. However, in many areas where parents set up establishment committees for a kindergarten, no such site is available and, unless the local authority is generous, the voluntary movement has to find, on the open market, a site which the association, the Regional Office of the Department of Education and the Land Purchasing Officer of the Ministry of Works

agree is suitable. Agreement can take months to reach. Should funds not be available, the site may have to be relinquished; that is assuming the owner has not already sold the site to another buyer to get his money promptly (as has happened; for example, in Wadestown, Wellington in 1974). Not surprisingly, the E.D.C. report states that procedures for site acquisition are even more complicated than for building projects.

The next stage in the process is obtaining approval from the Town Planning Division of the local authority for a change of land use. This is proving to be cause of lengthy delays, particularly in Auckland and Wellington. After this, the association can apply to the Union for a place on the priority list. The Union submits the list to the Head Office of the Department of Education who in turn forward it (in a modified order this year, much to the Union Executive's anger) for inclusion in the capital works programme. Then the process moves on to a path similar to that illustrated in Appendix 5. It is little wonder that voluntary members are looking for ways to simplify the process; for example, the Auckland association proposed a remit in 1976 that Education Boards be excluded from involvement in planning and building new kindergartens.

This then is the complex relationship between the voluntary movement and the Boards, Ministry of Works, Regional Offices and Head Office of the Department of Education and local body authorities in order to put up new buildings. The whole process is under review now and should be simplified in the next two years. It must be remembered though that under conditions of economic scarcity, the Pre-school Vote must be shared with little prospect of any more money coming along. What is used for sites is no longer available for putting up buildings. Twenty new kindergartens in 1974-75, and nineteen new kindergartens were recognised in 1975-76 - an expansion rate equal to that of the late 1960s - so little was achieved by a changed building strategy as regards absorbing the surplus of teachers. There were still 126 supernumeraries by mid-1976.

3. Allow Kindergartens to Operate in Community Buildings.

The NZFKTA have suggested that free kindergartens could return to the earlier practice of using existing accommodation. A major change in

the Regulations to allow for this strategy would have pervasive effects on the kindergarten organisation itself and on the relationship between the kindergarten movement and other groups in the environment. The scale of the organisation would probably increase quite markedly. The programme for the children would change, not necessarily in content, but with regard to group size and with regard to opening times possible. Allocation of human resources would alter markedly. Kindergarten staff would have changed working conditions if they were appointed to such kindergartens and would have additional tasks of establishing a harmonious relationship with people associated with the community accommodation. Kindergarten volunteers would become involved in a new array of tasks - at local level, with liaising in the community; and at association level with sorting out a more untidy relationship with the Department of Education. The approach to the market would be altered. Demand could be met more quickly but parents may not find the kindergarten service so attractive without purpose-built buildings, possibly without a five-morning-a-week service for older children and possibly with requests for parents to help stack away heavy equipment daily.

The difference between the playcentre and kindergarten services would be narrowed which could well heighten the competitiveness between the organisations and therefore the sense of loyalty felt by members. Hirschman (1970) discussing action options available to organisational members when they feel dissatisfaction with the organisation, says that loyalty to the organisation has a positive role to play when organisations are close substitutes:

*Expressed as a paradox, (this conclusion) is at its most functional when it looks most irrational, when loyalty means a strong attachment to an organisation that does not seem to warrant such attachment because it is so much like another one that is also available ... The more (two organisations resemble each other) the more irrational and outright silly does stubborn organisational loyalty look; yet that is precisely when it is most useful.*  
(Ibid, p.81)

Hirschman goes on to say that loyalty also has a positive function for organisations at the lower end of any scale such as a scale of prestige; "loyalty and a cohesive ideology" can retain valuable members. At present, kindergarten appears to be on top of the

scale, but a strategy of kindergartens using community halls could alter the ranking on more occasions leading to more parents leaving kindergarten in favour of playcentre. Much to the Union's ire, K.T.A. has been supported in asking to use community accommodation by the Playcentre Federation Conference.

4. An Improvement in the ratio of Teachers to Children

When senior sociology students took a tally of the number of adults present in ten kindergartens and nine playcentres half-way through two different sessions at each type of pre-school, they found a marked difference in the ratio of adults to children in the types of pre-school.

Table 11.1. Ratio of Adults to Children at Pre-school Sessions

	<u>Playcentres</u>	<u>Kindergartens</u>
Visit 1	1 adult : 4.1 children	1 adult : 12.5 children
Visit 2	1 " : 3.7 "	1 " : 21.1 "
<u>AVERAGE:</u>	1 " : 3.9 "	1 " : 12.3 "

Kindergartens ranged from having seven adults present to two adults present; and playcentres ranged from having sixteen adults present to four adults present. During kindergarten sessions when there were only two adults present and one was required to see to an administrative task, only one adult would be supervising up to forty children.

The poor ratio has a noticeable effect on various aspects of the children's session (see Appendix 4), and was one of the main factors influencing kindergarten teachers' feelings to frustration mentioned by Wellington staff during the 1975 pre-school staff survey.

Table 11.2. Aspects of Kindergarten Work which Staff find Frustrating\*

		%
Poor ratio and its effects	8	29.6
Parents not co-operating	8	29.6
Afternoon children too tired	5	18.5
Cleaning up	3	11.1
Not trained for working with children with special needs	1	3.7
Other	2	7.4
	27	100.5

\* This table is based on the number of frustrations mentioned, not on number of teachers expressing these frustrations.

It was therefore no surprise that at the 1976 K.T.A. Conference, delegates agreed that there should be three teachers to 80 children. They would like to see an improved ratio but without an increase in the size of the group of children. K.T.A. believe that effective kindergarten teaching requires close knowledge of the child and his family in order to satisfy his socio-emotional and cognitive needs at optimum moments, and this is not possible with a larger group size. The K.T.A. Executive negotiated with the Department and the Union Executive to stop the implementation of the Union's policy, and prepared a case which suggested alternative solutions to the 'numbers' problem of a surplus of teachers, while ensuring a high standard of early childhood education. Late in 1976 the Minister of Education announced that an additional teacher would be appointed to kindergartens where the association and existing staff had agreed to accept an additional group of children. The remaining surplus were absorbed by giving an additional teacher to those kindergartens with the longest waiting lists. Yet another policy will be needed in late 1977 to help 1977 graduates find jobs - Lindblom's model (1964) of 'muddling through' is most appropriate here. The conflict between bureaucratic and professional goals provided constraints on finding a quick solution (Blau and Scott, 1962, pp.60-63).

5. Employing Teachers in a Wider Variety of Jobs.

A range of different jobs for kindergarten teachers come to mind: employing kindergarten teachers in child care centres; having more Supervising Head Teachers; employing kindergarten teachers to work as community pre-school workers; increasing the number of Pre-school Advisors; and employing kindergarten teachers instead of primary teachers to work with young handicapped children.

Many of these tactics would affect other groups in the environment.

- (a) If kindergarten teachers worked in some child care centres and were paid according to the kindergarten salary scale, child care centres would have to receive more funding. In addition, a change of administration of child care centres might be precipitated.
- (b) More Supervising Head Teachers should improve the standard of the childrens' programme; lessen the load of administrative tasks on association dominant coalition, and perhaps bring about



structural amalgamation of some small associations.

- (c) Community pre-school workers have great potential for equalising the provision of early childhood education in the community. The environmental strategy of the kindergarten movement would take on a whole new look, should the free kindergarten organisation be the employing authority of such community workers, because a different group of families would be serviced in a different way from the traditional kindergarten approach.

Should the kindergarten movement not be the employer of kindergarten teachers who are employed as child care workers or community pre-school workers, then I foresee that the sphere of influence of the kindergarten voluntary organisation may diminish in the future, if expansion of early childhood services grows in these newer sectors. A new web of inter-relations between such workers and other early childhood groups, social workers, local body authorities and Government groups would be established, regardless of who is the employer. The employer decision will have important long-term implications in the field of early childhood care and education.

As regards child care centres, both kindergarten and child care dominant coalitions have indicated that they would like the two organisations to maintain separate identities. The Child Care Association has grown in size and increased its influence markedly in the last five years; and the Kindergarten Union Executive have repeatedly said that they regard child care as being outside their realm of interest because of philosophical differences. At the mid-1976 meeting of the National Advisory Council for Pre-school Education, where child care was the main agenda item, the Kindergarten Union was the only major organisation who neither submitted a paper nor discussion on this issue (despite requests for contributions). Union Executive members said they could not contribute as they had no policy because they believed the child should be in the home. In contrast, the Playcentre Federation representatives, who hold the same philosophic beliefs, had prepared a paper and devoted Playcentre conference time to discussion with association members on the issue.

As regards the new role of community pre-school workers, the time is ripe to decide whether or not to establish a new social system or

make them an integral part of one or both of the two main pre-school organisations. Karnes et. al (1975) suggests that the traditional method of education - a teacher in a classroom - is ineffective in low socio-economic areas and should be changed to teams where one professional teacher oversees three teachers and one home visitor (these four may in fact be para-professionals) to ensure that home and school activities for educating children are integrated. The community worker then does not become too separated from the institutional children's programme, nor vice versa.

Because many of these tactics for employing kindergarten teachers have implications for other groups, which may involve lengthy negotiations, and would only provide employment opportunities for a proportion of the supernumeraries, it is unlikely that they will be adopted in the next few months.

6. Reduced Student Quotas

If the economic recession continues, it is unlikely that Government will want to increase its expenditure on kindergarten buildings or kindergarten teachers' salaries, so the reduced student quotas (introduced for the 1977 intake of trainees) is likely to continue for a number of years. In some colleges the quotas were not filled because of the insecurity about employment at the completion of training.

A 'numbers game' strategy to cope with the surplus has succeeded - three teachers have been appointed in the fifty-seven kindergartens which have agreed to increase their roll to 120 children. This could well be an example of 'satisficing'. Simon introduced the concept of 'satisficing' into organisational decision-making theory.

*The key to the simplification of the choice process (necessary because of the intellectual and emotional limitations of individuals) ... is the replacement of the goal of maximising with the goal of satisficing, of finding a course of action that is 'good enough'. (Simon, 1957, p.204)*

and

*Only in exceptional circumstance is (human decision-making) concerned with the discovery and selection of optimal alternatives. To optimize requires processes several orders of magnitude more complex than those required to satisfice. (March and Simon, 1958, p.140)*

Ramsey (1975) describes such solutions as 'fire fighting' : this style of administration views problems only when conditions get bad enough to make things uncomfortable for the administrators, and the solution formulated is aimed at relieving this pressure. The alternative style of administration proposed by Ramsey is for the administrator to find policies and ways of implementing those policies that will meet both organisational and societal goals. His role included providing 'bridges' between the organisation and society. The alternative style therefore focusses on broad policies, rather than on narrow rules.

To side track, an example of satisficing with narrow rules is the recent Departmental Circular asking that Kindergarten Associations give preference to appointing teachers who are already in the service.

### Consequence 3: Changed Training Conditions

One senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Education described the changed training thus:

*Advantages have been in sharing all the Teachers' College facilities, because we must be honest and admit that the Kindergarten College facilities had their limitations. More specialist staff are available and thus a wider range of selected studies, plus increased breadth and depth of study. It is good to see student enjoyment of the choice of selected studies.*

*To be a member of a larger staff and experience wider professional contacts within the College itself is a stimulation and support.*

*Students are gaining more stimulation and sharing in a greater range of student activities ...*

*The disadvantages of a two-year course are becoming more and more apparent. We have been constantly watchful of the temptation to crowd the two years and so not give students the quality of experience necessary ... pre-school personnel must continue to preserve the spirit of early childhood education.*

(Varcoe, 1975, p.2)

The sheer size of Teachers' Colleges has resulted in two noticeable differences for staff and students. Firstly, the intimate relationships, a feature of the Kindergarten Colleges adding to the 'spirit of early

childhood education' is less apparent, and one wonders whether the increased formality will spill over into kindergarten teacher/child relationships. The data collected during observations in playcentre and kindergarten sessions (see Appendix 4), indicates that kindergarten adult/child relationships are generally more formal than playcentre adult/child relationships already, although this is probably partly a function of the number of children per adult. Secondly, the bureaucratic inflexibility of large institutions, such as Teachers' Colleges, can mean that 'golden opportunities' are lost because of timetabling difficulties or logistical problems with, for example, room allocation. Kanter's study of the 'organisation child' (1972) indicates that bureaucratic features of the adults' world are found in nursery schools. Hex found that "a people-processing organisation such as a nursery school, eager to implement the most advanced concepts of mental health, anxious to provide the 'right kind' of experience for its children, may unintentionally establish bureaucratic conditions to do so" (p.196). One wonders whether the training experiences of the staff have any bearing on this. If so, one could speculate that an increase in bureaucratic features will creep into kindergarten programmes in future years.

The weaknesses of Kindergarten College training mentioned most often by kindergarten teachers during my 1975 pre-school staff survey were (in order of frequency mentioned):

- (a) Too much wasted time;
- (b) Not enough coverage given to children with special needs; and
- (c) Not enough time given to practical training.

From Varcoe's comments on crowding the two years and the stricter timetabling at Teachers' Colleges, the first weakness should have been overcome by integration.

The Inspector of Pre-school Training and the current Supervising Head Teacher of the Wellington Association feel that coverage given to children with special needs has not increased. The last weakness has been aggravated because of integration. Wellington Teachers' College kindergarten students get one week less practical training than did their predecessors at Wellington Kindergarten College. The strength of their Kindergarten College training was seen by the 1975 Wellington Association staff as arising from the quality of the lecturers, and with most kindergarten lecturers winning Teachers' College appointments, this quality has been maintained.

The Department of Education, in conjunction with the F.K.U. and the K.T.A. Executive, is at present evaluating kindergarten teacher training. As no pre-integration data was obtained, an ex post facto research design will have to be used which has the problem of matching Kindergarten College trained and Teachers' College trained teachers on all variables apart from where they were trained.

#### Consequence 4: Improved Status for Kindergarten Staff

Because of integration, kindergarten students and teachers achieved salaries closer to primary students and teachers. This has raised kindergarten teachers' status quite considerably, although most kindergarten personnel feel that true equality of status will not be achieved until three-year training is a reality. Kindergarten lecturers also gained in status and salary as a result of integration, although offence was taken at the introduction of a lower step on the Teachers' College lecturers' salary scale at the end of 1974, which suspiciously coincided with the appointment of Early Childhood Unit lecturers.

#### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Almost from the time when training centres for kindergarten teachers were first established in New Zealand, kindergarten volunteers have pressed for Government to take over the responsibility of kindergarten teacher training. Government indicated in late 1973 its intention to implement this strategic choice at the beginning of 1975. As the official mechanisms for deciding upon the tactics were deemed (by all parties affected), to be too slow and not considerate of the individuals involved, ad hoc committees were set up to formulate recommendations regarding the details of integration. By this process the speed of decision-making was increased and, for the Wellington groups represented on the interim Advisory Committee at least, the level of participation in decision-making was felt to be satisfactory.

Who benefited from integration?

#### The Organisation

The scale of the organisation remained unaltered by this event, and there was very little change in the structure of the organisation, except in the training sub-system which was expanded and moved physically from Kindergarten Colleges to Teachers' Colleges. There should be improved programmes for the children as it is hoped that the quality of the training

and therefore of the teaching will have improved as a result of integration. The main benefits within the kindergarten organisation were undoubtedly to the member resources - staff and volunteers.

- (a) Staff. Through integration, and the accompanying improved pay for kindergarten and primary teachers, the staff have gained improved status. Kindergarten teaching may at long last shake off its image of being a career that 'girls' from 'nice homes' who are 'good with children' can do before they marry. Kindergarten lecturers have also gained status and been granted better salaries as a result of integration.
- (b) Voluntary workers. Integration definitely relieved the voluntary workers at the national level and in the associations which had training colleges in their area, of a good deal of responsibility. These voluntary members continue to give time to attending Teachers' Colleges meetings but their participation is not critical to the smooth functioning of training activities any more.

#### Families in the Environment

Whether the improved staff status and training undertaken in a more stimulating environment results in an improved programme for children and improved work with families (overseas research indicates that working with families, not just the children is the most effective type of early childhood education, particularly for so-called disadvantaged children), is a moot point. It can be argued that greater professionalization of staff could have an off-putting effect on parent participation in the children's programme.

However, an improved staff ratio which is a likely outcome of the over-supply of kindergarten teachers may give kindergarten teachers the opportunity to increase the amount of parent involvement. Voluntary members of the kindergarten organisation contend that parents will argue that their help is not necessary when there is an improved staff:child ratio. Kindergarten teachers contend that improved ratio will have the opposite effect, as it will give staff the time they need to work at increasing parent involvement, and work more effectively with the children. Research supports this latter argument. Hedges (1974) found that when volunteers were present at children's programmes, the "amount of adult time spent with individual pupils was more than tripled ... The increased time was provided not only by volunteers; the teachers themselves spent nearly twice as much time with individual pupils during volunteer sessions".

He also found that the tasks to which the teachers were able to give increased time when volunteers were present, were the activities which teachers, lecturers and administrators had ranked as the most important. Supervision, consolidating activities and technical work were given less time when more adults were present.

