

# Preschools for Science: The Child Study Centre at the University of British Columbia, 1960–1997

*Penney Clark*  
*Mona Gleason*  
*Stephen Petrina*

Although not entirely neglected, the history of preschool reform and child study in Canada is understudied. Historians have documented the fate of “progressivism” in Canadian schooling through the 1930s along with postwar reforms that shaped the school system through the 1960s. But there are few case studies of child study centers and laboratory schools in Canada, despite their popularity in the latter half of the twentieth century. Histories of child study and child development tend to focus on the well-known Institute of Child Study directed by the renowned William E. Blatz in the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto (U of T). Yet there were over twenty other child study centers established in Canadian universities during the 1960s and 1970s directed by little-known figures such as Alice Borden and Grace Bredin at the University of British Columbia (UBC).

The development of the Child Study Centre (CSC) at UBC provides a unique perspective on the complex and often contradictory relationship between child study and preschool education in postwar Canada. In this article, we detail the development and eventual closure of the CSC at UBC, focusing on the uneasy interdependencies of scientific child study research and the education of preschoolers. Similar to laboratory schools on Canadian campuses, the CSC was a strange hybrid of school and clinic, educational classroom and psychological lab, a place intended to cultivate both cutting edge research and children’s imaginations.

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Penney Clark is an Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC Canada. Mona Gleason is an Associate Professor at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada. Stephen Petrina is a Professor at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC, Canada. The authors would like to thank Philip Hophan for his help early in the project and Dr. Eric Damer for his research assistance throughout. We would also like to acknowledge the able assistance of archivists in the University of British Columbia Archives.

At its inception, stakeholders at UBC envisioned an equal partnership between research and preschool education at the CSC. The main goal of the Centre was to act as *the* hub of scientific research on child development for the entire university, a facility where researchers from a range of disciplines were encouraged to study all aspects of the child. Principally through the maneuvering of Dean of Education, Neville Scarfe, however, the CSC was administratively housed in the College of Education. This, we argue, contributed significantly to the crises of legitimacy regarding the Centre's stature as a cross-disciplinary research facility. At various points over the course of its history, the Centre became a crossroads for a constellation of competing, and often incommensurable priorities: a facility for scientific research on children and child development; a model of innovative preschool instruction and training; and a provider of a stimulating, nurturing, and progressive preschool environment to serve both the university and the broader community. While key figures such as Borden and Bredin attempted an astute balance of scientific child study with the exigencies of preschooling, ideological, and structural challenges and contradictions eventually diminished the optimism that accompanied the inception of the CSC in the early 1960s. For some critics, the CSC was never scientific enough; for others, it was never adequately educational or innovative. In policy, the tensions were readily resolved as administrators and policymakers looked for demonstrable proof for early education investments. In practice, it was another story, and it is this "other story" on which this article focuses.

We begin by placing the broader struggle for child study and preschool education in the province of British Columbia (BC) into the context of the history of scientific child study in North America. Even though the need for early childhood education had long been recognized by organizations such as the provincial Parent-Teacher Federation (PTF), its potential as an area of scholarly study languished for many years before it was taken up by UBC. In the balance of the article, we map out the founding, expansion, and eventual closure of the CSC, paying close attention to the ways those associated with its daily operations negotiated the evolving challenges, goals, and tensions.

### The Science of the Child

Historians date the beginning of child study in North America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with G. Stanley Hall and his work at Johns Hopkins University and Clark University. Hall used and advocated for naturalistic techniques for observing children and made a particular type of scientific practice accessible to parents,

psychologists, social workers, and teachers, many of whom were women. This naturalism and genetic, or developmental, psychology had much to do with bridging charity and social welfare with the new scientific social casework and pedagogy.<sup>1</sup> While many of Hall's peers dismissed child study for a lack of rigor, by the late 1910s, there were more female researchers in psychology than in any other discipline except domestic science. Through the 1920s, it was common for women to be responsible for the authorship of entire monographs on the study of children (e.g., 14/14 women authors in *Some New Techniques for Studying Social Behavior*).<sup>2</sup> The new baby and preschool test authors, such as Luella Cole and Beth Wellman, were also predominantly women. By the end of the 1920s, there were approximately eighty child research clinics—child development, child guidance, child psychology, child science, child study, or child welfare clinics—in the United States, including the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station among the most noteworthy. However, women were much less frequently appointed as Directors of these facilities.<sup>3</sup> Thus recast in a larger framework of the history of childhood, we perceive child study as a gendered, political process, albeit contested, through which children are constructed as subjects of science, technology, and the state. As Adriana Benzaquén

<sup>1</sup>On Hall, see Dorothy E. Bradbury, "The Contribution of the Child Study Movement to Child Psychology," *Psychological Bulletin* 34 (1937): 21–38; Dorothy Ross, *G. Stanley Hall: The Psychologist as Prophet* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1972); Leila Zenderland, "Education, Evangelism, and the Origins of Clinical Psychology: The Child Study Legacy," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 24 (Spring 1988): 152–65.

<sup>2</sup>Dorothy S. Thomas, ed., *Some New Techniques for Studying Social Behavior, Child Development Monographs, No. 1* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia, 1929).

<sup>3</sup>On the history of child research, see Hamilton Cravens, *Before Head Start: The Iowa Station & America's Children* (Chapel Hill University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Emily S. Davidson and Ludy T. Benjamin, "A History of the Child Study Movement in America," in *Historical Foundations of Educational Psychology*, eds. John A. Glover and Royce R. Ronning (New York: Plenum Press, 1987): 41–60; Mona Gleason, *Normalizing the Ideal: Psychology, Schooling and the Family in Post-World War II Canada* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Margo Horn, *Before It's Too Late: The Child Guidance Movement in the United States, 1922–1945* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1989); Kathleen W. Jones, *Taming the Troublesome Child: American Families, Child Guidance, and the Limits of Psychiatric Authority* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999); Anthony Platt, *The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1969); Erwin Johannimgmeier and Theresa R. Richardson, *Educational Research, The National Agenda, and Educational Reform: A History* (Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, 2007); Stephen Petrina, *Education, Medicine, and the Psy-ences* (Charlotte, NC: IAP, in press); Theresa R. Richardson, "Revisiting the Medicalization of Childhood and the Colonization of Children's Policy by Psychologists and Psychiatrists, Review of Kathleen W. Jones' Taming the Troublesome Child," *H-Net Reviews in the Humanities & Social Sciences* (February 2000). Accessed 5 November 2011 at: <http://www.h-net.org>.

acknowledges, “in many ways the recent history of childhood is the history of knowledge about ‘the child’.”<sup>4</sup>

The work of G. Stanley Hall and other researchers in child study during this period helped justify and shape the science of the normal child for the history of childhood. By the 1920s, all preschoolers—not merely the abnormal—had become legitimate subjects for psychological and psychiatric examination or observation. Child research clinics expanded through the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, partially through mental hygiene, to focus on both “abnormal” and “normal” children.<sup>5</sup> The mental hygiene movement, active primarily from 1910 through to the 1960s, was composed of scientific and social scientific experts who sought to solve and prevent social problems that challenged growing cities across North America and Europe. Given an adequately trained contingent of experts, mental hygienists reasoned, challenges posed by such things as public health concerns, the specter of venereal disease, mental health, and “feble-mindedness,” could be systematically studied and preventative measures taken.

Researchers in this emerging discipline of child research advocated for more scientific knowledge of the child, asserting that culture, education, politics, and religion could no longer provide adequate or reliable understandings of any child or all children. More specifically,

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<sup>4</sup>On the history of childhood, see Bernadette M. Baker, *Perpetual Motion: Theories of Power, Educational History, and the Child* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001); Adriana S. Benzaquén, “Childhood, History, and the Sciences of Childhood,” in *Multiple Lenses, Multiple Images: Perspectives on the Child Across Time, Spaces, and Disciplines*, eds. Hillel Goelman, Sheila K. Marshall, and Sally Ross (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2004): 14–37, particularly page 18; Samuel J. Braun and Esther P. Edwards, eds., *History and Theory of Early Childhood Education* (Worthington, OH: Charles A. Jones Publishing, 1972); N. Ray Hiner and Joseph Hawes, eds., *Growing up in America: Children in Historical Perspective* (Champaign University of Illinois Press, 1985); N. Ray Hiner and Joseph Hawes, eds., *American Childhood: A Research Guide and Historical Handbook* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985); Willem Koops and Michael Zuckerman, eds., *Beyond the Century of the Child: Cultural History and Developmental Psychology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003); Judith Sealander, *The Failed Century of the Child: Governing America’s Young in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); Alice Boardman Smuts, *Science in Service of Children, 1893–1935* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006).