Experience in other pre-school centres, in New Zealand and overseas, indicates that even with three staff to forty children, a further two or more parents could be effectively involved in the programme, both to improve the programme and as a form of parent education. However, parent involvement does not just happen. Motivation, planning and even some sort of sanctions are necessary to obtain an improved proportion of parents participating in the children's sessions.

I have concluded each examination of a strategic choice process by asking whether the decision has meant that a wider range of social groups get to pre-schools. In each instance, including the implementation of integrated primary and kindergarten teacher training, no significant change in clientele has been the result. With kindergarten teacher training now taking place inside Teachers' Colleges more people will be more convinced that kindergartens are provided by the State. They are not aware of the partnership mode of provision of kindergarten education. However, the families who have an incomplete knowledge of the kindergarten organisation and who are missing out, know that it is not the same as primary schools in the sense of them being free and universal. The decision to integrate training in no way overcame the barriers to low SES families attendance: fees, waiting lists, and hours that do not match work hours. Thus, no change to clientele groups will take place.

I will discuss further the implications the patterns of strategic choice have on the total population of families with children under the age of five years in Chapter 12 and the Epilogue. Chapter 13 evaluates the conceptual framework employed and looks forward to possible future organisational studies of the kind described in this thesis.



## PART III

### CONCLUSIONS

*"... the only opinion listened to by the major parties will come from one of the orthodox pressure groups which are sectors of the Establishment." (McLaughlan, 1976, p.76)*

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE PARTNERS - A CONCLUDING DISCUSSION ABOUT THE ORGANISATIONS

*Our problem is not to do what is right.  
Our problem is to know what is right.*

(Lyndon B Johnson)

This is the dilemma of so many decision-makers, and three of the strategic choice processes described in Chapters 8 to 11 illustrate the dilemma clearly - the strategic choice made by the Wellington Playcentre Association to raise supervision standards was the exception. The Training Team knew 'what was right' but the doing of it created tensions.

This thesis falls into the category of descriptive decision-making studies. It contains two organisational case studies focussing on how people actually go about making decisions. It does not fall into the category of normative decision-making studies concerned with how people ought to handle strategic choice processes. This latter approach was abandoned before the field work was begun after careful consideration of Etzioni's criticism of the goal approach (1960). Any model of decision-making based on the goal approach is particularly likely to portray what the main actors intended or wished would occur, rather than on what actually happened.

From my review of the literature, I had concluded that trying to devise one model for decision-making was not an acceptable objective for a naturalistic sociologist. However, in Chapter 1 I did place at the top of a list of anticipated findings a statement saying that it was expected that the two organisations under study would have similar ways of making choices even if the methods of implementation differed. It would seem to be an appropriate place to review those anticipated findings and state, in general terms, what my data showed. It should be remembered that there was never any intention to substantiate or refute these statements in any controlled, systematic way. A greater number of organisations would have had to be

studied to accomplish this. Much of the data was collected only in the Wellington region and this limitation should be kept in mind. However, the historical chapters have substantial sections on what happened all over New Zealand, and observational data based on Wellington events was carefully weighed against the nation-wide scene by reading national minutes and attending national conferences. The data most narrowly based are from the Pre-school Families Survey and the Pre-school Staff Survey, and these surveys are not cited below during the discussion of anticipated results.

#### ANTICIPATED FINDINGS

1. *That the processes of decision-making would be similar for both pre-school voluntary movements, but ways of implementing decisions may differ.*

Because both organisations shared one major goal in common - the provision of pre-school services - and both were voluntary organisations run mostly by parents, I anticipated considerable similarities would exist regarding the way choices were made. This anticipated finding was not substantiated by data from the two case study organisations. By the time the history of each organisation had been documented, it was fairly apparent to the researcher that there was a small cluster of decision-makers in the kindergarten movement who both made the choices and devised the strategies for implementation. In the last two decades there has been a deliberate widening of participation in national-level decision-making, but the extent of participation generally remains less than in the playcentre movement. Participation was inherent in the playcentre movement's beginnings when mothers banded together to help each other, and subsequent leaders have been carefully watching that parents are informed (by plenty of written material being circulated widely) and involved in all activities.

It seems, therefore, that not even a model pertaining to a specialised group of organisations offering a similar service can be devised. However, an exploration of the similarities and differences in playcentre and kindergarten strategic choice processes produced a wealth of information about themes in voluntary organisation processes.

2. *That older organisations with a larger legacy of earlier strategic choices and with leaders who are reluctant to dispose of traditional decisions, are less able to adapt than are younger organisations.*

It was found that the playcentre movement had fewer rules and regulations and this meant a greater freedom to adapt the delivery of the service to suit each community's needs. However, it is unclear from the data, whether fewer rules and regulations stemmed from the relative youth of the playcentre movement or from its resistance to too many detailed restrictions. Reluctance to dispense with traditional decisions inhibited both organisations' adaptability but not always with entirely negative outcomes.

3. *That the nature of the service is strongly influenced by the ideology of the service.*

The emphasis on children in the kindergarten organisation is the manifestation of the movement's ideology. Likewise, parental involvement in the playcentre organisation stems both from the movement's ideology and from the practical necessity for parental involvement in co-operative pre-schools.

4. *That members tend to participate most when the association does not have a large salaried staff; when members have considerable power relative to officers; when the association is not large; when it is not highly specialised internally; when membership is homogeneous in character and has few competing attractions.*

(Berelson & Steiner, 1965, Chapter 9)

Playcentre members participated more than did kindergarten members in terms of more people being involved, more being involved in offices above the minimum requirements, and more time being spent by playcentre voluntary people on playcentre activities. And, playcentres and their members have most of the characteristics listed by Berelson & Steiner (Ibid): there are no salaried staff; members have considerable power which is apparent in their ability to veto agreements made by the State-Federation partnership; there is not too much internal specialisation although this is growing; and membership is fairly homogeneous in terms of stage in family-life-cycle and socio-economic status.

5. *That a decentralised structure will be more able to adapt than a centralised, functionally specialised bureaucracy relying on formal interpersonal relationships.*

Day-to-day routine activities run smoothly in the more bureaucratized kindergarten movement where people have specialised tasks to do which are spelled out formally in considerable detail in written forms.

However, when a group wished to deviate from the standard patterns considerable difficulties were encountered and often they were told that their suggestion was not the "right" way. Decentralisation in the playcentre movement is associated with considerable variation in the ways in which playcentres operate because of awareness of different communities' needs. Adaptation seemed to be continually occurring in different playcentres and associations all around New Zealand.

6. *That the funding situation will considerably influence organisational adaptability.*

Funding for specific tasks, as has been the pattern for the kindergarten organisation, tends to result in not only specialisation of tasks, but also in formalising how those tasks should be carried out. The playcentre movement has usually sought funding for general purposes. This enables decision-makers to not only change priorities for spending from time to time, but also to experiment with different ways and means in different localities and adapt methods from year to year without prolonged negotiations. The issue of funding is discussed in much greater detail later in this chapter (see p.269).

In the Introduction I said that my objective was not to dwell on the above anticipated findings, but to show that the critical variable in any examination of organisation changes is the variable of strategic choice which intervenes between organisational variables and environmental variables. By using detailed analysis of four decisions, which were made in, or for, the two case study voluntary organisations during 1974-75, I have isolated some of the key factors which appear to influence decision-makers in their choice of strategies affecting availability and acceptability of pre-school services in New Zealand. The field study research approach adopted allowed me to illustrate the complexities of implementing strategic choices which is an equally important aspect of the whole process. In this chapter, I want to draw together the common themes that were revealed for each of the organisation's strategic choice processes, and for all the strategic choices. Because the organisations have different characteristics, each has a different pattern to its strategic choice processes, and if the organisation has some influence on the strategic choice process then it is likely to follow the pattern which experience has suggested will be most easily implemented.

It is intended that this chapter will further describe the characteristics of the playcentre and free kindergarten voluntary organisations, this time in terms of a simple schema, before examining how the different characteristics affect each organisation's relationship with its funding partner, Government; and, in turn, how this partnership was one key factor in the pattern of strategic choice processes occurring in each organisation. Any discussion of funding of educational organisations at the present time is likely to lead into a discussion of the issue of accountability, and I will briefly touch on this subject. Accountability usually involves asking whether there has been efficient use of funds, but it also may involve asking whether the organisation has obtained the results that different social groups in society desire. The conclusion to Chapters 8 to 11 proposed that the results of strategic choices made by pre-school volunteers are usually satisfactory for the majority of personnel within the two organisations, but they seldom improve the availability and acceptability of the services to social groups who are not at present using pre-school programmes. Changing social conditions, including alternative concepts of the world, and the development of other forms of early childhood education in New Zealand - playgroups and child care centres - indicate that the playcentre movement and the free kindergarten movement and Government need to consider whether their patterns of strategic choices are still appropriate. There is some indication that the legitimacy of the two movements receiving the vast majority of early childhood grants (see p.25), is being questioned.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PRE-SCHOOL VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

In considering the themes in the strategic choices, I want first to outline the distinguishing features of the two organisations; then discuss the characteristics of the voluntary organisation - State partnership pertaining to each of the movements.

The feature which has all pervasive effects on the structural and functional characteristics of the two organisations is the extent to which there is integration of the volunteers and professionals. A simple schema of voluntary organisations based on the integration concept would form a continuum of voluntary organisations with two polar situations at the extremes of the continuum.

Integrated organisations  $\longleftrightarrow$  Differentiated organisations  
Integration - differentiation are opposite states referring to the degree of

mesh of social groups within given parameters, in this case within organisations.

Integrated organisations have the following characteristics:

- (a) the structure comprises a single social system described by only one name;
- (b) members tackle most types of tasks over time or concurrently;
- (c) many members participate to a relatively high degree;
- (d) communication flows in all directions thus lessening the distance between members and leaders; and, closely related;
- (e) members can influence decisions in all areas and at all levels of activity.

Differentiated organisations have the following characteristics:

- (a) the structure comprises two or more social systems, distinguished by different terms being given to each social system. For example, the Free Kindergarten Union's name distinguishes it from the Free Kindergarten Teachers Association;
- (b) members undertake specialised tasks;
- (c) few members participate to a relatively high degree;
- (d) communication flows vertically and horizontally but seldom diagonally; and
- (e) members can have direct influence on decisions only in their own sub-system, although they may be influenced by strategic choices made by members of other sub-systems.

I concluded, as had Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), that there is no one best way to organise work situations. Lawrence and Lorsch also concluded that within particular industries the most effective organisations were those who matched their degree of integration-differentiation and style of conflict resolution with the demands in the environment which impinge upon that industry. If we look at early childhood as an 'industry' in this sense, there are different demands from different social groups, so it is possible for different organisations in the 'industry' to satisfy the various groups. Such a strategy within the 'industry' may be the most effective way of meeting different needs.

In general terms, there is a distinguishing pattern of organisation and administration for the playcentre and the kindergarten movements. In a paper presented to an Invitational Conference on Early Childhood Research (1977) I described these patterns thus:



The playcentre movement is like a large, untidy, extended family. It is like an extended family because all members of the child's family are welcome - siblings, both parents, grandparents can all join in. It is like a family because organisational members have certain role obligations but are willing and able to perform other role obligations should the need arise, just as family members co-operate. It is like a family too in that members fulfil family functions such as child care and visiting for one another, far more than do kindergarten members.

The playcentre movement is untidy because the 'parents' of the movement have not been very strict and uncompromising about how 'off-spring' playcentres should be accommodated, when they can be active, who will supervise them and so on.

However, the children's and adults' programmes are controlled by inculcating an ideology using subtle, but affectionate means. The affection shows itself in ways commonly seen in warm, family relationships - members are greeted warmly, often with physical contact, and made to feel part of the group; and members enjoy joint activities, be it work or 'play' activities, and enhance the enjoyment by adding large measures of laughter. The strength of the playcentre organisation lies in its untidiness, because the untidiness is indicative of an effective communication network which has little need of formal measures to ensure that the organisation functions smoothly. This method of operating can break down when distance makes communication difficult. Six out of the nine playcentres that went into recess in 1974-75 were in isolated rural areas and faced waning numbers and difficult communication.

Facilitating association-playcentre communication is one of the most important uses for any increase in money resources. The movement's leadership recognises this, but Government has derived new policies from Hill report recommendations or agreed on new policies which can show efficient use of public money. Money spent on support work is difficult to account for.

The kindergarten movement is a complex organisation which has become more and more bureaucratised each time Government has granted new funds. It is now characterised by rules; expectations of obedience to these rules; and formal communication between most members. Despite the complexity of the organisation arising from the number of social systems, the movement is comparatively tidy. It is tidy because the large majority of kindergartens offer a standardized service no matter what special community characteristics prevail.\*

\* (Meade, forthcoming).

To be more specific, the characteristics of the two pre-school voluntary movements could be contrasted by classifying the playcentre movement as approximating the polar type of 'integrated' voluntary organisation whereas the free kindergarten movement could be classified as a 'differentiated' voluntary organisation. These classes of voluntary organisation should be regarded as ideal types.

For integrated voluntary organisations, there is one hierarchy and members tackle a variety of tasks:

Table 12.1. Number of Local Positions Held by Volunteers, by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
1 job	37	43.0	50	68.5	87	54.4
2 jobs	30	35.0	16	21.9	47	29.3
3 or more jobs	<u>10</u>	<u>22.0</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>9.6</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>16.3</u>
	86	100.0	73	100.0	160	100.0

$$x^2 = 10.75; \quad df = 2; \quad p < 0.01.$$

Table 12.2. Number of Association Positions Held by Volunteers, by Pre-school Affiliation

	<u>Playcentre</u>		<u>Kindergarten</u>		<u>Total</u>	
		%		%		%
1 job	13	43.3	17	60.7	30	51.7
2 jobs	10	33.3	9	32.1	19	32.8
3 or more jobs	<u>7</u>	<u>23.3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>7.1</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>15.5</u>
	30	99.9	28	99.9	58	100.0

$$x^2 = 3.30; \quad df = 2; \quad p > 0.05$$

Members throughout the organisation are more likely to share common goals and a common ideology because of their varied tasks. In any decision-making process, the alternatives proposed as possible ways of meeting objectives will be weighed up not only in terms of their efficiency (and, perhaps, their humaneness) but also in terms of their alignment with the organisation's ideology. With members tackling a variety of tasks they come into contact with many sub-groups within the organisation. The communication network from each individual spreads in all directions including up and down the hierarchy. The horizontal lines of communication in any organisation are usually informal, but in an integrated organisation,

it is more likely that vertical and diagonal lines of communication are also informal. With effective informal lines of communication and a common ideology, there is less need for formal communication about preferred organisational behaviour, or for formal sanctions. Should the ideology include belief in democratic functioning with as many members as possible participating in decision-making processes, it is likely that policy changes will be made at a conference of constituent representatives. An integrated voluntary organisation will have only one conference, not separate ones for administrators and staff; and members will expect that any differences of opinion over preferred alternatives will be resolved by negotiation until the majority of members are satisfied. The alternative, authoritarian decision-making, is unlikely to be successfully implemented. The more often the democratic mode of functioning is practised, the more members will only act upon decisions made via democratic processes.

With only one hierarchy and members tackling many tasks, it is less appropriate for an outside agency to tag funds for specific purposes than it is when an organisation has specialist sub-systems. If money is given for a specific purpose, it is likely that the funding agency will expect the organisation to prove that it has spent the money properly. The demands for accountability result in funds mostly being given for products, rather than processes which are more difficult to measure for evaluation. Other studies have expressed similar views. For example, "Government subsidy policies have tended to favour capital and building subsidies rather than labour intensive support services" (N.Z. Council for Social Service, draft paper, 1976). To fulfil the demands for accountability it is likely that the organisation may decide to appoint members who specialize in allocating such funds according to need and to fulfilment of the criteria for receiving the funds. This could lower the level of integration.

The playcentre movement fits the integrated voluntary organisation ideal type because:

1. It has only one system.
2. The same individuals hold several varied positions either concurrently or consecutively; for example, rostered parent helper, and tutor to trainees, and Association President.
3. Because individuals are not trained or socialized exclusively into one specialized position in the organisation, all role incumbents in different positions share common goals and values.