<sup>5</sup>On mental hygiene in Canada, see Gleason (1999) ; Brian J. Low, *NFB Kids: Portrayals of Children by the National Film Board of Canada, 1939–1989* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002); Brian J. Low, “The Hand that Rocked the Cradle: A Critical Analysis of Rockefeller Philanthropic Funding, 1920–1960,” *Historical Studies in Education* 16 (Spring 2004): 33–62; Brian J. Low, “‘The New Generation’: Mental Hygiene and the Portrayals of Children by the National Film Board of Canada, 1946–1967,” *History of Education Quarterly* 43 (2004): 540–70; Theresa Richardson, *The Century of the Child: The Mental Hygiene Movement and Social Policy in the United States and Canada* (Albany State University of New York Press, 1989). For historiography of mental hygiene, see Stephen Petrina, “The Medicalization of Education: A Historiographic Synthesis,” *History of Education Quarterly* 46 (Fall 2006): 503–31.

researchers argued that as they gained more scientific knowledge of the child, the better able they would be to contribute advice about child-rearing or individualization, normalization, and socialization processes. Innocently put, “to say, then, that the child emerges as a scientific concept does not imply an approach that is theoretic or academic, as the phrase might indicate, but an intensely practical one, especially for the purposes of scientific research and analysis.”<sup>6</sup> Or as Hall so eloquently summarized this sentiment, “we believed we had overwhelming evidence that to know a child better is to love it more.”<sup>7</sup>

Day care, nursery schools, and kindergartens were coincident with and shaped through the practices of child research or child science inasmuch as through the policies of child-rearing, child saving, and reform; scientization and domestication converged as potent forces in early childhood education and the lives of preschoolers, parents, and teachers.<sup>8</sup> “Progressivism,” like “social control,” hardly describes this dynamic. Nor is it reconciled in what Larry Prochner calls “the missionary and the academic traditions of schools for young children.”<sup>9</sup> While Roberta Wollons reminds us that early childhood education was “diasporic . . . global in its identification and . . . local in its execution,”<sup>10</sup> there were “multiple tensions and accommodations involved.”<sup>11</sup> Historians are challenged to explain how processes of normalization or scientization generate uniformities and commonalities, which in turn, shape global practices of child study and child development among distinctly different cultural locations, and finally mix with local distinctions in early childhood education. For instance, Jean Piaget’s conference lectures at Berkeley and Cornell in March 1964 revived and coalesced North American early education researchers facing challenges to demonstrate local effects of preschooling on cognitive and emotional development. This dynamic was most evident within clinics, institutes, and centers, as researchers, parents, and teachers were drawn

<sup>6</sup>James H. S. Bossard, “The Child: Objective and Scientific Concept,” *Social Forces* 22 (March 1944): 307–10, on 308.

<sup>7</sup>G. Stanley Hall, *Life and Confessions of a Psychologist* (New York: Appleton, 1923), 392.

<sup>8</sup>Studies of Canadian day care include Donna Varga, *Constructing the Child: A History of Canadian Day Care* (Toronto, ON: James Lorimer, 1997); Larry Prochner and Nina Howe, *Early Childhood Care and Education in Canada* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2000). For the history of parenting and child-rearing, see Christina Hardymont, *Dream Babies: Three Centuries of Good Advice on Child Care* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983); Norah L. Lewis, “Advising the Parents: Child Rearing in British Columbia During the Inter-War Years,” (PhD dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1980).

<sup>9</sup>Larry Prochner, *A History of Early Childhood Education in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand* (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2009): 10.

<sup>10</sup>Roberta Wollons, ed., *Kindergartens and Cultures: The Global Diffusion of an Idea* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000): 2.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, 10.

together to cooperate or contend for knowledge, priorities, and designs on childhood.<sup>12</sup> Historians such as Barbara Beatty, Emily Cahan, and Julia Grant productively trace this dynamic through childhood, motherhood, and parenthood. As they acknowledge, “science did not win all of the many encounters with children in which it was invoked, but it had an enormous influence on most children’s lives.”<sup>13</sup> In the case of the CSC, children, education, innovation, and science ultimately played to a draw. When the CSC closed, no one could declare a victory.

The scale and scope of Project Head Start and Project Home Start were symbolic of extensive reforms in early childhood education and research across the United States and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s. Launched in the United States during 1965 and 1972, these preschool programs were what one psychologist called “the children’s portion of the great war against poverty.”<sup>14</sup> Albeit inspiring to early childhood educators and researchers, it was questionable whether preschools could be the first line of defense against poverty. “Head Start occupies only part of a child’s day and ends all too soon,” President Johnson confessed in 1967.<sup>15</sup> The child “often returns home to conditions which breed despair. If these forces are not to engulf the child and wipe out the benefits of Head Start, more is required.”<sup>16</sup> The hopes of reformers were channeled into research documenting early education’s influences

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<sup>12</sup> On the history of nursery schools, preschools, and kindergartens in Canada and the United States, see Barbara Beatty, *Preschool Education in America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995); Kristen D. Nawrotzki, “Greatly Changed for the Better”: Free Kindergartens as Transatlantic Reformance,” *History of Education Quarterly* 49 (May 2009): 182–95; Barbara L. Peltzman, *Pioneers of Early Childhood Education: A Bio-Bibliographical Guide* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1998); Prochner (2009); Lucy Wheelock and Barbara Greenwood, *History of the Kindergarten Movement in the Western States, Hawaii and Alaska* (Washington, DC: Association for Childhood Education, 1940); Wollons (2000), *Kindergartens and Cultures*.

<sup>13</sup> Barbara Beatty, Emily D. Cahan, and Julia Grant, eds., *When Science Encounters the Child* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2006): 2; see especially Cahan, “Towards a Socially Relevant Science: Notes on a History of Child Development Research,” 16–34; Barbara Beatty, “The Rise of the American Nursery School: Laboratory for a Science of Child Development,” in *Developmental Psychology and Social Change*, eds. David B. Pillemer and Sheldon H. White (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 265–87; Julia Grant, *Raising Baby by the Book: The Education of American Mothers* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998); see also Sealander (2003); Smuts (2006).

<sup>14</sup> J. McVicker Hunt, “Reflections on a Decade of Early Education,” *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 3 (December 1975): 276–339, 304.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Hunt, 304; original in Lyndon B. Johnson, “Special Message to the Congress Recommending a 12-Point Programme for America’s Children and Youth On Head Start,” 8 February 1967. Accessed 30 October 2011 at: <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu.ws>.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*



on the individual child, such as changes to self-esteem and increases in intelligence quotients.<sup>17</sup>

The growth of Canadian private and public preschools from the mid-1960s corresponded with Project Head Start in the United States, but in a comparatively “unintegrated and haphazard manner.”<sup>18</sup> One major survey of conditions at the time concluded that “in contrast to the national concern for early education in the United States, intervention programs and intervention research in Canada leave much to be desired.”<sup>19</sup> By the late 1960s, almost two-thirds of the four- to five-year olds in Ontario were enrolled in kindergarten but in BC enrollment was only 27 percent—the lowest in the country. Nevertheless, from the 1950s through the mid-1970s, policy priorities shifted, and by the early 1970s, education peaked in relation to the Canadian economy. As Ronald Manzer notes, expenditures on K-12 schooling reached their highest level of gross domestic product in 1970–1971 while the employment of teachers reached its highest level in terms of the labor force. In both the United States and Canada, educators and policymakers placed a high value on research connecting early childhood education to cognitive and emotional development and the development of models for preschool curriculum and programming.<sup>20</sup> Contradictions aside, historically clinic or laboratory research and preschool programs reinforced one another.<sup>21</sup>

In Canada in the mid-1920s, the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Memorial Foundation supplied McGill University and the U of T with funds to establish preschools and child research clinics. The McGill clinic and preschool lasted only five years while U of T’s St. George’s Nursery School thrived under the direction of William Blatz and parent

<sup>17</sup>For similar programs in Canada, see Bill Maynes and Rosemary Foster, “Educating Canada’s Urban Poor Children,” *Canadian Journal of Education* 25 (2000): 56–61.

<sup>18</sup>Thomas J. Ryan, “Poverty and Early Education in Canada,” *Interchange* 2 (June 1971): 1–11, on 5.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>On education in the Canadian economy, see Ronald Manzer, *Public Schools and Political Ideas: Canadian Educational Policy in Historical Perspective* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 120–21, 208–11.

<sup>21</sup>On child research in Canada, see Prochner, *A History of Early Childhood*; Larry Prochner and Pierre Down, “Researchers and Their Subjects in the History of Child Study: William Blatz and the Dionne Quintuplets,” *Canadian Psychology* 38 (1997): 103–10; Larry Prochner and Nina Howe, “The Wartime Child Care Centres in Canada and Great Britain: The 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary,” *Canadian Children* 26 (2001): 20–27; Mary J. Wright, “Recent Trends in Early Childhood Education in the U.S.A. and Canada,” in *Child Development: Selected Readings*, eds. Lois M. Brockman, John Whitely and John Zubek (Toronto, ON: McClelland & Stewart, 1973): 271–80; Lois M. Brockman, John Whitely and John Zubek, “Early Canadian Child Study: From Baldwin and Tracy to Blatz” (Eric Document No. ED 255 309, 1984); Lois M. Brockman, John Whitely and John Zubek, “The History of Developmental Psychology in Canada,” *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education* 8 (1999): 31–38.

education specialist Helen Bott. An assistant professor of psychology at the U of T, in 1930 Blatz was named director of the Windy Ridge School, a private school and kindergarten. This helped him attract wealthy Torontonians and their children to the St. George's Nursery School. Blatz became internationally known for his work with the Dionne quintuplets, effectively transforming the St. George's School into the Institute of Child Study autonomous from the Department of Psychology. Co-authored with Bott, his *Parents and the Pre-School Child* (1928) and *The Management of Young Children* (1930) were quite influential across Canada in the interwar years. Despite the immense popularity of the Institute and Blatz's emphasis on the science of child study, other Canadian universities were slow to respond.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, this response accelerated beginning with the second facility in Canada, the CSC at UBC. By the mid-1970s, there were twenty-two centers of child research attached to universities in Canada.<sup>23</sup>

The first decade following the Second World War was a watershed for educational reform in Canada. In BC, this culminated in 1960 with the *Report of the Royal Commission on Education* (i.e., 366 briefs, 34 public hearings, 116 visits to rural and urban schools) and subsequent sweeping changes to the school system. Reforms included newfound emphases on preschool and parent education across the country and a developmental, rather than chronological, emphasis for K-3 schooling. More specifically, the Royal Commission in British Columbia recommended that "the Department of Education take total responsibility for standards of educational services for the preschool child. Such responsibility would include the preprimary child (5 years) attending publicly and privately funded kindergartens and parent-cooperative preschool groups."<sup>24</sup> At the time, only forty-six public schools in ten school districts in BC-operated kindergartens had the capacity to enroll 3,891 children, while two hundred and fifteen private kindergartens enrolled 6,101 children.<sup>25</sup> As indicated, little changed through the 1960s and

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<sup>22</sup>For Blatz's internal history, see Staff of the Institute, *Twenty-Five Years of Child Study* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1951).

<sup>23</sup>On the history of child study centers in Canada, see Dona Mae Coates, *The Current Status of Child Study Centres in Degree Granting Institutions in Canada* (MA thesis, University of British Columbia, 1979), 9–32. For case studies of child study centers, see Joyce Antler, "Progressive Education and the Scientific Study of the Child: An Analysis of the Bureau of Educational Experiments," *Teachers College Record* 83 (Summer 1982): 559–85; Cravens (1993). On the CSC of UBC, see Grace Bredin, "The Child Study Centre of the University of British Columbia—Its History and Development," *The Journal of Education of the Faculty of Education, Vancouver* 12 (January 1966): 39–47; Coates (1979).

<sup>24</sup>Sperrin Noah Fulton Chant, *Report of the Royal Commission on Education* (Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia, 1960), 118–28, on 118.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 119.



policy for mandatory provisions for kindergarten was not implemented until 1973. The struggle to establish the legitimacy of scientific child study in BC and the contributions of Alice Borden were situated within this context.<sup>26</sup>

The desire to support the preschool years, which was articulated in the 1960 *Report*, had long been anticipated by dedicated advocacy groups. The groundwork was laid much earlier at a summit of the PTF in 1946. Under Alice Borden's direction, the PTF approved a series of recommendations that would have, if implemented, effectively positioned BC as a national leader in preschool education for the postwar period. Borden appealed to convention delegates to agitate for the establishment of an institute of child study at UBC, adequate nursery school facilities, curriculum for preschool teachers, parent education courses, and playgrounds.<sup>27</sup> Although what precisely constituted "child study" in relation to nursery school, preschool, and parent education, remained largely undefined, Borden and the PTF clearly took for granted its importance to their cause.

Alice Borden came to Canada and UBC in 1939 when her husband Charles joined the faculty of the German Department.<sup>28</sup> Along with her PTF work, in 1946 she received by-law zoning approval to open a kindergarten at her home in Vancouver. Borden's children, John and

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<sup>26</sup>On educational reform in Canada after the Second World War, see Gleason (1999); Hugh A. Stevenson, "Developing Public Education in Postwar Canada to 1960," in *Canadian Education: A History*, eds. J. D. Wilson & R. M. Stamp (Toronto, ON: Prentice-Hall, 1970): 386–415; Cyril Levitt, *Children of Privilege: Student Revolt in the 1960s* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1984), and Doug Owram, "School Days," in *Born at the Right Time: A History of the Baby-Boom Generation* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 111–135. On reform in BC, see Neil Sutherland, "The Triumph of Formalism: Elementary Schooling in Vancouver from the 1920s to the 1960s," *B.C. Studies* 69–70 (Spring-Summer 1986), 175–210; Charles Ungerleider, "Inequality and Education: The Ideological Context of Educational Change in British Columbia," *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundations* 1, 2 (1986), 7–27; Jean Barman and Mona Gleason, eds., *Children, Teachers, & Schools in the History of British Columbia* (Calgary, AB: Detselig, 2003).

<sup>27</sup>"Kindergarten Plan Sponsored by P-TF," 1946, UBC University Archives (UA), Alice Borden Fonds (ABF), Box 1, Folder 1.

<sup>28</sup>Alice and Charles Borden married in 1931. Charles was a PhD student, who would go on to become a respected archeologist specializing in the Indigenous peoples of the Northwest of BC. Alice received her Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California at Los Angeles. She studied rhythmic at the University of Heidelberg (1935–1936) and weaving and spinning at the City School of Weaving, Heidelberg. Charles and Alice both taught for a time at Reed College in Portland, Oregon, with Alice teaching modern and folk dance while Charles offered courses in German. The couple moved to Canada in 1939. In 1958, Alice returned to school, completing a master's degree in Education at the Eliot-Pearson School of Tufts University. Upon returning to Vancouver, she became educational consultant to preschool teachers for the Extension Department at UBC, and resumed directing the Longview Kindergarten. She was appointed to the UBC Faculty of Education in 1960. Borden assumed responsibilities as first Director of the CSC at UBC in 1961.

Richard, were by then eight- and two-year old. With an enrolment of twelve students, this marked the beginning of Borden's influential Longview Play School. Over the course of its considerable history, Longview provided practicum placement opportunities for many UBC students, both within and outside the College of Education.<sup>29</sup> It was an arrangement that many at the University valued. For example, in 1954 the Director of the UBC School of Nursing, Evelyn Mallory, confirmed the placement of three public health nursing students at Longview. "May we take this opportunity," a letter from Mallory concluded, "of thanking you for your co-operation in this phase of the students' educational programme."<sup>30</sup> The value of Longview as a practicum placement site for UBC did not eclipse its reputation as a supportive and stimulating environment for children. Parents conveyed a deep appreciation for this. "My reason for writing is simple," one parent wrote: "I want Vicki to go to your school because I know it is the best school of its kind in Vancouver—some say, Canada. A person whose judgment I respect said, 'Even if Vancouver had a number of first class preschools, Mrs. Borden would still be at the top because she has something very special to offer to her children.'"<sup>31</sup>

Borden's dedication to the children with whom she worked was clear from her long-standing willingness to take on roles of public leadership. Her work in the mid-1940s with the PTF serves as one example. As president of the BC Preschool Education Association (BC-PEA), Borden again worked tirelessly to promote an understanding of child development (Figure 1). With support from numerous interested community organizations, the BCPEA presented UBC President Norman A. M. MacKenzie with a comprehensive brief in 1956, urging the establishment of a Child Development Centre on campus. Building on Borden and the PTF's recommendations, the BCPEA requested a center with a variety of functions, ranging from preschool instruction and supervision, to research into human development, observation of children, and the dissemination of scientific information.<sup>32</sup> Once again, Borden and those advocating for greater attention to the preschool child wove together their interests in informed pedagogy, research into child development, and the dissemination of these findings. Thus from the

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<sup>29</sup>Borden's school was part of an extensive array of private preschools in BC. On the history of preschools see Kathleen Wycherly, "A Brief History of the Pre-School Movement in British Columbia to 1974," (unpublished paper, 9 March 1974, Box 1, Folder 2, ABF, UA); Gillian Weiss, "An Essential Year for the Child: The Kindergarten in British Columbia," in *Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia*, eds. J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (Calgary, AB: Detselig, 1980), 139–62.

<sup>30</sup>Evelyn Mallory to Alice Borden, "Placements for Longview," 25 March 1954, Box 1, Folder 2, ABF, UA.

<sup>31</sup>Sheila Marring to Alice Borden, 12 July 1957, Box 1, Folder 2, ABF, UA.

<sup>32</sup>Bredin, "The Child Study Centre," 40.



*Figure 1. Alice Borden with children—parents and students watching, ca. 1956. Source: University of British Columbia Archives (ubc14.1/4-1).*

perspective of supporters, education and research were strong pillars needed to support the development of the CSC at UBC.

### **Finding a Focus at the Child Study Centre**

The recognition of the need for preschool education and scientific child study at UBC was coincident with the arrival of the new Dean Neville Scarfe and his College of Education. From Winnipeg, Scarfe brought a cohort of loyal faculty members including preschool specialist, Grace Bredin. Scarfe commented that when he “made the move to UBC [in 1956] the entire faculty at Manitoba decided to come with me, Harry Stein, Joe Katz, Grace Bredin and Ben Whiting. The two secretaries, the janitor and the pet cat also left. There were great headlines in the Winnipeg papers about me taking the entire staff across the mountains and leaving the University of Manitoba high and dry.”<sup>33</sup> With Scarfe’s

<sup>33</sup>Scarfe was quoted in “The Dean Who May Have Missed His Calling,” *UBC Reports* 19, no. 9 (26 April 1973): 1-2, on 2. Accessed 24 October 2011 at: [http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC\\_Reports\\_1973\\_04\\_26.pdf](http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC_Reports_1973_04_26.pdf).

arrival at UBC, he underscored his interest in preschool education and research with his invitation to William Blatz, founder of the U of T's Institute for Child Study, to provide a summer teaching session and to advise on child study. A specialist in geography education, Scarfe also considered himself somewhat of an expert in preschool and elementary education. His "Play Is Education" presentation at the 1962 meeting of the Association for Early Childhood International circulated widely around the world throughout the decade. He summarized his philosophy with a statement on child development: "It can never be stressed too much, that a child must find his way to maturity, at his own rate, with his individualized capacity and limitation . . . . A teacher must not stunt or distort personality development or overdevelop it prematurely."<sup>34</sup>