4. All are perceived as having rights and obligations in decision-making processes. It is not possible to exclude groups on the grounds that they are not entitled to a vote or that they are not knowledgeable about that kind of task.
5. Decisions about both administrative and educational matters are made by the one group - Federation conference - comprising representatives from all associations. In addition to sharing goals and values, members display other indications of being a cohesive group. Although the playcentre members who committed themselves to taking on some administration or training responsibilities had more schooling, higher incomes and higher social participation scores than did ordinary playcentre parents, the volunteers and ordinary families were noticeably similar in their stage in the family life cycle and their socio-economic status. By contrast, kindergarten volunteers differed from ordinary kindergarten families on these characteristics. Fifteen percent of the kindergarten volunteers had a grown-up family; and no kindergarten volunteer was in Level 5 or 6 of the Elley and Irving Socio-economic Scale compared with fourteen percent of kindergarten families in these categories.
6. The physical structural influences resulting in a coherent social system with all parts participating in decision-making is reinforced by the playcentre ideology of maximum involvement of parents in their children's early childhood education. This ensures that democratic functioning is favoured over more authoritarian decision-making, even though the latter may be more efficient.
7. Although Federation cannot influence autonomous association and local centre 'ways and means' decisions, associations representatives of local centres attending Federation conference have considerable power to influence policy decisions - witness the influence of association representatives during the conference discussion on buildings subsidies. That is, representatives of local centres have considerable power to influence decision-making power at all levels in the hierarchy. It is they and not the Federation Standing Committee who decides upon policies and methods of implementation. The arenas for the making of strategic choices are principally the associations, and, because there are many arenas, strategic choices seldom pertain to the whole movement, even if the strategy has a standardized Government policy applicable supposedly to all playcentres in a

standardized form; for example, the Auckland and Hutt/Wairarapa Associations have changed the way sessional grants to playcentres are allocated to local centres.

8. Decisions are often not stable strategies. The Wellington Association training team were under pressure from local playcentre personnel:
  - (a) to change their policy decision regarding the raising of supervision standards (because local personnel were opposed to some aspects of it), before the February 1975 implementation date had arrived;
  - (b) to modify the training manual before the first graduates were presented with their Supervisors' Certificate. (This time not because the manual had obvious short-comings. Centre people were simply continually adapting methods.)

Such adaptations, be they to a local tactic or to an association or Federation strategic choice, are continually occurring because:

1. the informal communications network (which works very effectively in its untidy way) allows members to hear about many possible variations to, say, the training programmes; and
2. members at all levels in the hierarchy are listened to and drawn into the decision-making process.

For the differentiated voluntary organisations there are two or more sub-systems. The most common differentiation is between the voluntary administrative sub-system and the paid 'professional' sub-system. In each sub-system, members are more likely to tackle specialized tasks. Few (if any) members are involved in more than one sub-system. If common members are only representatives from each sub-system attending meetings of other sub-systems or attending meetings of a central co-ordinating committee, then the voluntary organisation could be classified as partially differentiated. An organisation with no common members in the different sub-systems could be regarded as completely differentiated. Such sub-systems would best be described as a separate organisation only if it had no goals in common with other sub-systems. If the person linking sub-systems, the gatekeeper, uses his position to put forward one sub-system's views to individuals or groups in another sub-system, he is increasing the level of integration of that organisation by using democratic rights. The same is true when he reports information about the second sub-system's ideas and actions back to the first sub-system.

Members of different sub-systems, as well as pursuing specialized tasks, usually develop goals and values distinctive for that sub-system; the sharing of which increases cohesion amongst members of that sub-system, but increases the social distance between members of different sub-systems. Members within one sub-system are likely to communicate most often with members within their own sub-system. At each level in the hierarchies of the sub-systems, there is likely to be informal communication but much of the communication between sub-systems will be formal; for example, the staff sub-system may formally recommend from its annual meeting that the administrative system be advised of decision X. This will be done via a letter from one national secretary to another, then circulated to members.

With differentiated sub-systems, decisions are often made by one sub-system that affect the other without negotiation between them. This happens when each sub-system has its own separate arena for decision-making, be it an executive body or a conference of constituent representatives. When decisions are made which affect members of a different sub-system and which have not been reached by a majority vote or by consensus decision-making, it is likely that bargaining or the imposition of a punishment on deviants may be necessary to implement the decisions. Because the sub-system members specialise in different tasks, funding can be given for specific purposes, often without directly affecting the other sub-system. However, organisations are made up of interacting units, so there is usually some influence on other units when one unit receives an additional input of resources. It can be more difficult to predict the effects on other parts of the organisation because the influence is indirect.

The kindergarten movement fits the differentiated organisation because:

1. It has several sub-systems; the local committees, associations and the Union forming the administrative sub-system of volunteers, and the local Mothers' Clubs and United Mothers' Clubs forming another sub-system of volunteers. The associations are the employing authorities of kindergarten teachers (trained in State Teachers' Colleges) who have their own union, comprising the third sub-system in the whole movement. The strategic choice to separate the training of teachers from the administrative sub-system (described in Chapter 11) completed the differentiation of volunteers and professionals.
2. Each sub-system has, on the whole, different members with specialised tasks. At the local level the local committee and the few Mothers' Clubs may have some common members. The only other members who belong to two different sub-systems are Supervising Head Teachers who are usually active K.T.A. members and are regarded as holding positions



- in the administrative sub-system by both teachers and volunteers.
3. Because each sub-system has a different membership who undertake different tasks from members in other sub-systems, each sub-system tends towards its own distinctive goals and value system.
  4. The voluntary administrative sub-system and the K.T.A. sub-system each has its own method of decision-making and, because of different value systems, each is likely to make decisions which constrain the other sub-system. This does little to promote cohesion in the whole organisation. Both are even more constrained by Government and departmental decisions. Some cohesion is forged between the Union and the K.T.A. when they jointly work to develop satisfactory tactics to cope with the consequences of a Government strategic choice. For example, they both worked together to 'protect' kindergarten college lecturers at the time of integration of training.
  5. The voluntary sub-system makes administrative strategic choices at the Union annual conference each year. Because the associations are the employing authorities and because this sub-system administered training until recent years, the administrative sub-system also makes decisions about the educational programme for the children. K.T.A. at its annual meetings has increasingly focussed on improved working conditions for members but it also makes decisions which are related to the children's programme. For example, the K.T.A. strategic choice that gives kindergarten teachers the right to veto their kindergarten becoming an extended roll kindergarten has been made both for the teachers' benefit and the children's benefit. Both major sub-systems in the movement have developed a strategic choice related to extended rolls but their strategic choices were in conflict in 1974 even though each sub-system said their policy was for the benefit of pre-school children. At the time of writing, the Union leaders have changed their opinion more towards that held by K.T.A. members and are questioning whether extended roll kindergartens can provide as high quality kindergarten education as do kindergartens with smaller rolls.
  6. Involvement of a wide range of members in decisions has no ideological reinforcement in the kindergarten movement. By default, kindergarten members have tended to allow their leaders considerable discretion in decision-making, although the withdrawal of the Auckland Association from the Union for a number of years was, I understand, partly a protest about the power wielded by the Union President and Secretary.



7. With more formal communication between members in the administrative sub-system than would be found anywhere in the playcentre system, and with lower-level members feeling constrained (by many Departmental Regulations and by the many kindergarten movement rules passed at successive conferences) from being involved in the making of strategic choices, the administrative sub-system tends towards oligarchy. The tendency is reinforced by:
- (a) Inadequate information feedback by gatekeepers who hold bridging positions between different levels in the hierarchy.
  - (b) Mechanisms such as posting minutes on meetings out to lower level groups at a date too late for discussion of proposals to take place before the next higher-level meeting.
  - (c) Mechanisms such as writing very brief minutes and infrequently preparing circulars which keep members poorly informed.
  - (d) An authoritarian leadership style. Materially, not enough information is given to members to allow their effective participation in strategic choice processes; and the attitudes of leaders is not one of encouragement to lower-level members who may be interested in decision-making. They are encouraged mainly to 'rubber stamp' decisions.
  - (e) The predominance of one or two-kindergarten associations lowers the cohesion in the movement because it lessens the chances of a large number of members discussing an issue and becoming informed about alternatives before a vote is taken at conference. At local level, representatives attend association council meetings at infrequent intervals and have few opportunities for communication between these meetings. The poor attendance of local committee representatives at Association meetings led the Wellington Association to decrease the number of Council meetings in 1973, thus lessening the opportunities for participation by local members.

In sum, the real arenas for making strategic choices for the kindergarten movement are the Union Executive in particular, and association executives, even though the nominal arena is the Union's annual conference. The introduction of the Standard By-laws in 1975 was a very pronounced example of the Union Executive using conference merely as an arena for ratifying decisions made by the Executive. It should be noted, however, that the conference was truncated because the Early Childhood Care and Development Convention followed it.

8. With the greater emphasis on formal communication, kindergarten decisions about rules of behaviour tend to be longer lasting, partly because By-laws are printed in booklets. Constitutional remits to change the By-laws require a two-thirds majority so adaptations of rules require a great input of members' time and debating skill.

#### ORGANISATIONAL 'TIDINESS'

Earlier in this chapter, in a quotation from another of my papers, I hinted that there is a positive correlation between flexibility in the delivery of services and the untidiness of that organisation. It would seem that one indicator of untidiness is the relative lack of rules and Regulations, or even guidelines.

Playcentres have far fewer requirements to meet to become 'recognised' by the Department of Education and these requirements are couched in more general terms (and therefore are often open to a wider range of interpretations). As the two historical chapters in Part I of this thesis have indicated, the kindergarten organisation's history is characterised by kindergarten volunteers asking for more resources from Government and when Government has agreed, more Regulations have been introduced to produce nation-wide uniformity, and to ensure accountability; whereas the playcentre organisation's history is characterised by playcentre volunteers showing determination that parents be involved in all the educational and administrative tasks, and therefore resisting strategic choices which may result in rules and Regulations limiting parental involvement. Thus, there are far fewer Regulations pertaining to playcentre functioning than is the case for the kindergarten organisation.

In addition, the playcentre organisation has far fewer internally-made formal rules. Norms of behaviour being passed on by informal methods of communication predominate in this organisation, although guidelines are offered in the introductory booklets and *I Play and I Grow* (all editions) given to parents. The hierarchical structure (perceived as an inverted pyramid by playcentre members) and the existence of such guidelines means that the playcentre movement is not as 'untidy' nor as flexible as organisational types of the 'learning systems' kind proposed by Schon (1970). It can not be as adaptive as some members within the movement and some people of the general public may hope for. This is also because of its ideological beliefs in and practice of parental involvement in all its activities. It is not because of a proliferation of rules. The

playcentre organisation has nothing equivalent to the kindergarten Union Standard By-laws.

The kindergarten organisation is 'tidy' largely because of the Regulations (agreed upon by departmental officials and Union members) and the Union Standard By-laws. These leave members with few opportunities to be innovative in response to local needs. The lower level of adaptability is the result of:

- (a) Most of the many Regulations being applicable to all associations and/or kindergartens, which decreases the possibilities for the delivery of service being adapted to suit local needs;
- (b) A tradition of centralised decision-making by the Union Executive whose task was made easier by the introduction of Union rules, and by no one insisting that as many members as possible were consulted about Union Executive or Union - Government initiated policy changes.

Until 1975, associations were able to decide on their own By-laws for the areas of functioning not regulated by Union rules or departmental Regulations. At the 1975 conference the Union Executive introduced Standard By-laws for the whole of New Zealand to 'tidy up' the movement. Ward members did forewarn their associations about the Executive's strategic choice but few copies of the Standard By-laws were available for perusal before the conference. The conference chairman did not give conference participants a chance to debate the By-laws until the associations had tried them for a year. These By-laws increased nation-wide uniformity, thus making the work environment for kindergarten teachers who moved from one employer association to another less complex.

The kindergarten organisation could well be described in the same way as Britain's health system:

*A multitude of edicts, standards and rules emanate from the summit of the bureaucracy and each successive tier within the hierarchy is expected to do its utmost to conform to the guidelines from above ...*

*Perhaps the most ominous feature of national guidelines is that they are so pervasive in local government that they are almost invisible. They condition approaches in subtle, but powerful ways. They tend*

*to work against the assessment of local needs and against innovation in meeting those needs.*

(Hambleton, 1977, p.602)

#### THE VOLUNTARY ORGANISATION - GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIPS

In 1977 approximately seventy percent of the Union conference remits proposals were directed at either the Department of Education or the Minister of Education. This indicates the extent of interdependence between the kindergarten movement and the State. By way of contrast, only thirty-three percent of the remit proposals at the 1977 Playcentre Federation conference were directed to the Minister of Education or his department about playcentre affairs. A further ten percent were asking Government to assist other organisations. The historical chapters and the examination of four strategic choice processes, indicate that the amount of contact between the partners is partly a product of the age of the organisation, and partly a product of how strong the organisation believes in remaining autonomous in its decision-making.

I was keen to see whether literature from other fields could further my understanding of the relationship between partners. A search of organisation and business management literature revealed that there have been few systematic studies of two or more organisations collaborating to achieve a common goal. When I turned to studies of marriage partnerships, more detailed analyses of partnership relationships were available. I would like to extract, from both types of literature, some of the characteristics which social scientists see as important for viable partnerships - business or personal.

Drucker (1966) says that teams (business partnerships) must have a common end and a general plan of action, but that there is an inherent contradiction in an idea of an organisational partnership. If a partnership exists, rather than a single organisation, then it is probable that each partner has different goal priorities. To avoid any differences becoming destructive, there must be responsible and direct communication. He also suggests that for each partner to make a competent contribution to the partnership, there needs to be self-development on the part of each partner. Broom & Longenecker (1961) talk about honesty, compatibility and ability to contribute an indispensable input to the business. They are also conscious that disagreements can grow if one partner assumes priorities

which differ from other partners' priorities as, legally, each partner can act on behalf of the whole. Each partner is seen to have rights which include: participating in management decisions, full communication and compensation for services.

Parkin (1977) proposes that the type of marriage which fits present-day Western society has the following characteristics: the partners are complementary but their contributions are equally indispensable to the partnership; the relationship is essentially de facto in that there is a working basis for development; and exchanges are reciprocal and reasonably integrated with the rest of the partners' concerns. The O'Neill's (1973) include in a list of features of an open marriage relationship the characteristics of trust, communication, identity and equal rights to retaining his/her individuality (being a 'whole person').

There are concepts in the literature cited above which are repeated even when authors are applying them to totally different types of partnership. It seems useful to draw them together here and underline them (literally and figuratively) before applying them to the two State-voluntary organisation partnerships. Shared goals and priorities are important but, because each partner has a right to maintain and develop his own identity, there may be some differences in priorities, but this should not constrain too much the development of the partnership. Good communication based on trust are necessary components to ensure that any differences in priority do not undermine the success of a partnership. Communication also helps the partners appreciate the complementary contributions made by each partner, so that there is acceptance that each partner has a right to some compensation which may include the satisfaction of doing things in a way that will preserve characteristics which give each partner his/her identity.

Do the State-voluntary pre-school organisation partnerships display these characteristics? In general terms, each partnership has shared goals (provision of pre-school education) but the priorities of the partners are not always agreed upon and tensions arise. The State giving priority to equitable grants for both movements (see Chapters 9 and 10) has run counter to each movement's top priorities. Both partnerships are developing ones, but the State thrusting change onto the voluntary organisation has affected the voluntary organisations' identities and lessened good-will between partners. Such behaviour could indicate that either the

Government partner does not trust the voluntary organisation partner to participate in policy decisions, or that it is unaware of the affects of such actions on the voluntary organisations' identities. This may be partly due to the fact that the voluntary organisations are not seen to be providing an essential service. Early childhood education has features which distinguishes it from other services for which Government takes responsibility:

*First, there is no compulsory element as in the case of education within the statutory age limits. Second, there is no obvious general need as in the case of health services. Third, there is no direct need connexion with individual and familial socio-economic level as in the case of most social welfare services. Early childhood care and education may consequently be treated as an extra, something that should be provided by voluntary effort on the part of those who want it. (Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, 1977, p.42)*

As long as early childhood care and education is seen as an 'optional extra' it is likely that the exchanges between the partners will not be seen as reciprocal. The point that exchanges ought to be "integrated to a significant extent with the rest of the partners' concerns" (Parkin, 1977, p.5) is illustrated very clearly in the discussion of the consequences of strategic choices in Chapters 8 to 11.

Jill Savage (1974) has made a comparison between Government-voluntary organisation partnerships and male-female partnerships. She says that both the role of voluntary workers and the role of women are vaguely defined and the incumbents' work is unpaid and undervalued. She attributes the voluntary workers' efforts in fund-raising and women returning to work as these groups' desire to do something which is of measurable value. She suggests that when women or voluntary workers attempt to take on a wider role - for example, take part in planning - they are likely to be blocked by the other partner who feels threatened, and they may have to be prepared to be assertive in conflict situations. Males and 'professionals' for their part, need to be receptive to what their partners are telling them about their needs to improve the partnerships.

Let me examine each of the State - pre-school organisation partnerships in greater detail, using the concepts discussed above. The State - playcentre movement partnership is characterised by:

1. The partners being complementary with Government giving some funds and other resources, while the playcentre organisation provides the service.