From the beginning, President MacKenzie recognized the importance of Neville Scarfe and the College of Education in negotiations related to the creation of a child study center. Once the new College of Education was established in the fall of 1957, he invited Scarfe to chair a committee to consider the BCPEA's recommendations. The committee consulted widely across campus, including education, home economics, medicine, nursing, physical education, psychiatry, psychology, social work, and sociology in its deliberations. Early debates regarding the most advantageous administrative structure for the Centre signaled the beginning of the challenge to establish priorities. The committee initially recommended that a "Child Development Centre be made an entirely autonomous separate body on the University campus organized or directed by a Council with representatives from every interested Faculty."<sup>35</sup> While this "autonomous" arrangement may have been in keeping with the vision of a child study center as a robust, multidisciplinary home for research, it was, the committee later decided, entirely out of step with the traditions of university structure and administration.<sup>36</sup> Scarfe argued that "its usefulness is less if it is not actually placed under the care of a particular Faculty or dean in the normal university administrative structure."<sup>37</sup> His offer to fund the university's share from Education's reserve fund no doubt provided a powerful incentive for the committee to approve his recommendation. The College of Education

<sup>34</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, "A Philosophy of Elementary Education," *Journal of Education of the Faculty and College of Education* (December 1960): 46–52, on 52; Neville V. Scarfe, "Play is Education," *Childhood Education* 39 (November 1962): 117–19. See also Margaret Rasmussen, ed., *Readings from Childhood Education* (Washington, DC: Association for Early Childhood International, 1966): 356–61. For Scarfe's biography, see John Calam, "Neville Scarfe and Teacher Education," *Historical Studies in Education* 18 (Spring 2006): 75–83.

<sup>35</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, "The Child Development Centre," [1960], p. 3, Box 6, Folder 14, ABF, UA.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

became the Centre's administrative home while a "research council in child study" was established to review its scientific aims. Charged with broad terms of reference, the Child Study Council (CSC) replaced the President's Committee, holding its inaugural meeting on 28 January 1959.<sup>38</sup>

Council membership included twenty-four members from disciplines initially consulted, plus deans of Medicine, Arts, and Education, and the University President as *ex officio* members. J. McCreary, dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Head of the Department of Paediatrics, was elected chairman at the first meeting, with Scarfe serving as vice chairman. The broad and varied membership of the Council signaled an understanding that, while grounded in education and learning, child study at UBC encompassed all scientific interests and claims on children. Although the Council made it clear that the work undertaken and supported under its auspices was "scientific," it was unclear that all the groups who had placed pressure on the president for a Child Development Centre would be satisfied with the preschool focus. Indeed, other departments and faculties, and the Psychology Department in particular, expressed concern that they would not be able to carry out experiments as freely as they would if the Dean of Education was not in charge.<sup>39</sup> And while pediatricians pushed for a "Child Health Program" as the Council's first project, Scarfe wanted to establish a nursery and kindergarten laboratory school to "demonstrate good standards, to train teachers for preschool education and to provide opportunities for observation and research related to normal development for students in all interested faculties."<sup>40</sup> Pointing out that the greatest hindrance was financial, Scarfe recommended that the budget should derive from general university operating funds with the balance secured by private donations. In the end, the Council endorsed two proposals in 1959: one for a Centre for Handicapped Children (CHC), or child study center for abnormal children, and one for a "Child Study Centre for normal children."<sup>41</sup>

After several meetings, Alice Borden was chosen to direct the campus's new CSC. The choice of Borden, who did not possess a doctorate and whose experience was in early childhood practice, postsecondary

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<sup>38</sup>Minutes, Child Study Council, 28 January 1959, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>41</sup>Minutes of Child Study Council, 19 June 1959, p. 2, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA. The CHC opened on 2 October 1963. In 1966–1967, the Association for Retarded Children of BC and UBC generated \$1.4 million to establish the BC Mental Retardation Institute or Research Unit for Exceptional Children. On abnormal and normal centers, see James Banham (press release for the Centre for Handicapped Children), 2 October 1963, Box 10, Folder 2, Community Relations Fonds, UA.

teaching, and advocacy, rather than research, was telling in terms of the place of research as a priority for the Centre. Borden's first task was to prepare a report that was presented the following year, on 25 November 1960. She provided a blueprint for the Centre, recommending that it have four groups of children in age cohorts of three-, four-, and five-year olds to a total of seventy. She proposed that three huts could be converted in Acadia Camp, a student residence that was formerly a Second World War army camp that occupied an acre of university land adjacent to campus. She requested an assistant professor to be a part-time instructor for the five-year olds, a part-time instructor for the three- and four-year olds, and three part-time teaching assistants, in addition to clerical and building maintenance assistance. In total, the annual budget was \$23,600 plus initial expenditures for basic furniture and conversion of the huts.<sup>42</sup> The president approved the plan and, drawing from a reserve fund in Education's budget, the CSC opened in September 1961.<sup>43</sup>

A Management Committee, which was to meet monthly, was formed prior to the opening. At its first meeting, in June 1961, it was decided that membership would include Dean Scarfe as Chairman, Grace Bredin from the College of Education as vice chairman, Dean Andrew of the Faculty of Arts (*ex officio*), Alice Borden, as well as representation from the Child Study Council, the Junior League, and parents of children enrolled in the Centre.<sup>44</sup> The committee was to

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<sup>42</sup>"Mrs. Borden's Proposed Plan for a Nursery-School Kindergarten Unit to be Established on Campus for Demonstration, Observation and Research," n.d., Early Childhood folder, Faculty of Education Archives, Scarfe Building, UBC (hereafter cited as FoE Archives).

<sup>43</sup>Letter to Dr. N. A. M. MacKenzie, President, The University of British Columbia, 14 December 1960; Minutes of Child Study Council, 13 December 1960, p. 1, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA; Minutes of Management Committee of the Child Study Centre, 19 July 1961, p. 1, Box 6, Folders 17, ABF, UA. Dean Scarfe also set up an Advisory Committee to advise the Extension Department regarding its noncredit preschool supervisory training program. In addition to university representatives, and one from Victoria College (later University of Victoria), this committee included community representatives such as adult education directors from metropolitan school boards and kindergarten and preschool teachers associations, as well as the primary supervisor of the Vancouver School Board. The Department of Extension was responsible for channeling all applications for observation in the Centre. On 25 November 1960, Borden, by then an assistant professor of Education, proposed to shift optics from child study to child development by renaming the Centre—to "take into consideration the research and practices of leading Child Development Centres within universities on this continent and abroad." "Some Suggestions for Consideration Regarding the Organization of The Child Development Centre, University of British Columbia," n.d., p. 1, Box 6, Folder 14, ABF, UA.

<sup>44</sup>The Junior Service League of Vancouver was founded in 1927 and ceased in 2003. It was an organization of women who engaged in volunteer activities largely related to health and welfare. In its early years, it contributed to organizations such as the Children's Aid Society, the Vancouver General Hospital, the Crippled Children's



be directly responsible to the dean of the College of Education for all matters pertaining to budget, staff and program. Overall policies of the Centre were to be the prerogative of the Child Study Council.<sup>45</sup>

The first students to attend the CSC came from the families of university students, faculty members, and parents within the neighbouring community, with about one-third from each source for a balance of age and sex. Borden considered all of her students to be enrolled permanently until their entrance in public school, reflecting the administration of her Longview Kindergarten. Borden reported that while many factors entered into the decision-making process for admissions, important considerations stood out, including a caveat that parents had to cooperate with the scientific research undertaken at the Centre.<sup>46</sup>

Scarfe compared Borden's role to that of a "principal, head teacher, supervisor, or director," as well as teacher of a Kindergarten group.<sup>47</sup> A full-time preschool teacher and three part-time assistant teachers were hired and members of the Junior League assisted on a volunteer basis. There were seventy-three children in four groups: fifteen three-year olds attended Tuesday and Thursday mornings; eighteen four-year olds attended the other three mornings; and two groups of twenty five-year olds attended for half of each day. Given Borden's loan of her own personal collection of equipment from Longview, a few new items, and others loaned from the Extension Department, the Centre was fairly well equipped. By the end of the school year in April, the Centre had accommodated seven hundred observers from courses offered in Education, Social Work, Psychology, Medicine, Home Economics, and Extension. Extension Department noncredit courses were offered for parent education and preschool supervisory training in "Methods in Pre-school Education," "Arts and Crafts," and "Child Growth and Development."<sup>48</sup>

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Hospital, the Canadian National Institute for the Blind, and the Well Baby Clinic. Over the years, the League became increasingly focused on the welfare of children. In the 1960s, it contributed to the salary of the education supervisor at the Vancouver Aquarium, volunteered in schools and provided \$30,000 for a permanent area for children's participation in Vancouver's Centennial Museum.

<sup>45</sup>Minutes of Management Committee, Child Study Centre, 22 June 1961, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>46</sup>Admission criteria changed somewhat just prior to the establishment of the Centre. Minutes of meeting, "Following recommendations made re Admission of Children to the Proposed Nursery School and Kindergarten, 5 May 1961, Box 6, Folder 14, ABF, UA.

<sup>47</sup>Minutes of Management Committee, Child Study Centre, 22 June 1961, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.; Grace Bredin, "Report on Child Study Centre, 1961-1962," in *Annual Report to the President and Board of Governors* (Faculty and College of Education, University of British Columbia, 1962), 70-72.



Figure 2. J. McCreary, Dean of Medicine; John B. MacDonald, president of UBC; and Neville Scarfe, dean of the College of Education, at the Centre, ca. 1962. Source: University of British Columbia Archives (ubc41.1/2350).

During its second year of operation, parents and dignitaries were invited to the inaugural opening of the Centre on 7 December 1962 with President Macdonald presiding (Figure 2). *UBC Reports* quoted E. S. W. Belyea, a member of the management committee: "A child study centre is essential if a university expects to offer work in the field of child development. Without it, it's like trying to teach chemistry without laboratory facilities." Scarfe added that "all the students are learning the patterns of behaviour of the developing child."<sup>49</sup> Indeed, the operative feeling that year was "positive optimism" and Scarfe felt the CSC had "succeeded beyond our fondest hopes."<sup>50</sup>

<sup>49</sup>"Child Centre Unique," *UBC Reports* 8, no. 6 (November/December 1962): 6. Accessed 30 October 2011 at: [http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC\\_Reports\\_1962\\_11\\_00.pdf](http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC_Reports_1962_11_00.pdf).

<sup>50</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, "Introduction," in *Annual Report to the President and Board of Governors* (Vancouver, BC: Faculty and College of Education, 1962), 1–7, on 2.

## Growing Pains at the Child Study Centre

Only one and one-half huts were converted instead of the three recommended by Borden, and inadequate space immediately became a problem for the Centre. CSC Management Committee meetings regularly recorded pleas for more space from Centre staff as well as promises from Dean Scarfe to provide it. The combination of inadequate space for children and programs, and increasing numbers of observers made daily operations awkward and stressful. This also spoke volumes about the uneasy fit between research and preschool education at the CSC. Between September and November 1961, for example, Borden reported that more than three hundred observers passed through the Centre and by February 1962, six hundred observers had visited.<sup>51</sup> Observations ranging from six hundred to eight hundred continued each subsequent year of the 1960s. Although Borden had many years experience as a preschool teacher in her Longview Kindergarten, increasing competition between her pedagogical work with the children and the needs of a research facility were challenging. By spring of 1962, Scarfe managed to secure the use of a small nearby residence to serve as offices and a seminar/library room, which alleviated the space problems somewhat.

By November 1961, only three months into the first year of operation other, more complicated challenges surfaced and spoke to tensions between the vision and the reality of daily operations at the Centre. At that time, the Child Study Council expressed concern about “lack of communication due to too few meetings.”<sup>52</sup> Some members felt they were not able to provide sufficient oversight because they were unapprised of the policies and procedures of the Centre. They requested that Scarfe “prepare a statement on the administrative arrangements of the Centre including the selection of children, extension of present facilities, and possibly additional space.”<sup>53</sup> This request reiterated that demands for science at the Centre were increasing but were not matched with adequate resources. Instead, the role of the Centre as a scientific observation laboratory for large groups of students and interested visitors limited the space available to staff and children and seemed to take precedence over other functions in the early years. Despite large numbers of visitors and observations, very little sustained research was conducted on the children by staff or by scholars who came to the Centre expressly for the purpose of research. Only one research project, separate from course-related observations, is noted in

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<sup>51</sup>Minutes of Advisory Committee Meeting on Pre-School Education, 24 November 1961, p. 1, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA; Minutes of Management Committee, 15 February 1962, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>52</sup>Minutes of Child Study Council, 6 November 1961, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid.

the Management Committee Minutes in year one. This was conducted by medical students, under the supervision of Dr. Read of the Faculty of Medicine (and a member of the Child Study Council), which was apparently “well received by parents and children.”<sup>54</sup> Given that the vision of the Centre was as a hub for vigorous and on-going scientific research by the university community, this paucity of research output was problematic.

Three days after the request from the Child Study Council for more administrative transparency, the CSC Management Committee decided, “there was a need to let all potential users (University Departments) know that observation facilities are available at the Centre.”<sup>55</sup> While the Committee supported more observations of the children, it distinguished between course-based observations and research. Members Belyea and Bradley moved that “research activities should not be attempted this year . . . and that all proposals re: research to be carried out in the Centre be reviewed by the Council.”<sup>56</sup> The motion was carried but Borden responded with a question: “What is research?” She suggested that “good observation is research” and pointed out that it was unreasonable to delay individual student research projects.<sup>57</sup> The Council revisited the issue and limited reviews to those involving modification of regular school procedures or those requiring information not ordinarily available to the Director. Overall, it was thought prudent that the Council “be kept informed of all use of the facilities, for the protection of the Centre.”<sup>58</sup> With the exception of the medical student project, during the first year in operation, “research” was nevertheless limited to student observations that were part of undergraduate course requirements in many departments and faculties across the campus.

Eleanor Evans, Director of a preschool program at the University of Washington, was appointed full-time teacher of the Nursery School in the second year of operation.<sup>59</sup> It seems to have been at this time that Alice Borden’s title changed from Director of the CSC to Director of Kindergarten. (The latter is the title used in the program for the official opening of the Centre in December 1962. Eleanor Evans is referred

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<sup>54</sup>Minutes of Management Committee, 15 February 1962, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>55</sup>Minutes of Management Committee, 9 November 1961, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.

<sup>59</sup>Minutes of Management Committee, 3 May 1962, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

to as Director of Nursery School and Grace Bredin as Chairman, Pre-School Education.)<sup>60</sup>

Despite its successes and the rhetoric at the official opening in December 1962, documents from the time suggest that the Centre was in crisis through its second year of operation. In January, the Management Committee noted without specific detail that “there was a general feeling in the Committee that the welfare of the whole centre was the concern . . . [and] a clarification of the issues would be welcome.”<sup>61</sup> The problem ostensibly stemmed from “parents’ concerns about the nursery school.” Related to this, the Nursery School teacher, Eleanor Evans, “expressed her feelings of being ‘put on the spot’.”<sup>62</sup> Scarfe reported to the Committee that Dean McCreary had requested that Mrs. Bredin investigate the situation and write a fact-finding report on the matter.<sup>63</sup> At the 12 February 1963 Child Study Council meeting, he reviewed the situation: “The two teachers in charge of their respective programs had been considered a workable solution in lieu of the former director. Miss Evans who came newly to the Centre to be in charge of the Nursery School program, having had many years of administrative responsibility in the University of Washington at Seattle, seemed a competent person to manage her own program. Each of the teachers was supported by an Assistant who was on a part-time basis. These Assistants are adequate and seemingly giving good service.”<sup>64</sup>

Scarfe’s solution was for the Management Committee to provide more direct attention to the Centre. The Council, evidently alert to the danger that parents would hear things that would cause concern, made the decision to exclude parents from the Management Committee; telling them that, if they had questions, they could contact the Committee or Directors of the Kindergarten and Nursery School, Borden and Evans.<sup>65</sup>

The documents do not tell us why Eleanor Evans suddenly tendered her resignation to take effect 12 April 1963.<sup>66</sup> Her decision precipitated a showdown at the 30 April meeting of the Management Committee. Borden was invited in a formal letter from Scarfe to “express your own views and opinions about the future of the Centre and

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<sup>60</sup>Official Opening, Child Study Centre, The University of British Columbia, 7 December 1962, Box 6, Folder 22, ABF, UA. (There are copies of this booklet in various folders.)

<sup>61</sup>Minutes of Management Committee, 15 January 1963, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Minutes of Child Study Council, 12 February 1963, FoE Archives.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Minutes of Management Committee, 2 April 1963, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

in particular your own relation to it. . . . In addition your future relations with Mrs. Bredin will be of special interest.”<sup>67</sup> Mrs. Bredin was deliberately not invited to the meeting in order to allow Mrs. Borden to speak freely. At the meeting Borden gave her views on the future of the Centre, stressing that “it has been with inadequate facilities, inadequate staffing, inadequate budget and with a deadline to meet at the beginning of the year.”<sup>68</sup> In response, Scarfe inquired about the interpersonal differences between her and Bredin. Borden responded by noting that “throughout her association with Mrs. Bredin they had enjoyed a long and very co-operative relationship until this present year, and this she felt was possibly due to lack of communication and ‘battle fatigue’. She thought that additional staff would enable everyone to relax more and to enjoy the happy relationships which previously existed.”<sup>69</sup> She was also asked if Evans and Borden saw “eye to eye.” Borden replied that they “actually had very little contact but when they did, there appeared to be no differences between them.”<sup>70</sup> Here again she thought additional staff would resolve any lack of communication. Scarfe also asked Borden a pointed question pertaining to her future in the Centre, but she replied that decisions regarding her future were left to the dean and Management Committee. She nonetheless “would be happy to perform any duties in the Centre, with the exception of losing complete contact with the children.”<sup>71</sup>

Parents’ concerns continued. But from the beginning, Dean Scarfe had made clear that the Centre’s “program of experimentation is not designed primarily to meet the needs or wishes of the parents. Nor is it designed to prepare children to be a little more advanced academically when they enter public school than those who do not attend kindergarten or nursery school. It is designed primarily to meet the needs of those who desire and need to know a great deal about children”<sup>72</sup> His emphasis was on research. Alice Borden’s query, “What is research?” was prescient. For administrators and fledgling early education researchers, observations served undergraduate and professional school students, researchers, and parents alike. The Management Committee, which was more aware of the day-to-day requirements of the Centre, and parents’ expectations, placed a moratorium on such

<sup>67</sup> Scarfe to Borden, 27 April 1963, Box 6, Folder 15, ABF, UA.