2. The playcentre organisation's contributions being far more indispensable than are the Government's contributions. The voluntary organisation could survive without the Government input, although it would be much more expensive for the users.
3. The partnership has room for on-going growth and change.
4. The exchange is reciprocal, but what is given by Government is not necessarily what the playcentre organisation wants to receive because the donor partner, Government, has not been receptive to the messages from the playcentre people. Similarly, the playcentre-type of service may not be what Government would most like the New Zealand population to be offered.
5. The mis-match of input and needs often results in the exchange not integrating with the rest of the partners' concerns. The input of sites and buildings for playcentres did not fit in well with the playcentre organisation's dominant concern for educating parents and children by co-operative means. The input of playcentre educated children used to unstructured, free play may not 'fit' well into structured, new entrants class programmes.
6. The tendency for Government to thrust strategic choices and methods of implementation upon the playcentre movement because they match strategic choices made with the kindergarten organisation a few years earlier, threatens features of the playcentre organisation's identity. Such actions seem equitable, and are expedient, but they may inhibit the flexibility of the playcentre movement.
7. The lack of consultation before a strategic choice affecting the partnership is made by Government, diminishes the trust between the partners. The lack of consultation in the planning stages indicates that Government does not trust the voluntary organisation's competency in planning skills; and the Government's denigrating action lowers the likelihood of the playcentre organisation trusting Government in future strategic choice processes.
8. All these features, when aggregated, indicate that the partnership is not likely to be a harmonious one, although the changes needed to improve the harmony would not be too difficult to implement.

The State - kindergarten movement partnership is characterised by:

1. The partners being complementary with Government providing most of the resources, while the volunteers are partially responsible for servicing the service.
2. The Government's contribution being far more indispensable than are the voluntary organisation's contributions. The Government on its own



could maintain kindergartens with little effort, but future growth may be problematic should the voluntary organisation die, and parent participation could decline further.

3. The partnership has less room for change in the relationship because of the large number of Regulations and rules.
4. The exchange is reciprocal. Usually what is given by Government is something which has been desired by the kindergarten organisation for a number of years. Consultation had become the norm, but in the mid-1970s this did not always occur.
5. Because the input was desired and consultation usually occurred, exchanges between the kindergarten organisation and Government have been reasonably well integrated with the rest of each partners' concerns.
6. Government has recently thrust strategic choices onto the kindergarten movement which have threatened the kindergarten organisation's identity. These grants were seemingly given to make playcentre and kindergarten funding more equitable, but they have lessened the need for kindergarten volunteers to fund-raise which was their way of doing something of measurable value.
7. As was the case with the State - playcentre movement partnership, these instances (fewer in number for the kindergarten movement) of lack of consultation has diminished the trust between the partners.
8. There are fewer features to this partnership which are likely to arouse tensions, and therefore it is likely that this partnership will be a more harmonious one.

Having developed a schema to describe the two voluntary organisations and having shown how the features of the State - playcentre organisation partnership differ from those of the State - kindergarten organisation partnership, I now wish to draw together the themes that were revealed for each of the organisation's strategic choice processes.

#### THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC CHOICE PROCESS: THEMES

When I began this thesis I deliberately chose an internally stimulated strategic choice process and a strategic choice process which had its main impetus from a group in the environment of each organisation; so there is no common theme as to how the process was initiated, except that decision-makers were not happy with the performance of the organisation for the areas where new strategies were chosen. I intend summarizing the themes which emerged in the analysis of playcentre strategic choice processes, then the kindergarten themes, before concluding this section of the chapter by discussing themes that were common to all four strategic choice processes examined in Chapters 8 to 11.

Patterns Emerging from the Playcentre Organisation's Strategic Choice Processes

1. When a strategy was agreed upon by a small group of people (be it the Training Team or Government's Cabinet) without following the traditional democratic pattern of the movement of circularising members to get their reactions to alternative schemes, those members not consulted objected to the low level of participation allowed them. This led to a decrease in the amount of trust in the decision-makers felt by those members who had not participated.
2. When the decision-makers short-circuited the democratic mode of functioning, lower level members did not accept either the process or the choice without insisting that the strategic choice process be discussed thoroughly. They usually managed to bring about some changes to the scheme before it was implemented.
3. This was possible because many people from a wide variety of roles in the organisation had a chance to join in the discussions. The level of integration of the playcentre organisation, and the ideological belief in parent participation in the organisation's decision-making, meant that these members' suggestions for modifications were accepted as legitimate.
4. Because of the co-operative nature of the organisation and the ideology which stresses parental involvement, playcentre leaders were loathe to accept funds which might lessen the amount of parent participation in the educational programmes (adults and childrens). They did not want to see supervisors paid a 'living wage', nor did they want funds for playcentre buildings if it meant that there would be diminished numbers of parents undertaking training.
5. The strategic choices did improve the performance of the organisation in the way the decision-makers hoped for; the quality of the programme and the accommodation was improved for centres needing improvement, and some of the members who had been feeling overburdened had their work load lightened.
6. Both strategic choices lessened the flexibility of the movement. Playcentres which accepted Scheme A subsidies for buildings were committed to opening for six half-days per week, and a playcentre accepting either type of buildings subsidy will feel less free to go into recess should their roll numbers drop in future years. The minimum standards of supervision decision brought with it a more forceful stance that the Association's Executive would not accept other teaching qualifications as a substitute for playcentre training.
7. In the long term, the basis of the type of service offered to families with young children was not altered, except when a centre chose or had to resort to group supervision.

Patterns Emerging from the Free Kindergarten Organisation's Strategic Choice Processes

1. The norm in the kindergarten movement is to expect that Government will provide resources to relieve any pressures felt by the voluntary organisation sub-system.
2. Lower-level members were involved in the processes leading up to the announcement of a strategic choice by formally proposing remits to Union conferences asking for more Government help.
3. Union Executive members emphasize members' demands by making submissions to various commissions and committees of inquiry.
4. The impetus for Government action appeared to come less from the kindergarten members' and leaders' requests for new inputs of resources and more from Government implementing its manifesto based on the Hill Report (1971). The announcements came not from the partnership, but from one partner to the other.
5. When a strategy was agreed upon by a group of people in the kindergarten movement's environment - Government - without the Union Executive being consulted as had been the tradition, the Union Executive objected to the changed procedure. The lack of consultation led to a decrease in the amount of trust felt by the kindergarten voluntary organisation partner towards Government.
6. Lower-level members in the voluntary organisation sub-system felt that they must accept the choice of strategy made by the funding agency and that they could not influence the implementation stages of the strategic choice process. This is related to the unequal nature of the partnership, and to members feeling confined by the formal channels of communication which were inappropriate for expressing discontent.
7. Both strategic choices decreased the degree of participation that voluntary members could have in the organisation. The sessional grants meant that there was less need for fund-raising which lowered the frequency of participation of ordinary members; while the integration of training further narrowed the variety of tasks that volunteers could participate in. With the decline in the chances to participate, has come a decrease in the numbers of parents interested in being involved in the voluntary organisation.
8. When the strategic choice was to inject new funds for a specified purpose into a sub-system other than the voluntary organisation sub-system, members of the other sub-systems were less constrained about demanding that they participate in meetings to decide the tactics for implementation, than were volunteers. They were better able to exercise the voice option (Hirschman, 1970), than were the volunteers who seemed to be constrained by their concern with being loyal to their funding partner.

9. When a new input of resources (funds) occurred, the sub-system specialising in the task for which the grant was given was the most affected sub-system. The other sub-system likely to be next most affected is the K.T.A. sub-system, because practically every decision affects the staff.
10. The strategic choices did relieve the pressure on some of the volunteers who were feeling that their skills, time and energy were being drained.

#### Patterns Emerging from all of the Strategic Choice Processes

1. If any organisation needs decisions in two different areas at the same time to solve a problem, and only one decision is taken and the other deferred, it is very likely that the imbalance will create tensions. Members are likely to send feed-back that further strategic choices are necessary.  
  
The decision to raise standards of supervision in the Wellington Playcentre Association was not accompanied by a decision to cross-credit other educational qualifications. This has led to considerable criticism of the Training Team being expressed by local members and may, in later years, lead to a system of cross-crediting being devised. The sessional grants were not accompanied by changes to parental involvement in local parent education schemes so that local members felt that there were few rewarding tasks left them in kindergarten voluntary work. The decision to integrate training but not to introduce three year training has contributed to there being an oversupply of kindergarten teachers. This situation has set in motion consideration of a variety of strategies. Consultation has been re-instated between K.T.A., the voluntary organisation and Government to try and resolve the problem.
2. All of the strategic choices brought about consequences which were unforeseen by the dominant coalition who made the choice. The improved standards of supervision depleted the supply of potential association leaders, and stimulated members to demand cross-crediting of qualifications. The sites and buildings grants led to increased differentiation of function in the playcentre movement where little existed previously. The sessional grants, along with Education Boards taking responsibility for kindergarten buildings maintenance, led to a decline in voluntary members satisfaction from working for the kindergarten movement. The integration of training was a partial cause of the present oversupply of kindergarten teachers.

3. Strategic choices which involved a change in the environmental variable - funding resources - required careful consideration, particularly when the strategic choice was made without consultation. Points to consider for similar future strategies include:

- (a) The amount of assistance can be too much and stifle the motivation of parents to participate in voluntary work for the pre-school organisation that their child attends. This happened when the sessional grants were given to local kindergartens.
- (b) The basis upon which the funds are given should be according to where the funds are needed most. However, it would appear that the real basis is the political philosophy current at the time. In the strategic choices examined in this thesis, the philosophy was that the two major pre-school organisations should be given equitable assistance. When the assistance given did not match the felt needs, organisational leaders made decisions to re-allocate resources to fulfil those needs.
- (c) The allocation of funds is crucial. For the playcentre organisation which is highly integrated, the giving of grants for specific purposes can affect the degree of participation, thus affecting the feature which is central to this organisation's identity. Funds given for general purposes:
  - (i) decrease the chances of specialist sub-systems forming which would detract from the strengths of members being involved in diverse tasks, and
  - (ii) allow the movement to be flexible in using the funds in a variety of ways which meet local community needs.

For the kindergarten movement the tradition of giving funds for specific purposes has led to increasing differentiation into a greater number of sub-systems over the years. With differentiation came formal means of communication and many rules to regulate organisational behaviour to a standard pattern, which leaves little room for flexible use of resources to suit local needs.

- (d) The process for deciding and implementing strategies should be a process of consultation between the partners involved in the strategic choice processes. If Government assumes that it has the power to make such decisions on its own, members of both organisations become distrustful of the Government partner. They say negotiations with them are begun too late in the whole process.

4. The benefits from the strategic choices mostly came to personnel who were already involved in the pre-school movements - to the parents and young children who were using the service, and to the staff and volunteers who provided and administered the services. No changes were made which helped large numbers of new clientele avail themselves of playcentre or kindergarten education. Generally, the strategic choices were decisions which perpetuated the status quo.

5. Each movement is constrained from being as flexible in its delivery of service as changing social conditions demand.

The playcentre movement is constrained by its identifying feature - by the amount of participation of members in the work and in the decision-making processes. This high level of participation is unique in pre-school co-operative organisations for the world. Its high level of worker participation in decision-making approaches the ideal that advocates of joint-optimization of technical and social needs in organisations aspire to, and its level of parental involvement in their young children's early childhood education approaches the ideal that educationists are now advocating after research has shown that the only effective Head Start programmes were those with parent participation in a children's and/or parents' education programme, and with a school follow-up. Thus the level of participation is desirable, but it does mean that the organisation cannot offer its service to more than a few parents who are unable to participate in its activities.

The kindergarten movement is constrained by one of its identifying features - by the standardization of its service which is an outcome of successive strategic choices where Government funds were accepted along with accompanying Regulations. The abundance of rules and Regulations make for tidier functioning but allow little room for innovative changes.

Before providing an evaluation of the conceptual framework in the final chapter, I want to briefly examine the concept of accountability which is an adjunct of any discussion of funding for educational programmes.

#### ACCOUNTABILITY

Levin (1974) feels that this concept is used in four different senses by educationists, which produces confused thinking when the different meanings are jumbled.



1. Accountability as performance reporting has two important problems:
  - there is seldom agreement as to the objectives of education, and
  - data on performance cannot of itself alleviate observed deficiencies; decision makers must make a choice and act to implement tactics to overcome the deficiencies.
2. Accountability as a technical process is concerned with delivering education in the most cost-effective way. 'Payment by results' accountability has been the only major recommendation made by the Committee of Inquiry Into Pre-school Education which has not been considered by any of the partners. It would seem that it is not acceptable to any of them.
3. Accountability as a political process asks that educational institutions obtain the results that particular constituencies desire. This conceptualisation fits that held by playcentre personnel as was discussed in chapter describing the history of the playcentre movement (see p.88). However, there are usually several constituencies, often with conflicting felt-needs, which cannot all be fulfilled. Studies of power relationships show that those with more power are most likely to have their needs met. The main problems with this form of accountability are:
  - to whom are educational institutions answerable, and
  - for what reasons (economic, moral or political).

The controversy existing about the 'to whom' problem in the field of pre-school education in New Zealand usually focusses on two constituencies: parents and the taxpayer represented by Department of Education officials. None of the partners agree that each organisation should be answerable to only one partner; thus adding to the tensions in the partnerships. If each organisation was permitted to be self-governing, there is a danger that the organisation would become too interested in serving its own interests and not interested enough in serving the public's interests. If the organisations' decision-makers were answerable to the Government partner, the voluntary aspect of the organisations would be lost as members' satisfaction declined and more and more members left the organisation. There is a tendency towards this in the kindergarten movement today. The



public can best be served if it is involved in decision-making in an informal way; and this is one of the main strengths of a voluntary organisation whose decision-making members come from the client group. The Educational Development Conference exercise indicates that the Labour Government, in power during the time of the four strategic choice processes, upheld the philosophy that parents as well as schools and educators should be involved in policy formulation. The then Minister of Education said "The E.D.C. Report ... was the voice of thousands of New Zealand parents saying what they want in their education system. Who are we to quibble with that? They are paying for it, and it is their children who will use it" (Amos, 1975, p.39).

4. Accountability as an institutional process questions the whole institution of schooling. This usually happens when people lose faith in educational institutions for certain or all age groups. The Moores' stance (1975) is an example of this form of accountability, when they argue that a complex of factors indicate that formal schooling should not be begun until children are 8 years of age.

Levin argues that there are sequential stages that the different conceptualisations might be used for. An evaluation of performance may lead to improvements to the technical system being attempted. If the deficiencies are still felt to be present, political decisions to shift the balance of power may be attempted. Those still unhappy may decide that the whole system is pathological.

In the field of pre-school education in New Zealand, accountability debates in the kindergarten - State partnership mostly centre around performance reporting in terms of numbers of new kindergartens opened and increased numbers of places. Cost effectiveness has entered the debate in recent years during the discussions about extended roll kindergartens. In the playcentre - State partnership, accountability in the third sense is focussed upon. Playcentre members are concerned that they should not become answerable to the State in too many areas because it could jeopardise parent participation and the flexibility of the movement. Playcentre leaders are sceptical of pre-school services that become "school-like" institutions with professional teachers who keep their knowledge to themselves and

create a large gap between teachers and parents.

It would seem from our high proportion of 3 and 4 year olds attending pre-school centres with most of those who miss out desiring a place at a pre-school centre that few New Zealanders question the value of early childhood education. However, some of them are sceptical about the value of early childhood education being provided in all-day child-care centres which is one of the reasons why the kindergarten and playcentre organisations have not attempted to change their programmes to provide longer hours of child-care for working mothers. The other main reason is that the organisations are both constrained from making such a major change by certain identifying features of the organisations. Difficulties in making major changes was one of the major themes emerging from my examination of strategic choice processes.

The thesis of this study has been that environmental changes or poor performance in all or part of the organisation's operations do not of their own accord bring about new strategies. A dominant coalition must choose a major goal and develop strategies to have it implemented. The strategic choices examined in this study indicate that acceptable strategies are those which are economically feasible, are ideologically acceptable to both Government and the organisation, and are capable of being implemented without affecting too many other aspects of the organisation. Recommendations for early childhood education personnel and Government policy-makers developed from these two organisational case studies are given in the Epilogue. In the final chapter, I want to turn back to the conceptual framework and provide an evaluation of the approach based on two and a half years of field work and further reading and thinking. Some suggestions for future research conclude this thesis.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### STRATEGIC DECISION PROCESSES - A CONCLUDING DISCUSSION ABOUT THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Underlying this study is an acceptance of John Child's argument that the process of making and actioning strategic choices is a key variable in understanding change. My general objective has been to examine this hypothesis by undertaking two case studies focussing on decision-making processes, but I also had three further specific objectives relating specifically to the case study organisations themselves. First, to describe the key factors influencing strategic choices regarding the nature and delivery of pre-school education services in New Zealand. Second, to show that implementing new strategic choices is not a quick and straightforward event, particularly when a voluntary organisation and a government body are both parties to the action. Third, to describe how these strategic choices affect who gets involved in pre-school organisations - which families attend, who teaches or leads, and who administers.

In achieving these objectives, it has been possible to identify some themes relating to voluntary organisational behaviour which were drawn together in the previous chapter. In this chapter I shall return to the theoretical bases of the thesis, further discuss the open-systems approach in the light of my findings and evaluate Child's conceptualisation of the process of organisational change and the operationalisation of it.

#### THE OPEN-SYSTEMS APPROACH

When reviewing organisational literature in Chapter 2, I commented that Etzioni had judged the open-systems approach to be superior to the goal approach for the study of organisations. Etzioni felt that a comparison of the ideal goal with the actual performance was a rather fruitless approach because it simply revealed an inevitable gap between the ideal and the real. His dominant reason for favouring the open-systems approach was its practical potential for assessing the optimum allocation of resources. While I am not so confident that the approach can adequately advise researchers how to measure optimum allocation of resources, it does provide a framework with the variables that need to be considered in relation to resource

allocation. Throughout the history of the playcentre and kindergarten movement, decision-makers have been concerned with pressures on different aspects of their organisations. Most of the changes which decision-makers set in motion have primarily affected the allocation of resources; in essence, the economics of pre-school education. Therefore, it is a major strength of the open-systems framework that it can handle a central real-life concern of organisations.

The characteristic which distinguishes the open-systems framework from the closed systems framework is that the former allows for 'two-way' interaction between the organisation and the environment. In the two case study organisations described here, the kindergarten members in particular were keen to bring in extra resources from the environment, but apart from expanding the service by adding more of the same service, there was a reluctance in both groups to give out additional resources to different social groups in the environment who were demanding new types of early childhood service. To be fair, there were some exceptions; for example, a few kindergartens which have extended their opening hours (see p.26) and playcentre associations which have allowed alternative pre-schools to become affiliated without them being parent co-operatives. However, an imbalance in the two-way transaction of resources remains, indicating that both organisations exhibit signs of being partially closed-systems.

The open-systems framework ability to take into account the exchange relationship between an organisation and its environment is, in this writers' view, the strongest feature in its favour. This relationship places some constraints on members and leaders trying to fulfil organisational goals and meet the needs of different personnel. After completing my field-work, I came to appreciate that the approach has the scope both to accept functional explanations and conflict-resolution explanations about associations between different variables. For example, the restructuring of some playcentre associations in the early 1960s had the function of maintaining the parents' central role in the organisation despite a considerable growth in size. The more or less concurrent changes in the kindergarten teachers' role to providing afternoon sessions and playcentre parents' role to training to be supervisors for playcentre sessions led to the resolution of conflict between kindergarten staff and playcentre personnel in the late 1940s regarding the programme organisation of shared sessions.

The changes to pre-school systems described in Chapters 5 to 11 of this thesis illustrate that a change in one variable does not automatically result in a change in another variable. If a change in an environmental variable impinges on the organisation, the power holders must decide how that change should be allowed to affect organisational variables. The decrease in Government funds to the kindergarten movement during the 1930s Depression could have resulted in the closure of kindergartens but the leaders decided to ask staff to accept lower wages and ask new groups of volunteers to increase fund-raising. Pre-school building maintenance grants have eased pressure on playcentre resources in recent years, except in the Auckland Playcentre Association where the leaders chose not to accept these grants as they believed a misplacement of goals may occur should the grants be taken up.

Child's (1972) introduction of a dynamic variable (strategic choice process) intervening between the variables usually found in open-systems conceptual frameworks appealed because it provided a linking variable and it was a human behaviour variable. Human beings act. The theoretical orientation is compatible with my naturalistic stance, as I am not a determinist believing that there are universal laws of nature fixing social relationships. Situational factors have considerable influence on organisational features, but their influence is filtered by decision-makers during each interaction or exchange between variables. The choice process can make a critical difference to the shape of organisational change.

#### THE ROLE OF THE STRATEGIC CHOICE PROCESS

Child describes his conceptualisation variously as a 'theoretical re-orientation', a 'theoretical model', and a 'theoretical scheme'. This seems to be acceptable when one appreciates that Child is concerned with an explanation for structural variation within organisations. His argument is that environmental conditions and/or organisational variables are points of reference which decision-makers must perceive and evaluate before they make decisions to alter aspects of structure; that is, "the direct source of variation in formal structural arrangements (is) the strategic decisions of those who have the power of structural initiation" (Ibid, p.16). However, the acceptability of Child's conceptualisation is lessened when it becomes clear that the 'theory' cannot predict structural variations in any more definitive way than do organisational theories which 'explain' structural variation as a product of environmental conditions, of size or

of technology because there is a statistically significant association. Child has grappled with the reasons why these other types of theory have not been successfully transformed into a stable mathematical form. The human element of choice intervenes, and choices made by individuals or groups are rather idiosyncratic even when certain situational factors are constant.

The strength of Child's arguments lies in his conclusion that there is no predictive certainty in existing theories of organisational decision-making. His discussion is concerned with the weaknesses of theories of organisation available at the beginning of the 1970s, and he proposed a 'revised perspective', different from simply proving associations between variables. Child proposes that the source of their weaknesses is the lack of attention given to the political processes within organisations, and states (like several other sociologists including Zald (1970) and Pettigrew (1973)) that analyses of decision-making processes are needed to advance the understanding of organisational behaviour much further.

Child's paper does not develop a theory. He says explicitly that he has not set out "to propose a series of considered propositions in any detail" (Ibid, p.17). His stated intention is to add a new and critical variable, the strategic choice process, to existing theoretical models. I prefer to call the final conceptualisation a conceptual framework rather than a theoretical model. It provides social scientists with the major referents which must be considered in any organisational analysis focussing on decision-making processes using the open-systems approach. The probable sequence between the variables (referents) is also considered.

The present thesis focusses on the political processes - that is, on the evaluations, choices of goals and plans of action by power-holders in the playcentre and free kindergarten movements. How did Child's conceptual framework stand up to use in the field?

I should make explicit at this point that I made two alterations in the way I interpreted Child's framework:

1. My case studies were of voluntary organisations, not the work organisations discussed by Child, but I feel that there were no difficulties in generalising its use to the analysis of voluntary organisations except that variables could not be operationalised the same way as Child had done in former studies.



2. I chose to make performance the dependent variable in the two case studies, whereas Child was concerned with explaining structural variation. Therefore, I again generalised the framework's use beyond the author's intention although many of his arguments show how the relationships between different organisations and environmental variables are largely defined by the choice exercised by organisational decision-makers, the implication being that any variable can be treated as the dependent variable if it is preceded by the intervening variable: strategic choice process. The framework was easily adapted to allow any variable to be regarded as the dependent variable. My choice of performance as dependent variable is supported by Child's own concession that strategic choices other than those relating to structure can affect levels of performance.

Child provided no operational definitions for the variables in his framework, although he may have intended to use the operational definitions for some variables employed in the earlier Aston studies (Pugh et al., 1963). I chose not to develop precise operational definitions because my objective was to undertake exploratory case studies rather than to test systematically the association between variables. Also, processes cannot be precisely defined for measurement; they can only be described, perhaps with identification of stages of development. Therefore all variables were defined and assessed in general terms and not in precise operational terms.

If I had chosen to undertake measurement of the strengths of the links between variables in the framework, neither Child's papers nor the other organisational literature would have been much use in developing instruments of measurement as any attempts to quantify the variables have generally been applicable to work organisations. I had, for example, considerable difficulty finding criteria for assessing performance. Child (1972, p.10) says that an adequate definition is problematic but in a later paper (1973) he discusses two types of criteria: one to do with effective organisational performance (productivity), and one to do with the social relevance of the performance for people. My criteria were given in Chapter 3 (p.47) and encompassed both types of criteria discussed by Child, and by Bass (1971). I made no attempt to develop criteria for other variables.

Perhaps because of the exploratory approach made to the study of the pre-school voluntary organisations, this thesis added little more to the theory



of organisations than to find that there were as many differences as there were similarities in the patterns of the strategic choice processes and outcomes for the two organisations. This is so despite the facts that both organisations provided a pre-school education service and shared the same corner of the environment. A major similarity was that neither organisations' decision-makers made choices to adapt to the demands for new variations of early childhood education service. This reluctance to adapt could be attributed to different constraints in each organisation - the playcentre movement is constrained by its ideology and its method of delivering pre-school education via parent participation, and the kindergarten movement is constrained by the accumulation of many rules which inhibit the organisation's ability to be adaptive, and by its ideology. The influence of ideology on decision-makers' willingness to make changes to their organisation, a factor which has been commented upon previously (see p.23, p.94 and p.196), should be noted.

Child (1972) pointed out that consideration of ideological values was outside the scope of this paper but attributed uncertainty of association between variables in an open-systems framework to this factor. Data from my research supports Child's suggestion that ideological values are very influential on what decision-makers perceive as important, and on their choice of goals and courses of action to implement goals. Further support comes from a study in Sweden cited by Child which found that existing values and power structure were critical in predicting reactions to new ideas, and my literature review includes studies by Blackstone (1971) and Hage and Dewar (1973) which came to similar conclusions. All this suggests to me that careful consideration needs to be given to how ideological values fit into the strategic choice process. Further study on the association of values and strategic choices seems to be an important area for future research and I intend elaborating on this point later in the chapter. However, I now wish to examine the critical variable in Child's conceptual framework.

#### THE STRATEGIC CHOICE PROCESS

My data raises some questions in relation to the strategic choice process concept other than its relationship to ideological values. I agree with Child that the concept needs a term other than decision-making because the process has one more stage than is usually associated with decision-making. Evaluation and choosing between alternative goals are the usual stages in

decision-making, but also included in the strategic choice process is the development of a strategy of implementing the goals.

Who evaluates whether the choice is strategic - the researcher, the power-holders or the ordinary members of the organisation? I made the selection of the four processes examined in Part II without asking organisational members their opinion but did use the actions of leaders and members (speeches and amount of effort expected) to help me to assess whether decisions could be defined as strategic ones. The actions of leaders and members were found to be acceptable indicators by this writer. The range of different consequences which later emerged revealed that the decisions studied were indeed strategic ones.

The choice is supposed to be exercised by the power-holders. Child adopted the term dominant coalition so that it could be accepted that the power-holder group may change for each strategic choice process. Thus the researcher needs to define the coalition involved for each process described. From my data it was apparent that the nominal power-holders had little choice over some of the alternative goals and plans for implementation. Others really held the power and imposed the decision upon nominal power-holders and members with a few modifications being made after a minimal amount of consultation had taken place. For example, the first building code for playcentre buildings was brought out after only a small amount of consultation (see Chapter 9). On such occasions the term 'choice' is a decided euphemism. Perhaps the concept would be better labelled 'strategic decision process' to cover courses of action which do not allow much choice.

When an organisation believes in 'grass roots' participation those described as the 'dominant coalition' can be a large and scattered group. This has implications for the researcher endeavouring to follow the various stages in the strategic decision process. Discussion of alternative goals and courses of action may take place amongst various groups in different venues before goals and plans are crystallised and formally accepted. The researcher has to observe as many discussions as possible to describe the process fully, and this can have the effect of upsetting his personal research timetable if he anticipated the observation of executive meetings only would reveal the development of the process.

Only participant observation can enable the researcher to study processes

and I commend this methodology as one very suitable approach for future research into organisational processes, with supportive validating data being collected by other methods. On the basis of my experience in carrying out this study, I believe that the development of organisational theory must rely on research alternating between case studies of the kind provided here giving detailed descriptions of whole processes, and 'scientific' studies which aim to test the hypotheses developed during case studies. Because I believe that the conceptual framework is worthy of continued use, I plan to outline, in the final section of this chapter, areas for future research with some comments about methodology included in some instances.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH

1. There has been a growing demand for some observational studies of organisational processes. Sofer (1972) called for a "series of first-hand intensive studies ... that will provide material for the detection of characteristic sequences [of events]" (Ibid, p.268). This thesis contains two close-up studies of processes of decision-making in voluntary organisations in New Zealand, and I feel there is scope for other researchers to use the conceptual framework and develop a series of processual case studies to add to the wealth of information described here. For example, it would be worthwhile carrying out multi-method case studies for different types of organisations such as trade unions, finance houses, production line industries and so on.

In the journals available to this writer, I found three recent reports which make use of Child's work. Only one of them fits my conceptualisation of case studies outlined above, as they do not focus on sequences of events. Evans and McQuillan (1977) conducted a longitudinal study of one insurance company. They administered to senior staff the Aston study interview schedule (Pugh et al., 1963) and found relationships between the variables. However, the research instrument was not able to reveal the processes underlying the relationship. It was this shortcoming that led Child to argue for a revision of the theory of organisational structure used for the Aston study. Evans and McQuillan cited Child's paper on the strategic choice process, but made little use of the variable.

Paine and Anderson (1977) developed typologies of successful strategic modes from 62 longitudinal case studies using a matrix with environmental uncertainty on one axis and the perceived need for internal change on the other. Again there was no first-hand examination of processes, but the operationalisation of characteristics of decision patterns may be useful for future studies of strategic choice processes.

Salaman (1977) undertook a single case study, examining first-hand the process by which the founder's authority style affected the structure. He did not employ Child's framework despite his agreement with Child's argument.

Out of the case studies of the playcentre and free kindergarten movements, themes emerged as to likely consequences from different types of situations and stimuli. With further case study material it may be possible to build up some 'ideal types' of processes that will fit different 'ideal types' of organisations. If the integrated - differentiated voluntary organisation schema proved to be a useful device, it may be possible, with data from more case studies, to build up an 'ideal type' of process for integrated organisations and one for differentiated organisations.

2. A search of the literature revealed a paucity of information about inter-organisational relationships among organisations which are working in partnership to produce something together. Organisational literature on intra-organisational partnerships - two or more people setting up together to provide, for example, legal services or retail goods - was not easy to find; while inter-organisational studies at the institutional level of analysis are few in number. Selznick's study (1966) of the Tennessee Valley Authority is one of those rare case studies. My experience in carrying out this study leads me to recommend that further studies of inter-organisational partnerships between organisations, and the way in which these organisations jointly decide on alternatives and strategies should be carried out. I realise that I am proposing quite a formidable task because Argyris (1972) argues (see p.20), that not only do relationships between positions have to be investigated, but also relationships between people. In any research of this nature the structural sociologist would want to study variables such as centralisation of decision-making, functional specialisation, standardisation mechanisms and so on, while the social psychologist would find it necessary to

interview personnel, and the power-holders in particular, to find out their characteristics and attitudes. As is obvious from this thesis, my own preference is for a combined approach. Such research brings problems of combining levels of analysis both for the theoretical underpinning and for the analysis of data aspects of the research.

In New Zealand, there are many other State-voluntary organisation partnerships which could be examined by social scientists interested in studying organisations. Up to this point in time Government-sponsored committees of inquiry are more common than sociological analyses of State - voluntary organisation relationships. Some examples of these in the field of children's services are the two committees of inquiry which met in 1946 and 1970 to look at New Zealand's pre-school services, the Consultative Committee on Infant and Pre-school Health Services which met in 1959 and the State Services Commission Working Party (which is NOT a committee of inquiry) set up in late 1977. Raffel (1966) undertook a sociological study of the State-Plunket Society relationship, but in a very limited way. His data, based on secondary sources, was focussed on the partnership at the time of the 1959 Consultative Committee's deliberations, on how that Committee approached its task and the reactions of parties involved. A first-hand case study of the present State-Plunket Society partnership would yield a wealth of information about partnership strategic choice processes.

Other possibilities are studies into the whole range of State-Church Social Service and/or State-Local Authority partnership studies, all of which could be studied within an open-systems framework.

3. One dimension in particular of the strategic choice process variable, ideology, needs further investigation. The data in this study indicates that ideological values can have considerable influence on how decision-makers will and can use their power. For example, both pre-school organisations' reluctance to consider providing longer hours of child care is largely based on the leaders having ideological objections to child care being provided by agencies other than the family; although there are also practical barriers, particularly for playcentres which rely on parents staffing the centres.

I have a hunch that a high degree of ideological influence might be found if case studies or comparative studies were done of several non-commercial enterprises such as voluntary organisations, churches and

trade unions. Studies cited earlier in this chapter (see p.279) and Bendix (1956) suggest that commercial organisations' decision-making may also be critically influenced by the values held by power-holders, particularly decisions involving change rather than growth. Therefore, studies of ideology need to be carried out to find answers to two questions:

- (a) What are the relationships between ideology, the strategic choice process and change?
- (b) On which variables does ideology have the most effect and under what conditions?

To answer the former question, an exploratory study or studies using participant observation may be the most appropriate approach, while the latter may require some form of quantitative study using multivariate analysis.

4. In addition to the need for more case studies to further our understanding of decision-making processes, some quantitative studies also need to be carried out to gather information about the links between different variables when the conceptual framework is used for voluntary organisations. The Aston study and others based on it have indicated the strengths of association between some variables in work organisations; but further studies based on Child's reformulation of the theoretical model could also usefully be conducted. Some possible problems for research include the following:

- (a) What are the strengths of the links between types of decision-making (authoritarian - consensus) and programme (technology)? We are now aware that work organisation practices are strongly determined by existing social relationships in the wider society, and that this influence is probably largely introduced into the work situation by the decision-makers. Their philosophy about work organisation is probably just as influential as information about the technical efficiency of the technology. The comparative strengths of these associations need to be examined.
- (b) What is the nature of the association between technology and the use of resources compared with that between strategic decision processes and the use of resources?