<sup>68</sup> “Comments Made by Mrs. Borden on ‘The Future of the Centre’ at Child Study Centre Management Committee held on 30 April, 1963.” Attachment to Minutes of the Management Committee, 30 April 1963, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> N. V. Scarfe, “The Child Study Centre,” p. 5, Box 6, Folder 19, ABF, UA, n.d.



research for the first year. It was too demanding to balance the needs of children, parents, and teachers with the needs of researchers. It was not until the mid-1960s that research projects using the Centre as a site actually were carried out on a regular basis.

At the following meeting, Scarfe announced that he had appointed Grace Bredin, his vice chairman and member of the Council since its establishment, as Administrative Head of the CSC and Chair of Pre-school Education. Bredin was a long-time ally of Scarfe and accompanied him from the University of Manitoba in 1956 to take a position in his new Faculty at UBC. In 1942, she had been instrumental in organizing a child guidance clinic in the Winnipeg school system. Borden was reappointed Director of Kindergarten. This was a clear sign of Scarfe's desire to draw distinctions between the research director Bredin and the kindergarten director. Borden reacted by applying for and receiving a license to operate the Longview Co-Operative Play Group, which authorized her to offer daytime care of up to twenty preschool children, signaling that she was planning to either leave the CSC and UBC or reduce her time there.

In October 1963, its third year of operation and after just emerging from its first major crisis, UBC's new president, John B. Macdonald, called the entire existence of the Centre into question by requesting nothing short of a full-scale appraisal of its value to the larger university. This request may have been precipitated by Scarfe's submission of a separate CSC budget, which was a departure from his previous practice of incorporating it into his larger budget. He took the position that the College should not have to bear the full burden of expenses since the Centre was a laboratory for the university at large. He rationalized the substantial increase in the budget due to several additions to the staff. It was estimated that between six hundred and seven hundred students were expected to observe children at the center that year, which required additional staff to facilitate orientation and follow-up sessions. Full-time staff members also divided their time between the Centre and lecturing in College of Education courses that sometimes necessitated substitute teachers. Substitutes were also required when teachers went to observe other preschool centers. Although the central aims of the Centre were aligned with those of the university, the university took little responsibility for its funding. The Junior League contributed \$7,000 per year for the first three years and parents' fees also amounted to \$7,000 per year. In year two, the Cooperative Pre-School Association paid \$800 for fifty consultative services by Centre staff and a return observation visit to the Centre. The university merely matched the \$14,000 obtained from fees and the contribution of the

Junior League and provided the buildings and maintenance.<sup>73</sup> The College of Education covered the salaries of staff members who were also faculty members and paid for renovations. For Scarfe, the core issue was whether the Centre and its aims were peripheral or central to the university. Over the next three decades, conflicts over funding issues would continue to arise intermittently and for Scarfe, ultimately these issues were tied to the legitimacy of the Centre itself.

### A Shift in Emphasis

The later 1960s and 1970s were vibrant times for the Centre. It was thriving as a bustling site for courses and observation, attracting an array of international attention. University officials adamantly promoted its connections to teaching and research first, and its connection to child care, second. As Information Officer for Community Relations Jim Banham candidly put it, the CSC did “not function as a baby sitting service, but as an academic training center for a variety of UBC departments and schools.”<sup>74</sup> In the 1963–1964 school year, visitors from Australia, Ghana, New York, and the Philippines were among the eight hundred observers. Each observation was followed by a half-hour conference with teachers. This placed significant pressure on staff who were already juggling other priorities. They taught courses, supervised preschool education student field experiences, communicated with parents on a daily basis, welcomed researchers, debriefed observers, and engaged in outreach activities. During this time, Borden was in demand, traveling across BC to lead workshops for school boards and preschool teachers’ associations. Catering to practitioners of early childhood education, the Centre began to publish *Viewpoint* in September 1966 under Borden’s editorship. In the inaugural issue she commented on child development, creativity, lifelong learning in an affluent society, diversity, and personal dignity. Subsequent issues included articles and editorials on the Montessori method, parks and green spaces for children, creative play, benefits of organic foods, relationship of parents to the school, school community partnerships, and self-concept.<sup>75</sup>

A concerted effort to both support a shift in emphasis toward research and to protect the interests of parents and children took place in the mid-1960s with the appointment of Eleanor Ames as Director

<sup>73</sup>N. V. Scarfe, Dean, “The Child Study Centre,” Box 6, Folder 19, p. 7, ABF, UA; Minutes of Child Study Council, 18 October, 1963, Box 6, Folder 17, ABF, UA.

<sup>74</sup>J. A. Banham to Doug Stewart, 24 August 1964, Box 10, Folder 2, Community Relations Fonds, UA.

<sup>75</sup>*Viewpoint* continued to be published until 1979 under a system of volunteer editors. It is available in the Education Library, UBC.

of Research for the Centre. Ames, who held a joint appointment in the Department of Psychology and the College of Education, and whose research interest was in infant perception, supervised four new studies in the Centre. She also systematized the Centre's research policies and brought them in line with ethical considerations. She refined approval procedures for research proposals to include the teachers, asking them to evaluate the proposals with regard to anticipated effects on the children and their programs. A research coordinator was also appointed to be present during interviews with children, to remove identifying information from the Centre's files before allowing researchers access, and to assist students using those files. The number of adults permitted to observe a session was now limited to six and observers were given access to the classrooms only after a systematic orientation. A staff person from the Centre was required to debrief observers following their observation sessions. The appointment of Ames and her insistence on new, more rigorous policies around the conduct of research, speak to the earlier frustration felt by some parents and staff members such as Eleanor Evans.

This attention to systematic research procedures and ethical considerations continued with the appointment of David Bain, who followed Ames as Director of Research for the Centre. A 1965 "Statement of Policy and Planning" completed by Bain, required the Director to provide a written evaluation of each research project proposal for the Management Committee, which would then assess the proposals for feasibility with particular attention to the possibility of harm to the children.<sup>76</sup> Bain's report on research studies in 1965 included "Social and Emotional Development Through the Ages Three to Six," "The Effects of Visual Perception Training on Reading Readiness and Beginning Reading," "A Study of Anthropometric Measures and Strength Factors in Boys," and "Age Changes in Patterns of Visual Fixation."<sup>77</sup> Bredin expressed her approval of the new policies, stating that they "demonstrate the deep concern for providing the suitable organizational atmosphere and arrangements that allow for humane and scientific practices to 'co-exist.'"<sup>78</sup>

Despite this renewed interest in research protocols, whether the scientific research and observations reinforced or contradicted the practices of the Directors and teachers was not an issue. Scarfe anticipated this in an initial bid for the Centre: "What seems to be necessary is

<sup>76</sup>Director of Research, Child Study Centre, *A Statement of Policy and Planning*, 1965, FoE Archives.

<sup>77</sup>David A. Bain, "Agenda of Presentation to Child Study Council," 12 November 1965, FoE Archives.

<sup>78</sup>Grace Bredin, "The Child Study Centre," 45, 56.

some form of co-ordination so that the research part does not necessarily interrupt the normal education part of the model [preschool] too drastically. Parents would not want their children used as guinea pigs with too little attention given to the normal educational process.”<sup>79</sup> The two were thoroughly integrated in observation reports, which could be read as both ethnographies of learning and child study. For example, an observation report from 2 March 1966 notes: “Teacher confided she had been waiting for the children to work together . . . This was the day she looked forward to, for they had worked well together with an interesting group interaction . . . John had been directed to the block area when he entered and initiated the work, others joined him, he retreated to the outskirts of the group watching but not working, when he could remain out of the activity no longer he started again at the outskirt of the construction. Again he retreated when the group moved to his area, and watched . . .”<sup>80</sup> “Child study,” for its advocates, simply meant “an objective and systematic exploration of the truths of human development during the early years of life.”<sup>81</sup> This dual purpose or thin line between preschooling and research was astutely summed up in 1966 by one of Scarfe’s key administrators: “Because of the heightened public awareness of the urgent need for early childhood education, school boards are calling on the CSC for practical guidance in establishing kindergartens. The Centre also serves research needs, and such projects as the recent development and administration of a test for measuring cognitive development in five-year olds suggests the curriculum implications of the work being promoted.”<sup>82</sup>

The key was to see the significant in mundane “intensely practical” activity.”<sup>83</sup> Scarfe reminded the Centre staff in 1968 that “child study becomes ever more important as we find out more about the learning processes . . . Early childhood is the place where we break the vicious circle of delinquency, crime, corruption, and demoralization. It is the starting point for inventive technology, the creative arts and the great society.”<sup>84</sup> Having actually taught the kids, Borden was less sanguine: “Now like Atlas,” she reasoned, the preschool teacher “is asked

<sup>79</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, “The Child Development Centre,” 1960, Box 6, Folder 14, ABF, UA.

<sup>80</sup>Evelyn Shellshear, “Observation Report,” p. 2, 2 March 1966, Box 10, Folder 2, ABF, UA.

<sup>81</sup>C. E. Meyers, “New Trends in Child Study,” *Child Study* 28 (Fall 1966): 4–30, particularly 4.

<sup>82</sup>George Tomkins, “Promoting Excellence in the School Curriculum,” in *Teacher Education at the University of British Columbia, 1956–1966*, eds. J. McGechaen and Philip G. Penner (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia, 1966), 80–96, on 96.