This study set out to examine John Child's argument that the strategic choice process is the critical variable for explaining change in organisational

variables, and I believe that the utility of the conceptualisation of organisational change has been demonstrated. Further studies along the lines suggested above would serve to test the argument in different ways, and also extend sociological knowledge of strategic decision processes and their effects on organisations and their environments. /



## EPILOGUE

### THE FUTURE OF NEW ZEALAND'S PRE-SCHOOL ORGANISATIONS

*Better to develop a policy of identifying  
the sources of spontaneous regeneration.  
That would make a brave statesman indeed.*

(Hall, 1977)

The Epilogue brings the discussion back to the concerns of New Zealand readers involved in early childhood services and examines the organisations with particular reference to implications for future developments in the field in 1978 and later years.

Because of their different histories, the two organisations, which have dominated pre-school education in New Zealand up until the present time, have distinctly different characteristics, except for the children's sessions which are very similar in comparison with some children's programmes in overseas pre-school centres. In brief, the differences between the playcentre and free kindergarten organisation are:

- The Playcentre movement is an integrated organisation with only one hierarchy and members tackling a variety of tasks; whereas the kindergarten movement is a differentiated organisation with four sub-systems and members tackling specialised tasks.
- The playcentre movement's structural integration is reinforced by an ideology advocating parent participation in all tasks - educational and administrative; whereas the kindergarten movement's structural differentiation inhibits parent participation in many tasks and there is no participatory ideology to counter this.
- In the playcentre movement, decision-making is done throughout the organisation, but in an integrated fashion because all the groups in the movement have many overlapping members (a 'participative' organisation according to Likert's typology (1967) of organisations); whereas in the kindergarten movement, policy is made at the top and lower-level groups make lesser decisions within the policy framework, often checking with the national body before implementing such decisions (a 'benevolent-authoritative' organisation according to Likert's typology).

- The playcentre movement focusses on the family and provides a programme involving both adults and children, offering what has been recently recognised as the most effective approach to early childhood education; whereas the kindergarten movement focusses on the child, and, without the reliance on parental involvement, is able to provide more child-care time.
- The playcentre movement's children's programme is less structured than is the kindergarten movement's children's programme. The majority of parents in New Zealand appear to favour the latter.

Past events have brought about these results, and I have attempted by examination of past and recent strategic choice process to vividly demonstrate the complexity of such processes and the inadequacy of models of decision-making; and I believe this has been achieved. The other objective underlying this study was to describe how the patterns of strategic choice processes affect the availability and acceptability of playcentre and kindergarten education in New Zealand. The conclusion to Chapters 8 to 11 and the discussion in Chapter 12 suggest that the strategic choice processes enacted by the State - playcentre and the State - kindergarten partnerships during the mid-1970s did little to alter the picture as to 'who gets to pre-school'. The main function of the choices was to relieve pressure on the organisations' resources.

One strategic choice (sites and buildings for playcentres) has increased the number of playcentre places available in areas where a building has been erected or renovated, thus improving performance in terms of productivity, and in terms of parent and staff satisfaction at not having to set up and pack away equipment for every session. I would hypothesize that the increased numbers of parents in urban areas will share the same characteristics as my survey of pre-school families and Barney's surveys (1975) revealed. The sessional grants to local kindergartens may have averted an increased drift away from kindergarten use in low SES areas because parents felt that rising costs were making the suggested voluntary donations too expensive. Thus, in low SES areas, acceptability was maintained and personnel were relieved of some fund-raising which can be burdensome in those areas. The training of kindergarten teachers in Teachers Colleges, and the raising of standards of supervision of playcentre supervisors, both contributing to the professionalization of pre-school staff, may well have an off-putting effect on certain groups of parents already not feeling comfortable in playcentres and kindergartens.

Looking at all four strategic choices examined, marginal gains were made to the availability of pre-school places (and these were important gains in

rural areas which could not have any pre-school education until accommodation was made available) and there were gains and losses in terms of acceptability to the personnel already involved in the organisations. Performance was not improved regarding acceptability to families in social groups not at present participating in playcentres and kindergartens. Few would deny the worthwhileness of playcentres and kindergartens, but they are only meeting the demands of some of our New Zealand families with young children.

I believe that the time is ripe for change. Decision-makers need to explore ways and means to establish new types of facilities, and different ways of delivering early childhood services using existing facilities. Conditions have changed in the last few years which encourage a major re-evaluation.

1. Government is faced with different economic circumstances than existed during the years when I was involved in the field work for this study. In the early 1970s, New Zealand's economy was booming; whereas today we are in the midst of a recession with no end in sight. A shortage of money often encourages innovative thinking and acceptance of new strategies to meet demands, and I hypothesize that many innovative schemes which parents have been establishing around the country will find favour with the present Government if they are low cost schemes.
2. Parents are demanding new forms of early childhood services. They are no longer content with having two major services - playcentre and free kindergartens - supplemented by some private pre-school centres; they are demanding a variety of services and acting to make the provision of a diversity of services a reality. In Wellington, the Mount Victoria Playgroup and the Aro Street Pre-school Centre provide two examples.
3. People involved in the early childhood care and education constituency, including some playcentre members and kindergarten teachers, are questioning the legitimacy of only two organisations receiving the vast majority of the public money set aside for early childhood education. They too are saying that there is a need for funds being spent on a diverse range of services.

The expressed needs are mostly for two different types of early childhood service:

- (a) For some variation along the lines of a playgroup/drop-in centre/shoppers' creche; the form depending upon community needs; and
- (b) For regular child care in child care centres or in family homes.

These services are desired by groups in the community which have different characteristics from the pre-school users. The former service is usually desired by parents with pre pre-school aged children, and the latter is desired by parents who have or want to work. That we know about these

demands means that these are people with the skills and confidence to express their needs verbally and by their actions. It is possible that other additional services or modifications to existing services are desired, but no one has loudly voiced their interest in a new type of service; or if they have, those wedded to the status quo have not listened.

The analysis of the four strategic choice processes and the discussion in Chapter 12 indicate that characteristics of the State-voluntary organisation partnerships impose limitations on the sort of policy changes that will actually occur in the field of early childhood education in response to public demand. The changes which the State-kindergarten partnership is inclined towards are:

- changes which increase the number of kindergarten places (even if there is a possibility of lowering the quality of the programme);
- changes which 'tidy' the organisation and make it uniform for the whole of New Zealand; and
- changes which relieve pressure on the voluntary organisation's personnel, as long as this does not entail a big expenditure on salaries.

Because of the tension between the State and the playcentre movement and the playcentre organisation's dominance in this partnership, future changes are likely to be dominated by the playcentre organisation's own characteristics which incline it towards changes which will not disrupt the parent co-operative nature of the movement.

There is another barrier to policy changes in response to public demand, and that is the attitude of Government officials towards community groups and vice versa. Government officials seem only able to co-ordinate with community groups if they can be in the position of authority, because they have been given the task of seeing that public money is properly spent. Community groups question the assumption that Government officials are the best judges of what constitutes worthwhile community facilities, and often take the exit option from a co-ordinated relationship in preference to being the subordinate partner. There are two alternative solutions to this problem: Government officials accept a more equal status when working with community groups, or community groups accept a subordinate status. When Regulations are instituted which the community groups do not accept as legitimate, mock bureaucracy (Gouldner, 1954) exists, and the partnerships do not function effectively.

Changes to the playcentre and kindergarten organisations in the early and mid-1970s continued to support certain types of pre-school families - families who choose to have their 3 and 4 year olds attend a pre-school centre - and have used up the Government financial resources so that another type of pre-school family - families who need to place their 3 and 4 year old children

in pre-school centre (often at short notice) - have been restricted from receiving their share of the public finance set aside for early childhood education. Parents who need to use a pre-school centre usually need a longer period of care (with an educational component) for their children than playcentres and free kindergartens offer. They tend to select child care centres and family day care; the former receives minimal Government support, and the latter none. The situation is analogous to the state of hegemony prevailing in a society, but at a micro level.

Livingstone (1976) defines hegemony as "a social condition in which all aspects of social reality are dominated by or supportive of a single class" (p.235). It would appear that the existing pre-school organisational structure and means of delivery of service brought about by past and recent strategic choices, and reinforced by the organisational ideology, have all been supportive factors in ensuring that two forms of pre-school centre only are recognised by Government. This self-perpetuation has some advantages. Garrett (1973) provides us with the pros and cons of voluntary organisations supporting the status quo:

*It is true they may be counter to openness in the sense that they are often congregations of the like-minded. But this is their strength ... They operate at community level ... They support individuals in need. More, they enable the flowering of highly individual interests and concerns to be fostered". (p.235)*

Without a major restructuring of the field of early childhood care and education taking place, I hypothesize that playgroups will flourish increasingly in the future, while child care centres will continue to struggle. Playgroups are relatively cheap to run (thus suiting the economic conditions) and they can be fitted in with existing organisational structures and ideology easily. The only 'rule' that playgroups have to comply with is the 1960 Act introducing the Child Care Centre Regulations which says that no person can regularly look after more than two children without obtaining a Child Care Centre Licence. In effect, this means that parents must stay with their children in playgroup settings.

Any venue can be used for playgroups - parents' homes, plunket rooms, kindergartens and playcentres when the pre-schools are not functioning. Pooled private equipment or equipment borrowed from the playcentre or kindergarten is used. Playgroups tend to be an appendage to kindergartens if they use kindergarten buildings, whereas the boundaries between playcentres and playgroups are beginning to blur. Playgroup parents often join the playcentre council and training meetings. The playcentre movement is encouraging

playgroup mothers to start training to build up a supply of trained mothers for playcentre supervising, now that demographic changes - smaller families, and mothers with young children returning to work - have made the supply of supervisors problematic in some localities.

Growth in the number of child care centres is far more difficult to achieve. There were only 36 more licenced child care centres at the end of 1976 than there were in 1975, and many of these were pre-school/special care centres for handicapped children.

The Government reflecting the division of opinion amongst the New Zealand general public about child care centres, is maintaining an ambivalent stance. It agrees that children in care should receive quality care, but says:

*It is not anticipated that day care services to the families of pre-school children should become a universally available service as of right to all those families who would like to avail themselves of it at the taxpayer's expense. To do so would in effect be to provide considerable economic rewards for the parents of a young family to place the children in day care and both go to work to double the family income.*  
(Department of Social Welfare, 1976)

Good quality child care is expensive and Government is unlikely to launch into expensive new social policies during a recession, particularly when the general public is not unanimous in its support of child care centres.

The two pre-school organisations are constrained from changing their functioning to provide a longer period of child care each week than they are at present providing. Although playcentre leaders support other groups' efforts to provide quality child care, they argue that their parent co-operative pre-schools cannot support more than a few working mothers. Neither can the movement extend its hours more without over-taxing personnel resources and without changing the ideology of the movement which emphasizes playcentre being an extension of the home, not a substitute. If playcentres were to start offering a substantial number of child care places, it could upset all the advantages of being an integrated voluntary organisation that playcentre presently enjoys.

Free kindergarten voluntary leaders have not been as supportive of other groups' efforts to extend the number of child care places in New Zealand. Until 1977, they have taken no interest, saying that children should be with their mothers until they are 5 years of age, apart from spending a few hours a week at a pre-school centre. To offer children all-day care or even 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. care in a kindergarten would upset the pattern of opening



times which have been in existence since 1948 (with some afternoon sessions added later). All-day care would mean a change of programme. It would also mean fewer places for kindergarten users, which is a direct reversal of recent strategies for increasing places by adding to the number of extended-roll kindergartens.

Thus, New Zealand's economy and social climate; and the pattern of strategic choice processes, the ideology and the existing mode of functioning inhibit both movements from offering all-day early childhood care and education to a new clientele.

If the two major pre-school organisations in New Zealand will not move out of their niche, perhaps a major re-structuring of the field is worth investigating. Because existing organisations have unique and worthwhile features, it would seem desirable to develop a structure which would leave the play-centre and kindergarten movements reasonably autonomous, but improve their co-ordination and their flexibility of responses to community needs. What sort of structure might achieve this? The Centre for Educational Research and Innovation's (1977) evaluation of issues in the field of early childhood care and education concluded that little:

*advance may be gained by putting responsibility for such services in the same ministerial portfolio.*

*The alternative structural options lie therefore in a variety of integrated or closely co-ordinated models. At the national level, but with a clear provision for involvement of the local communities in both budgetary planning and in decision-making about the services required, we have the example provided by the 1973 Child Care Act in Finland. Also at national level but within potentially severe constitutional and political constraints of a federal structure, there is the Children's Commission in Australia, formed as recently as 1975. Within a federal structure where responsibility of all kinds for ECCE is fully devolved to the constituent provinces, there is the model afforded by the Directorate of Early Childhood Services under a cabinet committee of the government of Alberta in Canada, set up in 1973. Even within the dual system of the United Kingdom there are several centrally-supported experiments at local authority level in the unified provision of full-day care and sessional nursery school facilities. (p.60)*

There are many models for re-structured, co-ordinated early childhood services around the world. Probably none could be transferred in toto to the New Zealand setting, but they would be worth close examination should a political decision be imminent regarding restructuring public expenditure on early childhood care and education, and there is gathering pressure for Government



to consider such a decision. Unfortunately, the pressure comes from groups with mostly women members, who do not carry as much weight politically as do dominantly male groups in my opinion.

In the light of the examination of strategic choice processes in the body of the thesis, the concluding discussions in Section III, and my comments in this Epilogue, it seems fitting to formulate a set of recommendations for future decision-making in the field of early childhood care and education.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE DECISION-MAKING

##### A. For all Partners

1. One of the features which emerged from this thesis was that recent strategic choices have done little to improve the availability of pre-school education to certain social groups. Therefore, recognition needs to be given to the social groups in New Zealand society who cannot avail themselves of the existing forms of State-aided pre-school education. This recognition could involve public support of alternative groups, and/or involve channelling resources into different forms of early childhood groups such as playgroups or child care centres; or into new playcentres or kindergarten in areas where provision is scant; for example, in inner city and remote rural areas. A new national structure may be necessary to attain re-allocation of resources.
2. The playcentre and kindergarten movements may have to sacrifice improvements to their own service or conditions of work to help other early childhood groups, if recognition involves material support in a time of economic recession.
3. The playcentre movement and the kindergarten movement each have unique characteristics which are important to the systems-maintenance of the units of the organisations. Actions taken to make both organisations more equitable often upset the interaction between the various parts within the organisations to little apparent advantage, and all partners need to resist policies predominantly motivated by the principle of equitability.
4. All partners in the field should value the diversity we have in New Zealand's early childhood services. What is the point of having alternative forms of pre-school education, if Government in particular tries to encourage them to become more similar?
5. The practice of one voluntary organisation expressing envy of

what the other voluntary organisation has been given from Government funds is likely to encourage the Government partner to pursue policies based on the principle of equitability to make grants seem 'fair'. The Hill report encouraged strategic choices based on this principle and the outcomes, in some instances, have been quite damaging to the movements.

6. If Government holds back from assisting one movement until both organisations can be given the same help, severe difficulties in systems-maintenance can be experienced by the organisation in greatest need. Each organisation is likely to have needs that are best met in rather different ways.
7. Accountability for both organisations should be a balanced combination of leaders being answerable to their own members and to the Government partner, because members of pre-school organisations are tax-payers, volunteers and clients all at once.
8. Silence, or no complaints, does not necessarily mean that members are happy with strategic choices. It may mean that there are no perceived channels for expressing criticism. Both the Government partner and the kindergarten organisation give pre-school personnel fewer opportunities to express dissent than does the playcentre organisation. The former bodies need to investigate ways of improving communication between constituent parts, and between partners.
9. Some rivalry over clients between the two organisations is inevitable when the product primarily sought by pre-school families - the children's programme - is remarkably similar. Publicity extolling their own good features and thereby implying a poorer performance by the rival is used by both organisations to highlight the few differences in the programmes.
10. Staff in all types of early childhood care and education institutions should be encouraged (expected?) to monitor, in a systematic way, the progress of each child. This seldom happens and certain groups of children are selecting a limited array of play activities in a free play environment.
11. Transportation of children (and parents) to pre-school centres and taking resources for early childhood education into private homes needs to be further expanded, if reluctant attenders are to be encouraged.

B. For Members of the State - Playcentre Partnership

1. The time is ripe for the playcentre movement to make explicit

its choice between (a) keeping the distinctive characteristics of the movement which make it unique in the world for its amount of parental involvement, and accepting the accompanying 'elitist' label, and (b) decreasing the level of parental involvement so that more children of parents who are unable to participate can attend. I feel that the choice was made at the 1977 Federation conference to remain a parent co-operative pre-school movement which caters for families whose parents can participate, but this was not made clear to other groups in the early childhood constituency.

2. To maintain the participation of parents in a variety of tasks and related decision-making, the level of integration should be preserved and specialisation of tasks avoided.
3. Funds granted to the playcentre organisation can be least destructive if they are for general purposes and not for specific purposes which would lower the level of integration.
4. Playcentre training personnel could give consideration to altering the closing of the children's session to make it less stressful for the children, the programme more acceptable to parents and more like a new entrants classroom in one small respect. Some form of large group activity may fit these criteria.
5. Ways and means for reducing the turnover of playcentre supervisors needs to be investigated. I think the turnover in city centres is too rapid now that individual families spend fewer years at playcentre with their smaller families. Two suggestions are: Parents starting on the first part of the Training Manual before their first child begins at playcentre, and rewarding supervisors who stay for a term or two after their children have left playcentre, to slow down the turnover.
6. If playcentre training personnel were to give serious consideration to cross-crediting sections of the playcentre training courses and other teaching courses, more mothers might take up supervising. A shorter playcentre course for former teachers would make these trainees feel happier and could mean that they would start supervising earlier; and credit being given for playcentre certificates by other teaching courses would encourage mothers with career aspirations to start up the ladder by doing playcentre supervising.
7. Playcentre leaders should be conscious that members, once used

to participating in decision-making activities, will not willingly implement decisions introduced authoritatively.