<sup>83</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, “Views,” *Viewpoint* 3 (April 1968): 1.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid.

to hold in her delicate grasp the whole precarious structure of education, the beginnings, the foundation upon which the superstructure will rest secure, come tottering down, or decay unfinished and discarded as changing times demand more relevant structures.”<sup>85</sup> To be sure, neither Scarfe’s teacher education program nor Borden’s Centre were spaces where teachers and children could merely “do their thing.” As Scarfe stressed, “doing one’s own thing ‘completely’ can usually only succeed at the expense of others, directly or indirectly. Hippiedom may be the result of helping children be more completely themselves.”<sup>86</sup> “All this may sound out of step with the times,” he admitted.<sup>87</sup> On this, Borden was in full concurrence: “It is easy, to declare emphatically, that the child should be ‘free’ to pursue his interests, until we ask, ‘*What is the source of those interests?*’ Facilitating freedom for the experientially well-endowed kindergarten child may be crippling deprivation and neglect.”<sup>88</sup>

In February 1967, the Council was moved to “consider a plan to resolve some of the problems and to improve the quality of the program giving more emphasis to the work with parents.”<sup>89</sup> The context in which the Centre operated was changing, including a greater number of available kindergarten programs for five-year olds in the community. A scarcity of well-trained people and low salaries presented challenges for securing staff for the Centre as well. The programs were expanded again in 1969 to include a kindergarten class that the nearest elementary school, University Hill, could not accommodate. A male staff member was appointed in the 1969–1970 school year for the first time: “another successful innovation.”<sup>90</sup> By this time, Bredin estimated that the personnel necessary to maintain the Center included the Director, three assistant professors, four teachers, four teaching assistants, a social worker, and two secretaries. This was deemed adequate for thirty-five three-year olds, sixty-one four-year olds, and fifty-six five-year olds. With salaries, equipment, and \$8,000 of R&D expenses, the total budget needed was \$67,350. With tremendous growth through the 1960s, the Centre was poised to host the World Organization for Early

<sup>85</sup>Alice V. Borden, “The Kindergarten in Search of a Curriculum,” *Viewpoint* 4 (September 1969): 1–4, particularly 1.

<sup>86</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, “Education of Young Children in Varying Cultures Around the World,” *Viewpoint* 5 (June 1970): 1–4, on 3.

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>88</sup>Borden (1969).

<sup>89</sup>Minutes of Child Study Council, 6 February 1967, FoE Archives. The Child Study Council was reconstituted in 1966 to better integrate the work of the Centre with the Child Health Program and Research Unit for Exceptional Children, created that year from the CHC and a \$1.4 million grant, and to keep the President and other faculty members informed of developments.

<sup>90</sup>Grace Bredin, 1970 *Annual Report*, Child Study Centre.

Childhood Education in May 1971 with a conference theme of “Continuity and Balance.”<sup>91</sup>

Alice Borden, sadly, did not live to see the conference come to the Centre; nor did she see the fruition of her labor for widespread kindergarten provisions in the schools. She died in February 1971 after a lengthy illness, working until a few months prior to her death. Scarfe eulogized in his *Annual Report*: “The whole Faculty was saddened and made poorer by the tragic death of Mrs. Alice Borden. This gracious and wonderful lady added great distinction to our Faculty not only by her scholarly contributions which were acclaimed all over North America, but by her selfless and tireless devotion to teachers and young children.”<sup>92</sup> Another colleague acknowledged that the death “critically tested the personal and professional resources of the department”<sup>93</sup> and the Centre. Commemorating her vision and new legislation for kindergarten attendance, she was given a dedication in the Ministry’s *Resource Book for Kindergartens*.<sup>94</sup>

In the spring of 1973, the *Public Schools Act* was amended to make it mandatory for all public school districts in the province to offer kindergarten (attendance was not compulsory). At the time, sixteen districts were without kindergartens and provisions were inadequate in those that had half-day programs. Echoing child research advocates upon the introduction of the legislation, Minister of Education Eileen Dailly asserted that “the earlier we can catch them, so much the better for giving them help.”<sup>95</sup> The new policy, she concluded in a *Viewpoint* editorial, sought to “recognize kindergartens, not as a frill or a luxury or a thing apart, but as an integral, vital element in the total educational process.”<sup>96</sup> Enrollments of the five-year olds in the public schools grew from about 3,500 in the late 1950s to 36,874 in 1975.<sup>97</sup> In November 1973, UBC’s Department of Education for Young Children responded, reasoning that “the time has come for this faculty to go to Victoria [seat of BC government] to inform the Minister of the flourishing activity

<sup>91</sup>Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, “Introduction,” in *Dean’s Annual Report* (Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, 1971), 3.

<sup>93</sup>Dr. Norma Law, “Education of Young Children,” in *Dean’s Annual Report* (Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, 1971), 67.

<sup>94</sup>Department of Education, *Resource Book for Kindergartens* (Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia, 1973).

<sup>95</sup>Eileen Dailly, quoted in *Official Report of Debates of the Legislative Assembly*, 1973 Legislative Session: 2nd Session, 30th Parliament, Hansard (Wednesday, 14 February 1973), 428.

<sup>96</sup>Eileen Dailly, “New Kindergarten Programme for British Columbia Schools,” *Viewpoint* 7 (May–July 1973): 4.

<sup>97</sup>Cited in Gillian M. Weiss, *The Development of Public School Kindergarten in British Columbia* (Vancouver, BC: unpublished Master’s thesis, University of British Columbia, 1979), pp. 62 and 67.



in early childhood education” [and] “to point out the need for special funding if this department is to continue to ‘stem the tide.’”<sup>98</sup> Although the number of the Faculty’s Young Children majors was stagnant at about ten per year, the number post-legislation immediately tripled to thirty-one with an additional thirty-four dual Elementary and Young Children majors and ten diploma students. Given that graduate courses such as “Research in Pre-School Education” were introduced in tandem with the Centre, in 1973 the Department also claimed it was time to expand its Master of Education degree in the Education of Young Children.<sup>99</sup>

The Centre expanded as the Faculty of Education grew throughout the 1960s and 1970s. Elementary and Secondary Education majors grew from nine hundred and five in 1956–1957, Scarfe’s and the Faculty’s first year on campus, to a peak of 3,275 in 1968–1969.<sup>100</sup> Education majors paralleled the baby boom and expansion of the BC public schools, where the number of students where the number of students grew over 200 percent—from 164,000 to 513,000—between 1950 and 1970.<sup>101</sup> Throughout his tenure as dean, which ended with retirement in 1973, Scarfe repositioned a core of the Faculty’s personnel and resources toward research to respond to demographic changes in the province and new emphases across the university. He presided over a Faculty that prepared about one-half of the province’s 22,000 practicing teachers. His Faculty had grown from forty-two members in 1956 to two hundred and twenty-two, including sixty-one women, in 1972–1973.<sup>102</sup> In 1964, Scarfe asserted as a matter of fact that his Faculty was “unified in its philosophy or theory of Education. It is research based.”<sup>103</sup> “A Faculty of Education,” he reiterated in 1966, “must place most of its professional education on a research-oriented basis, for, again, innovation cannot be left to chance.”<sup>104</sup> Indeed, to Scarfe,

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<sup>98</sup>“Memorandum from Education for Young Children,” 5 November 1973, Early Childhood Folder, FoE Archives.

<sup>99</sup>Ibid.

<sup>100</sup>John Calam, *Affecting Eternity: Origins of the University of British Columbia’s Faculty of Education* (Vancouver, BC: Pacific Educational Press, 2007), 215–16, 275. On the early history of the Faculty of Education, also see Nancy Sheehan and J. Donald Wilson, “From Normal School to the University to the College of Teachers: Teacher Education in British Columbia in the 20th Century,” *Journal of Education for Teaching* 20 (1994): 23–37.

<sup>101</sup>Department of Education, *Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, Seventy-ninth Annual Report, 1949–1950* (Victoria, BC: King’s Printer, 1951), 9; Department of Education, *Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, Ninety-ninth Annual Report, 1969–1970* (Victoria, BC: Queen’s Printer, 1971), 13.

<sup>102</sup>Calam, *Affecting Eternity*, 275.

<sup>103</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, “Introduction,” in *Annual Report to the President and Board of Governors* (Faculty and College of Education, University of British Columbia, 1964), 1.

<sup>104</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, “Introduction,” in *Annual Report to the President and Board of Governors* (Faculty and College of Education, University of British Columbia, 1966), 1.

education was scientific. The next year the Centre's annual report presented to the dean included a section on research for the first time. In 1967 his Faculty established the BC Educational Research Council, which by the late 1960s was awarding grants up to \$30,000.<sup>105</sup> This trend toward research through the 1960s and 1970s reflected dramatic transformations of graduate education in Canada during the 1970s, including the creation of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) in 1977.<sup>106</sup>

Through the 1970s, scientific research in the Centre continued apace with the growth of preschool programs in the Faculty. In 1972, for instance, funds were provided to study the relationships between children's self-concepts and perceptions held by significant adults. Other studies included filming specific motor activities of the three age groups by physical education students and a pilot study on concept formation. The *Annual Report* duly notes that staff members were publishing in journals such as *Association for Childhood Education International*, *Journal of Correctional Education*, *Childhood Education*, and the Faculty's own *Viewpoint*.<sup>107</sup>

### The Demise of the Child Study Centre

Despite the CSC's long-standing existence and successes on campus, and the fact that the staff were participating in research, the UBC Senate approved a new Centre for the Study of Childhood, to be established within the Faculty of Graduate Studies, in January 1978. "We want to stimulate and facilitate studies of all aspects of childhood," a UBC pediatrician announced, "by providing a research centre for those involved in conducting such research."<sup>108</sup> In an implicit dismissal of the CSC as a center for research, the dean of Graduate Studies remarked that those "responsible for the care of children, not to mention parents and families, are constantly faced with issues or situations where factual

<sup>105</sup>Neville V. Scarfe, "Introduction," in *Annual Report to the President and Board of Governors* (Faculty and College of Education, University of British Columbia, 1967), 2; Neville V. Scarfe, "Introduction," in *Annual Report to the President and Board of Governors* (Faculty and College of Education, University of British Columbia, 1973), 1–9. Neville V. Scarfe, "The Future," in *Teacher Education at the University of British Columbia*, 97–98.