C. For Members of the State-kindergarten Partnership.

1. If kindergarten leaders and departmental officials give consideration to revoking some of the existing rules and regulations, the kindergarten movement may improve its ability to be adaptive.
2. Any further large inputs of Government resources to the kindergarten movement is likely to severely dampen the voluntary efforts of parents to work for movement.
3. Kindergarten leaders and departmental officials must consciously consider the effect any strategy or tactic they choose in the future has on parental involvement, if they wish to retain and increase parent participation, given that some parents cannot, or will not, participate in their children's early childhood education.
4. To increase the level of parent participation above the present level, I suggest trying some or all of the following tactics:
  - send out fuller minutes so that all members are well informed;
  - send out minutes with adequate time allowed for members not present at the meeting to discuss the issues raised;
  - send out more newsletters or circulars;
  - do away with executive committees at local and association levels. The small number of decisions left to these volunteers does not warrant the existence of an executive;
  - introduce new types of parent education gatherings;
  - increase the opportunities for social interaction of members - give them a cup of tea during meetings and so on. It was the adult companionship which gave the most satisfaction.
5. Kindergarten leaders and departmental officials should give consideration to opening more kindergartens offering an extended programme such as that offered to some children on the roll at the Helen Deem Centre in Dunedin.
6. Ways and means by which the turnover of children through some kindergartens can be slowed down need to be investigated. A turnover of forty children per term is stressful for the children, as well as for the staff who must continually be forming new relationships. Demographic changes may make policy changes unnecessary in present-day high-demand areas.

7. Kindergarten leaders and departmental officials should give consideration to the plight of geographically mobile families wishing to use kindergartens. This group of families, and Polynesian families, are ill-served by a "first in, first served" waiting list policy.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

1. Further research needs to be done on the families who do not get to pre-school at present. Low SES families are clearly under-represented on pre-school rolls. My survey of pre-school families, including some non-users in a middle SES suburb in Wellington, indicates that geographically mobile families are also missing out on pre-school education.

Research is needed to establish the situational and attitudinal factors which inhibit these families from using existing pre-school facilities (apart from waiting list constraints). It is probable that the two organisations studied in this thesis cannot meet these families' needs. Many low SES families are choosing not to enrol their children, or, if they do, attendance ceases after a few months.

2. There is a growing number of research projects on all aspects of early childhood care and education in New Zealand, but there is a pressing need for far more knowledge about New Zealand children's development, about child-rearing practices here, and about the effects of both children's programmes and parent education programmes on the recipients.

## APPENDICES

- APPENDIX 1 - PRE-SCHOOL FAMILIES QUESTIONNAIRE
- APPENDIX 2 - PRE-SCHOOL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE
- APPENDIX 3 - PRE-SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS QUESTIONNAIRE
- APPENDIX 4 - PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES
- APPENDIX 5 - FLOW CHART OF A BUILDINGS PROGRAMME  
(EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE, 1974)

APPENDIX ONE

PRE-SCHOOL FAMILIES QUESTIONNAIRE

1. So I know who's in the household, could you tell me who lives here, starting with the eldest adult?

Relation to Yourself	Age Group	Pre-school

2. Is this the usual composition?
3. Have you taken your pre-school child/children anywhere other than the shops in the last two weeks?  
Is that usual?
4. Do you know what pre-school facilities are available in this suburb?
5. How did you hear about them?
6. Did you know anyone in your street who uses either playcentre or kindergarten? Which?
7. How long does it take you to get to the pre-school centre?  
By car?  
Walking?
8. Do you have the use of a car?
9. Would/do you have any other way of getting to playcentre or kindergarten?
10. Would/do you find it hectic getting the children to playcentre or kindergarten?

FOR NON-USERS

11. Would you mind telling me why you don't use playcentre or kindergarten?

IF SWITCHED TO NON-USE ANSWER QUESTION 12, OTHERWISE NON-USERS GO TO QUESTION 17.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE SWITCHED

12. Why did you switch from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_?
13. Why did you use playcentre/kindergarten/private kindergarten rather than the others available?
14. I would be interested to hear which activities you have been involved in at playcentre/kindergarten.



FOR THOSE INVOLVED

15. What things in playcentre/kindergarten brought about your involvement?

IT WOULD HELP ME TO UNDERSTAND BETTER ABOUT THE WAYS PLAYCENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS ARE USED IF I KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT HOW LONG YOU HAVE LIVED HERE AND SO ON.

16. How long have you lived in the greater Wellington area (including the Hutt and Porirua)?
17. How long have you lived in this suburb?
18. Do your parents live within 20 miles of here? IF NO, Where?
19. How often do you visit them?
20. Do your husband's parents live within 20 miles of here?  
IF NO, Where?
21. How often do you visit them?
22. Do you intend moving in the near future, say in the next year?
23. How often have relatives, including your husband, minded the children for you during the day, in the last two weeks?  
Is this usual?
24. How often have friends or neighbours minded the children for you during the day, in the last two weeks?  
Is this usual?
25. How many times have you visited, or had friends or neighbours from this suburb here, in the last two weeks?

COULD I ASK A FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR GENERAL BACKGROUND?

26. Which of the following best describes you?  
(Maori, Pacific Islander, Chinese, Indian, European, Mixed - state, Other - state.)
27. Does anyone in your family speak a language other than English most of the time?
28. Would you mind telling me your marital status?
29. What was your job before you had children?
30. Have you worked since? IF YES, What did you do?
31. Do you work at present?  
Full-time or part-time?
32. Who minds the children?
33. What does your husband do?  
Is he self-employed?

34. Does he do any shift work or overtime?
35. Would you mind telling me in which group your total income would fall?  
(\$0 - \$2999; \$3000 - 5999; \$6000 - 9999; \$10,000 and over)
36. Could you tell me which organisations you belong to?

Organisation	Nat. or local Member	Attend	Financial	Comm.	Office

37. What about your husband?

Organisation	Nat. or local Member	Attend	Financial	Comm.	Office

38. At what stage did you leave school?
39. Have you had any further education after leaving school/university?
40. Would you like to make any further comments about the pre-school services in the suburb?

APPENDIX TWO

PRE-SCHOOL STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

A - KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Training

1. What motivated you to choose kindergarten teaching as your career?
2. Do you think there were any particular strengths and/or weaknesses in your training?  
Strengths?  
Weaknesses?
3. Have you attended a refresher course since you completed your training?  
IF NO, Please comment on why not.
4. Was it a day in-service course?  
a Department residential course?  
a University Extension course?  
an evening course related to pre-school work?  
other (specify)?
5. Would you like to see any changes in the courses offered for refresher purposes? What?

Teaching

6. Can you tell me your years of teaching experience?  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

IF HAVE HAD A BREAK

7. Why did you not teach during this break?

FOR HEAD TEACHERS

8. How many years have you been Head Teacher?
9. In how many kindergartens have you taught:  
- as Head?  
- as teacher?
10. How long do you think you will remain in kindergarten work?

FOR THOSE LEAVING INSIDE 2 YEARS FROM NOW

11. Why are you intending to leave kindergarten work?

IF LEAVING FOR OTHER EMPLOYMENT

12. What sort of work are you thinking of doing?

13. How high would you rate your job satisfaction?

(Very high, high, moderate, low, very low)

What aspects of your work influence this rating?

14. What things in your work do you enjoy most?

15. What things in your work do you find frustrating?

16. What do you feel are the two most important qualities of a good kindergarten teacher?

K.T.A.

17. Are you an active K.T.A. member?

IF NO, Why not?

18. What do you think are the functions of K.T.A.?

19. Is the K.T.A. fulfilling these?

20. Which would be the most satisfactory means for you to keep in contact with the local K.T.A. branch and its members?

(Newsletters, meetings, informal telephoning, formal telephoning, small area meetings, social gatherings for the Branch, annual membership lists, other).

FOR BRANCH MEMBERS OF K.T.A. (Answer Questions 21, 22, 23)

21. What does your branch committee stress? And what do you think it ought to stress? IS OUGHT TO

- arranging social occasions;
- collecting information for cases to Government;
- disseminating information re cases to Government;
- actively pressing for improved pay and benefits;
- organising refresher courses;
- organising discussions on current issues;
- disseminating information about current issues;
- maintaining liaison with administrative bodies;
- other;

22. How do you think most decisions are made in the branch? Is there a wide consensus of members or do a few predominate?

Wide consensus      1      2      3      4      5      Predominant few

←-----→  
(Circle one)

23. How satisfied are you with this situation?

Satisfied      1      2      3      4      5      Dissatisfied

←-----→  
(Circle one)

Administration

24. Would you like to see any changes in the administration of kindergartens?
25. Would you like to see the Association offer more assistance in running kindergartens.
26. Would you like Government to offer more assistance to the kindergarten movement?

Children's Programme

27. Do you plan a programme?
28. IF YES, When do you do this?
29. IF YES, Do you as Head/Does the Head Teacher, do this planning, or do you do it as a team?
30. Do you discuss with the parent helpers what you would like them to do? When would you do this?
31. How many parent helpers would you have, on average, each week?
32. When a new child begins, do you:
- home visit?
  - hold pre-entry groups?
  - ask the mother to stay if needed?

IF HAVE PRE-ENTRY GROUPS

33. How often would you have pre-entry groups?

IF HAVE PRE-ENTRY GROUPS

34. How often would a child attend a pre-entry group before starting kindergarten?
35. How many children did you have on the roll for the whole of 1974?
36. What would be the average length of kindergarten experience for children attending this kindergarten.

ADVISORY SERVICES

37. How do you find the advisory services available to kindergarten teachers?
- (Government, and kindergarten)

38. Could you rank these aspects of kindergarten work in order of their importance to you personally:
- good physical working conditions;
  - satisfactory pay and benefits;
  - adequate personal opportunities for promotion and prestige;
  - opportunity for teachers to share in policy decisions with administrators;
  - harmonious relationships with students;
  - harmonious relationships with administrators;
  - harmonious relationships with other staff;
  - other.

B - PLAYCENTRE SUPERVISORS

Training

1. What level of training have you reached?
2. What were your reasons for taking a playcentre course when you first started training?
3. What motivated you to become an assistant?
4. Do you think there were/are any particular strengths and/or weaknesses in your training?  
Strengths?  
Weaknesses?

IF COMPLETED TRAINING, ANSWER QUESTIONS 5, 6, 7

5. Have you attended any refresher courses since you completed your training?
6. Was this:
  - a playcentre course?
  - a University Extension course?
  - a Department of Education course?
  - an evening class related to pre-school education?
  - other?
7. Would you like to see any changes in the courses offered for refresher purposes?

Supervising

8. Can you tell me when you have assisted and supervised?

\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

IF HAVE HAD A BREAK

9. Why did you not supervise during this break?

FOR SUPERVISORS

10. How long have you been supervisor-in-charge?

11. In how many playcentres have you worked:

- as an assistant?
- as a Supervisor?

12. How long do you think you will continue doing playcentre assisting/supervising?

IF LEAVING INSIDE 2YEARS FROM NOW

13. Why are you intending to resign from playcentre supervising/assisting?

IF LEAVING FOR OTHER EMPLOYMENT

14. What sort of work are you thinking of doing?

15. Would you like to make pre-school work your career?

What sort of work do you envisage?

16. How high would you rate your job satisfaction?

(Very high, high, moderate, low, very low)

17. What aspects of playcentre influence your decision?

18. What things about assisting/supervising do you enjoy most?

19. What things about assisting/supervising do you find frustrating?

20. What do you feel are the two most important qualities of a good playcentre supervisor?

Supervisors' Association

21. Are you an active member of the Supervisors' Association?

IF NO, Why not?

22. What do you think are the functions of the Supervisors' Association?

23. Is the Supervisors' Association fulfilling these?

24. Do you have any suggestions for activities for the Supervisors' Association?



Administration

25. Would you like to see any changes in the way playcentres are administered?
26. Would you like the Association to offer more assistance to playcentres?
27. Would you like Government to offer more assistance to playcentres?

Children's Sessions

28. Do you work out what you intend doing for the children's session?
29. IF YES, When do you do this?
30. IF YES, Do you as Supervisor/Does the Supervisor, do this planning, or do you do it as a team?
31. Do you discuss with the parent helpers what you would like them to do?  
When would you do this?
32. When a new child starts, do you visit its home?
33. How many children did you have on the roll in 1974?
34. What would be the average length of playcentre experience for children attending this playcentre?

Advisory Services

35. How do you find the advisory services available to playcentres?  
(Playcentre services and/or Government Services)
36. Could you rank these aspects of playcentre work in order of their importance to you personally:
  - good physical working conditions;
  - satisfactory wages;
  - adequate personal opportunities for career advancement;
  - opportunity for supervisors to share in policy decisions with administrators;
  - harmonious relationships with supervisors and assistants;
  - harmonious relationships with administrators;
  - being able to combine pre-school work with family commitments;
  - other (please specify).

C - BASIC INFORMATION

1. Which age group do you fall into?  
(Under 20; 20-24; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50+)

2. Would you mind telling me your marital status?
3. How many children do you have?
4. What are their ages?
5. What form were you in when you left school?
6. What is your highest educational qualification?
7. What does your husband do?  
Is he self-employed?
8. Would you mind telling me your husband's income group?  
(\$0 - 2999; \$3000 - 5999; \$6000 - 9999; \$10,000 +)
9. Did you have another job before you entered the pre-school field?
10. Could you rank, in order of priority, your present main life interests:
  - community interests;
  - kindergarten/playcentre work;
  - home and family;
  - other recreational interests;
11. How would you describe your commitment to kindergarten/playcentre work:
  - strongly committed;
  - moderately committed;
  - slightly committed;

BEFORE I FINISH

12. Do you have any other comments you would like to make about kindergarten teaching or kindergartens generally/playcentre supervising or playcentres generally?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX THREE

PRE-SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Why did you choose kindergarten/playcentre for your child's early childhood education?
2. In what year did you join your first kindergarten/playcentre committee?
3. How did you become a committee member?
4. When you first came onto the committee, what was your most important reason for joining?
5. To what extent has membership fulfilled your reason for joining?
6. Did you have any reasons for joining other than your main reason indicated above?
7. Please state your history of involvement in kindergarten/playcentre positions.

	Local	Association	Position
(a) 19__ to 19__			
(b)			

FOR THOSE INVOLVED BEYOND LOCAL COMMITTEE LEVEL

8. What brought about your increased involvement each time you took on new positions?

FOR ALL MEMBERS

9. How long do you intend remaining in the kindergarten/playcentre movement?

IF EXPECTING TO LEAVE IN LESS THAN 1 YEAR FROM NOW

10. Why are you intending to leave the kindergarten/playcentre organisation?

FOR ALL MEMBERS

11. Please tick the statement which best suits your spouse's interest in your involvement in the kindergarten/playcentre organisation:  
(Spouse is member too; Spouse actively supports involvement;  
Spouse is willing to discuss; Spouse takes little interest)

FOR LOCAL COMMITTEE OFFICE BEARERS

12. Could you comment on what you think are the objectives of your committee and whether there are hindrances to fulfilling these objectives (Give examples).

FOR ASSOCIATION COUNCIL MEMBERS ONLY

13. Please comment on what you think are the objectives of your committee and whether there are any hindrances to fulfilling these objectives (Give examples).

FOR UNION/FEDERATION EXECUTIVE MEMBERS ONLY

14. Please comment on what you think are the objectives of this committee and whether there are hindrances to fulfilling these objectives (Give examples).

FOR ALL MEMBERS

15. How high would you rate the satisfaction you gain from being an involved member of the kindergarten/playcentre organisation?  
(Very high, high, moderate, low, very low)
16. Can you name two things in kindergarten/playcentre voluntary work that give you most satisfaction?
17. Can you name two things in kindergarten/playcentre voluntary work that you find most frustrating?
18. Who do you think should be allowed to make statements to the press, T.V. and/or radio about kindergarten/playcentre matters?
19. How do you think most decisions are made? (In the committee at your highest level of involvement.)

Is there a wide consensus of members or a predominance of a few?

Wide consensus	1	2	3	4	5	Predominant few
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(Circle one)

20. How satisfied are you with this situation?  
(Very satisfied, satisfied, neutral, dissatisfied, very dissatisfied)  
Any comments about the decision-making?

## District Pre-school Committees

21. What is your opinion of the District Pre-school Committees as they are now?
22. Would you like to see any changes in them?  
What?

National Advisory Council for Pre-school Education

23. What is your opinion of the N.A.C.P.S.E. as it is now?
24. Would you like to see any changes in this body?  
What?

FOR NATIONAL MEMBERS ONLY

25. How do you feel about Mr Pinder's suggestion that there be a pre-school standing committee with a small number of representatives from the Playcentre Federation, Free Kindergarten Union and Department of Education?

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

It would be useful to know whether particular groups in the movement have particular views. For this reason, could you give me information on your background?

26. What is your household composition, starting with the eldest adult?

Relation to Yourself	Ages of Children

27. Please indicate your sex.
28. Please indicate your marital status.
29. Please indicate which age group applies to you  
(Under 20; 20-24; 25-29; 30-34; 35-39; 40-44; 45-49; 50+)

IF YOU ARE A WOMAN

30. What was your job before you had children?

FOR ALL MEMBERS

31. What is your present occupation? (Please give a full description).  
Are you self-employed?
32. Please indicate how much time you spend in paid work each week.  
(No paid employment, part-time occasionally, 0-20 hours, 21-30 hours, more than 30 hours per week)
33. What is your spouse's occupation? (Please give a full description).  
Is he/she self-employed?

34. Would you mind telling me the income group of the head of the household (as used for the census)? Please tick the income category which represents your income from all sources (except benefits) without deductions.

(\$0 - 2999; \$3000 - 5999; \$6000 - 9999; \$10,000+)

35. Could you tell me which organisations and clubs (including sports clubs) that you belong to this year?

Name	National or local	Attend	Financial	Committee	Office Bearer

36. Please indicate spouse's membership in group activities.

Name	National or local	Attend	Financial	Committee	Office Bearer

37. Was a pre-school committee the first voluntary organisation that you had joined?

(Yes, Had belonged to sports clubs only before pre-school committee, Had belonged to other voluntary organisations.)

38. At what stage did you leave school?

39. Please indicate qualifications (other than school qualifications that you have gained).

40. Do you have the use of a car for your pre-school activities?

41. Before finishing, do you have any comments about the movement - past, present or future?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR HELP

APPENDIX FOUR

PRE-SCHOOL PROGRAMMES

A large proportion, 36 percent, of pre-school families chose free kindergarten because they felt it was 'more organised' or had 'more discipline' or had 'better supervision'. Why did parents say such things as:

*I don't think playcentres give sufficient training  
in discipline before school,*

and

*Kindergarten gives discipline by having times when  
children are organised to do things together;  
children need to learn this before school.*

(Parent interviewees)

Researchers in the field of early childhood education in New Zealand seem unconvinced that there are differences in programmes offered to children in playcentres and kindergartens. Geraldine McDonald writing in *Education* (1974) says "from the point of view of the child it is doubtful whether playcentre and kindergarten are alternative to each other; in fact the programmes of both are similar in aims, objectives and techniques" (p.23). Barney (1975) also comments on a "folk-lore (which) holds that kindergarten provides better education for school than does playcentre ... For example, more attention is supposedly paid to completing tasks ..., there is said to be increasingly greater amounts of work with groups of children ...; and there is a 'sort of timetable'" (p.157).

I was interested to find out whether these differences seen by parents were largely a myth; or whether these perceptions of differences were valid, based on an accumulation of small but real differences which add up to a total that means something to parents subscribing to different child-rearing philosophies.

The Hypothesis

In the early part of 1975, twenty-seven senior (300 and 400 level) sociology students each visited a kindergarten twice and a playcentre twice. Ten kindergartens and nine playcentres were used to investigate



the hypothesis that there were differences between playcentre and kindergarten sessions. Five of the kindergartens were in the same suburb as five of the playcentres, and these five suburbs ranged from high SES to low SES areas. Of the remaining pre-school centres, two kindergartens and one playcentre were in low SES areas, and the balance were in middle SES areas.

The students were asked to look not only at the activities and the way they were presented, but also to take note of whether accommodation, number of adults present, age range of children and so on, had any effect on the organisation and style of discipline of each pre-school. It must be emphasized that, because of the limited scope of this part of the study, this section can only be regarded as exploratory.

#### First Impressions

The students were asked to record their first impressions, putting themselves into the role of a prospective pre-school parent coming for a first visit. The buildings and sites of free kindergartens made the greatest impact as far as kindergartens were concerned. All but one kindergarten was given praise for its facilities. The description of playcentre accommodation as 'cramped' or 'dreary' was used in relation to five playcentres. The way activities were laid out contrasted too. Students in five different kindergartens said activities were laid out in an ordered way; no playcentre put out table activities quite as systematically as did kindergartens. Kindergarten children were often described as too well dressed for play.

The first impression regarding all playcentres was the number of adults present and the way adults related to children in a more personal, informal manner. Prescott and Jones (1972) found that when there were large numbers of children per teacher, the teacher adopted an authoritarian style of leadership, and when there were fewer children per teacher, it was more probable that a less formal staff/children relationship evolved. The other dominant first impression of playcentres was the wide range of children, from 3 to 5 years old, at each session with toddlers belonging to the parent-helpers also present. Kindergartens usually have fairly homogeneous age groups attributable to the long waiting lists.

#### Ratio

There was a much higher ratio of adults to children in a playcentre. The

students were instructed to count the number of adults present half-way through each of the four sessions they observed. The ratios are based on a playcentre roll of 30 children per session and a kindergarten roll of 40 children per session. Adjustments were made for the Grade 2 kindergartens having 60 children on the roll.

Table A4.1. Ratio of Adults : Children at Pre-school Sessions

	<u>Kindergartens</u>	<u>Playcentres</u>
Visit 1	1 : 12.5 children	1 : 4.1 children
Visit 2	1 : 12.1 "	1 : 3.7 "
	1 : 12.3 "	1 : 3.9 "

Time Allocation

Such differences in the ratio had effects on other aspects of the two pre-schools' sessions. How the head-teacher or supervisor spent her time, was affected by the ratio and also by the assistance given by the administrative committee. Tasks of the staff during sessions can be classified into three categories:

1. Working with the children, which involves sitting down and unobtrusively working alongside the child or children;
2. General overseeing, which involves walking from group to group, or child to child, supervising and giving assistance briefly before moving to another child or group. This behaviour is more noticeable than the first category; and
3. Organisation and administration, which involves preparation of activities, paper administration tasks, arranging displays and phone calls.

Table A4.2. Time Allocation of Head-teacher/  
Supervisors' Tasks

	<u>Kindergarten</u>	<u>Playcentre</u>
Working with children	45%	60%
	(Range: $\frac{1}{2}$ - 2 hours)	(Range: 1 - 2 hours)
General overseeing	22%	27%
	(Range: $\frac{1}{4}$ - 1 hour)	(Range: $\frac{1}{4}$ - 1 hour)
Organisation and administration	33%	13%
	(Range: $\frac{1}{4}$ - 2 hours)	(Range: 0 - 1 hour)

Thus the playcentre supervisor spent far more time unobtrusively working

with children than did the kindergarten head-teacher, mainly because the head-teacher had less help from parents and therefore spent more time doing administrative work. During the time given to administrative tasks, the remaining adults are left to do all the interacting with the children. Therefore in the kindergartens where there were only two adults present (and this situation occurred in ten of the fifty-four students' visits) there is only one adult interacting with the children for one-third of the session, most likely in a more authoritarian manner.

### Discipline

During much of all the sessions observed, the children in both types of pre-school were so busy that they needed little disciplining, or they settled tussles themselves. However, it was found that kindergarten teachers used enforcing measures ('Do as I tell you' style) far more frequently than playcentre supervisors. Playcentre personnel tended to use positive forms of discipline more frequently.

Table A4.3.                      Discipline in Pre-school Sessions

<u>Enforcement Measures</u>	<u>Instances in Kindergartens</u>	<u>Instances in Playcentres</u>
Reprimands	18	7
Punishments (doing dishes, forbidden enjoyed activity)	5	1 (by own mother)
Children enforcing norms	<u>3</u>	<u>—</u>
	26	8
	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
<u>Positive Measures</u>		
Prevent when trouble brewing	2	5
Distraction	5	7
Diverting with extra attention	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
	12	17
	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>

The greater use of enforcement measures in kindergarten probably reflects the high ratio of children to adults. This type of discipline is more noticeable to other children and visiting adults, than are quiet diversions. One student suggested that the style of discipline in each type of pre-school centre may suit different types of parents. "I think the discipline I saw in the kindergarten would appeal to many parents because it is obvious. A socially accepted code of behaviour is taught. A great many people get to know if someone deviates and this enhances the chances of

the rest conforming ... The discipline I saw at playcentre is not so obvious and tended towards self-discipline and respect to the rights of others ... I suspect that discipline to many parents means imposing their values on children, and since this seems to be achieved in the kindergarten, it follows that parents may feel happier with this discipline than with that at playcentre which is less insistent on the superiority of adults' values vis-a-vis the child's."

#### Group Activities

Although it was found that there was little difference between the type and number of play activities provided in a kindergarten and in a playcentre, it was found that there was a difference in the methods used to introduce activities to the children. The methods were either obvious or unobtrusive.

Table A4.4.                      Methods of Introducing Activities

<u>Obvious</u>	<u>No. of Kindergartens</u>	<u>No. of Playcentres</u>
Loud announcement	8	2
Quiet announcement to nearby group	6	5
<u>Unobtrusive</u>		
Adults sit down with children and suggest new idea	5	9
Adults sit down and build on what children doing	2	3
Put new material out	10	9

Playcentre leaders interpret the free play philosophy as including giving children the freedom to play for as long as he/she chooses without adult interruption.

On looking at how many group activities occurred, it was found that kindergartens had an average of 3.5 (range: 2 - 5) large group activities per session that were initiated by the staff compared with playcentres who averaged 2 (range: 0 - 3) large groups per session. There was 100 percent attendance at mat-time when the children sat on the mat at the end of the kindergarten session in six kindergartens; in the other kindergartens, staff allowed 1-2 children to help with cleaning up or to roam. Playcentres do not generally have mat-time. At the other group activities, in both kindergartens and playcentres, children are generally free to choose whether to join in or carry on with what they are doing.

### Morning Tea

Morning tea is one activity which can be a group or individual activity. The method used was often cited by parents during interviews as giving them concern as to the discipline in playcentres. It was found that five of the kindergartens had a formal morning tea where the staff determined when, what and how the morning tea was served. No playcentre had quite so structured and interrupting method of serving morning tea. Six playcentres but no kindergartens served morning tea on demand, and the informality of this method seemed to upset parents who were stricter about food-consumption habits. Five kindergartens and three playcentres used a semi-formal method with a few restrictions on time and more restrictions as to what or how.

### End of Session

Again, kindergarten staff are more likely to turn this into a group activity. The children were asked to help tidy up in eight out of the ten kindergartens, followed by mat-time. Everything was ship-shape by closing time in all but three kindergartens. Children were seldom seen tidying up at playcentres - an aspect of playcentre functioning which causes many parents to complain about the discipline. Half the playcentres had personnel tidy abandoned activities in the last  $\frac{1}{4}$  hour and half still had all activities out at closing time.

### Summary

Although the numbers of pre-school centres and the number of observation periods used in this study are too few to say that the data is completely reliable and valid, I think there is sufficient evidence contained in the student records to say that there are differences between playcentre sessions and kindergarten sessions in the Wellington associations of the two pre-school organisations. The differences seem to stem from two sources:

1. The ratio of adults to children, which influences:
  - (a) the adult/child relationship;
  - (b) the amount of time the head-teacher/supervisor has to spend with the children;
  - (c) the style of discipline; and
2. The interpretation of the free play philosophy, which influences:
  - (a) the number of group activities; and
  - (b) the methods used to introduce new activities.

These differences are enhanced by the visual differences of the buildings, and by the age range of the children.

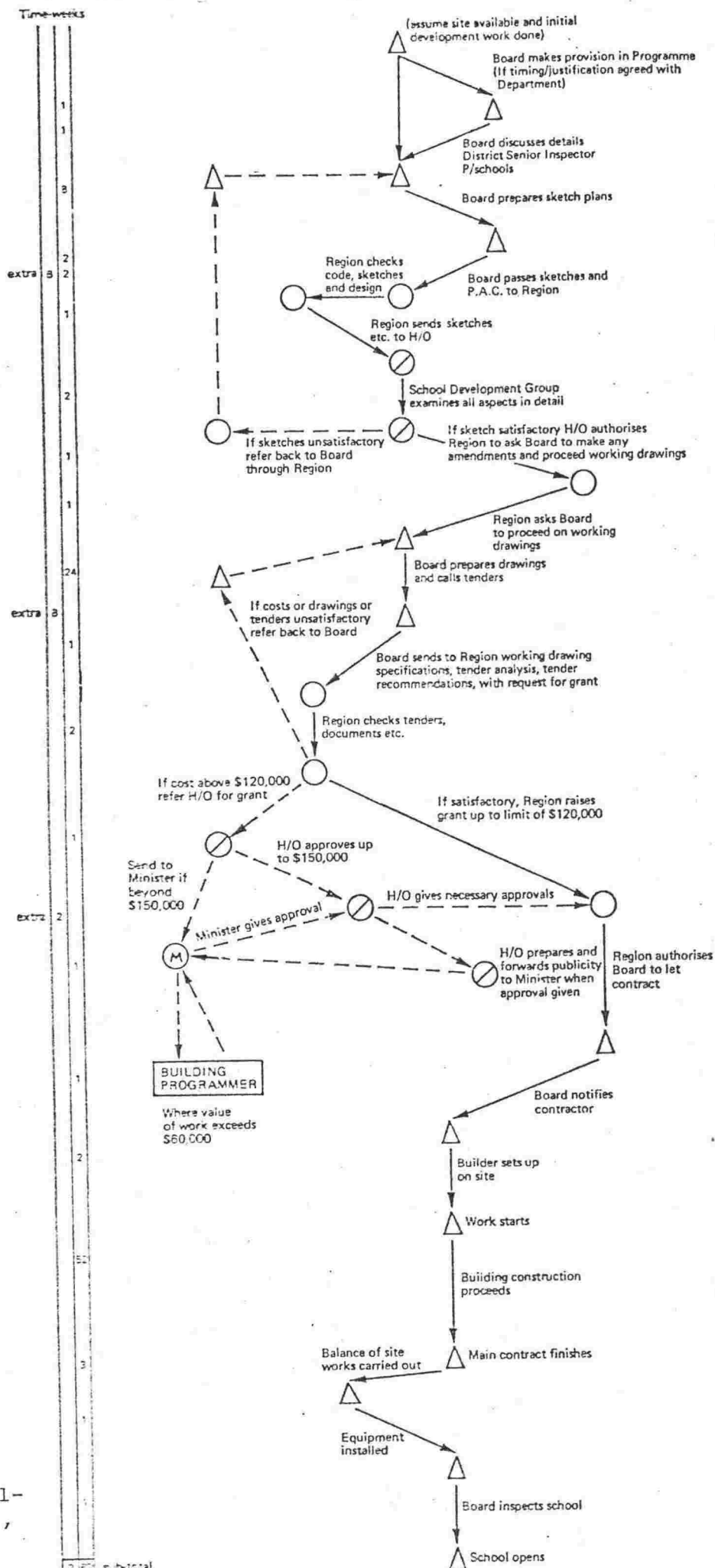
It would seem that although these differences are often not great and are usually quite subtle, parents with dissimilar child-rearing philosophies do perceive the differences and they select the service which best suits their philosophy. Betz and Judkins (1975) concluded that members joined the voluntary organisations that they studied, more as a means for the support of attitudes held prior to joining, than as a means of changing attitudes; and it would seem that this exploration of playcentre and kindergarten sessions supports Betz and Judkin's conclusion. The question of 'match' therefore becomes important for those parents who have no choice about which pre-school voluntary organisation they can use.

FOOTNOTE: Pre-school Staff Survey Data

Several items were included in the Pre-school Staff Survey interview schedule pertaining to the children's session, which produced some interesting data. I discovered that 9 percent of the kindergartens operated without any staff planning the programme, and 20 percent of playcentre staff said they did not plan a programme. Twenty-two percent of the kindergarten sample did not tell the parent helpers about what was happening during the session, but only 5 percent of the playcentre sample said that they did not have a discussion with the day's rostered parent helper.

Because the Union President had said that many children, other than those on kindergarten rolls, received early childhood education each week in kindergarten pre-entry groups, I asked how many kindergartens had pre-entry groups. Only one kindergarten in the Wellington Association had a group each week (this increased to two later in 1975); 22 percent had one group per term; 39 percent had a group occasionally; and 35 percent of the kindergartens did not have pre-entry groups at all. The majority of those kindergartens which ran pre-entry groups once a term or when the occasion arose (that is, when a largish number of children were expected to start in a short space of time) only had one meeting before the children joined the full session and the remainder had two gatherings. The claim that many more children are receiving kindergarten education than roll numbers indicate would appear to be exaggerated, if Wellington kindergarten pre-entry group practices are anything to go by.

The procedures for site acquisition, and for secondary buildings, are even more complicated.



(Educational Development Conference, 1974, pp.128-129)

NOTE: If no hitches, construction takes 108 weeks but it could and sometimes does take



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