<sup>106</sup>On the expansion of graduate research in Canada, see Garth Williams, *Doctoral Education in Canada, 1900–2005* (Ottawa, ON: Canadian Association for Graduate Studies, September, 2005).

<sup>107</sup>Norma Law, "Education of Young Children," *Dean's Annual Report* (Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia, June 1972).

<sup>108</sup>"New UBC Centre for the Study of Childhood Established for Researchers," *UBC Reports* 24, no. 1 (January 1978): 1–2, on 1. Accessed 30 October 2011 at: [http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC\\_Reports\\_1978\\_01\\_11.pdf](http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC_Reports_1978_01_11.pdf).

information on which to base policy decisions or actions is either non-existent or unavailable . . . Hopefully, this [new centre] will give rise to a more rational approach to child-raising policies and provide an alternative to the present off-the-head type of opinion that has produced much of our cyclic swings in child-raising techniques.”<sup>109</sup> Despite an increased emphasis on research in the last decade, the CSC it seems, was never scientific enough for its detractors.

The following year the CSC was criticized for its increasing isolation from the university. The Report of the President’s Review Committee on the Faculty of Education recommended “special attention be given to the strengthening of the Early Childhood Education Department, through new appointments, reconstruction of the curriculum, and upgrading of the Child Study Centre.”<sup>110</sup> A proposal emerged to reorient the CSC as more research oriented, funded as an interdepartmental Centre serving the Graduate Division, and involving faculty and graduate students from various areas.<sup>111</sup>

In 1982 the goals and purposes of the Centre were formally redressed, resulting in a proposal to move it from an “observation and demonstration” site to one intended for “more sophisticated and systematic research.”<sup>112</sup> Accordingly, a Research Advisory Committee was established and Glen Dixon was appointed Director. Dixon, a Canadian from Winnipeg, like the earlier group who accompanied Neville Scarfe, was recruited in 1977 from the University of Texas. To reorganize, he proposed two different classrooms for the Centre: Classroom A to support a motivation and socialization program emphasizing affective goals based on “progressive” education of the “whole child”<sup>113</sup> and Classroom B, based on behavioral modification.<sup>114</sup>

Within two years, Dixon was confronted with a major crisis. In 1984, the Fire Commissioner condemned the Acadia Road huts and as a result, the Centre facility was relocated to Lord Kitchener School in Vancouver, a fifteen- to twenty-minute drive from the university.

<sup>109</sup>Ibid., 2.

<sup>110</sup>“President Studying Report on Faculty of Education,” *UBC Reports* 25, no. 5 (28 February 1979): 1, 3, on 3. Accessed 30 October 2011 at: [http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC\\_Reports\\_1979\\_02\\_28.pdf](http://www.library.ubc.ca/archives/pdfs/ubcreports/UBC_Reports_1979_02_28.pdf).

<sup>111</sup>Deans and Directors (Liaison binder), 6 April 1979, FoE Archives.

<sup>112</sup>Roland Gray to Pat Arlin, Michael Foster, Hannah Polowy (members of CSC Management Committee), 17 February 1982, Early Childhood Folder, FoE Archives.

<sup>113</sup>See Arnold Gesell, Frances L. Ilg, and Louise Bate Ames, *Infant and Child in the Culture of Today: The Guidance of Development in Home and Nursery School* (New York: Harper & Row, 1943).

<sup>114</sup>See Glen Ninnicht, Oralie McAfee, and John Meier, *The New Nursery School* (New York: General Learning, 1969) and David P. Weihart et al., *The Cognitively Oriented Curriculum: A Framework for Preschool Teachers* (Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1971).

It was not until 1990 that the Centre returned to a new facility on campus. The new building incorporated a day care center and complex facilities for scientific observation and research. In 1993–1994, Dixon reported that the Centre was “internationally recognized as one of Canada’s leading campus-based child development laboratory research and demonstration facilities, and is the largest center of its type in the country.”<sup>115</sup>

Until the mid-1990s, the Centre thrived in its role as a preschool and day care center, offering various programs for kindergarteners, three- and four-year olds, two-year olds and their parents (the ANCHOR program), and after-school arts summer programs (for which Centre staff were not responsible). The ANCHOR program, offered one morning per week, involved the parents in a seminar emphasizing growth and development of young children and parenting practices.<sup>116</sup>

In 1994, the Centre was forced into a “cost recovery model” by a new administration eager to expand UBC in the face of government funding reductions, and as a result struggled with new financial demands. Prior to this, a significant deficit was incurred each year, which had been covered by the Faculty of Education. While “cost recovery” was generally interpreted to mean that parents’ fees covered all costs, this was not actually the case since administrators’ salaries and building maintenance were covered by the university and the Faculty of Education. Although the preschool generated revenue through tuition fees, the research functions were ill designed to generate revenue. In the face of mounting concern about the possibility of closure, Dean Nancy Sheehan attempted to allay fears, sending a memo to Dixon on 8 March 1995, assuring him that “the university and the Faculty have no intentions of closing the Child Study Centre” and asking that he “distribute this memo widely in the hope of quelling the rumours about closure.”<sup>117</sup>

In 1996, amid increased criticism and a financial crisis, Dean Sheehan invited two well-respected academics, Patricia Canning, associate dean of Graduate Programmes and Research, Faculty of Education, Memorial University and Douglas Powell, Head, Department of Child

<sup>115</sup>Glen Dixon, *Annual Report, 1993–1994* (Child Study Centre, Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia).

<sup>116</sup>Arlene Kasting, “Respect, Responsibility, and Reciprocity; the 3 Rs of Parent Involvement,” *Childhood Education*, 70 (1994): 146–50. Kasting was a Program Coordinator with the Centre at this time. The ANCHOR program is still offered at the Vancouver Child Study Centre. Accessed 5 November 2011 at: <http://www.vancouverchildstudycentre.ca/programs.htm>.

<sup>117</sup>Nancy M. Sheehan, Dean to Dr. Glen Dixon, Director, Child Study Centre, 8 March 1995, FoE Archives.

Development and Family Studies, Purdue University to proceed with an external review. The reviewers spent two and one-half days on campus in October 1996, examining documents and talking with faculty, staff, parents, students, and members of the Faculty of Education as well as other university faculty associated with the Centre. There was little time for an exhaustive review of the Centre and so no observations were made of the Centre's programs.<sup>118</sup>

An important implication of the "cost recovery" concept was that an inappropriate amount of weight was given to parents' preferences and expectations with regard to policy and program practice decisions. The reviewers noted that parents were of the opinion that the primary purpose of the Centre was to provide programs for their children and that "if parents believe their fees cover all costs, they may feel little or no obligation to contribute to Centre research or program demonstration activities."<sup>119</sup> They mentioned reports of parental refusal to provide permission for their children to participate in research projects, adding that they found this surprising, given the very limited number of research projects conducted. Ultimately, given that the university endorsed the Centre primarily as a facility for early childhood research and that parents' fees neither covered all expenses nor were underwriting research, the reviewers saw little connection between fee-paying clients and the mandate of the center.

The reviewers concluded that "It is difficult to justify continued university support of the Child Study Centre in its current condition." They reported that "[our] concerns result from the fact that the Centre is not able to fulfill its clearly articulated mandate. Its role as a university-based centre must be questioned." Describing the level of research activity as "exceptionally low," they noted that they had not been provided with an inventory of research projects being conducted, although an internal report listed eleven "current and recently completed research projects." Specific concerns related to: limited efforts to attract researchers, unclear criteria and procedures for reviewing research proposals, infrequent meetings of the Research Advisory Committee, little time devoted to discussion of research, and a failure to take advantage of federal government initiatives that were supporting

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<sup>118</sup>Documents examined included an internal review report, the Parent Information Handbook, a description of the Centre's ANCHOR Program, a brochure and information for visitors, the university calendar, the Teacher Education Program Handbook, Centre staff job descriptions, minutes of recent meetings of the Centre's Advisory Committee and the Research Advisory Committee, descriptions of the Early Childhood Education degree programs at the university and selected correspondence from staff, members of the Faculty of Education, and parents.

<sup>119</sup>Patricia Canning and Douglas Powell, *Report of the External Review of the Child Study Centre, University of British Columbia*, 5 December 1996.

early childhood research in other universities and community colleges. The different mandates of the Centre surfaced in explicit conflict once again. Parents were very pleased at this time with the programs offered to their children and were not concerned about a lack of research. The reviewers acknowledged that

parents generally hold the Centre in high regard, the teachers are well trained and dedicated, and the programmes for children appear to be stimulating, creative and appropriate. The reviewers' concerns result from the fact that the Centre is not able to fulfill its clearly articulated mandate. Its role as a *university-based centre* must be questioned. Many criticisms would not apply if the UBC CSC were a community-based programme.<sup>120</sup>

With the review team and its report signaling serious troubles, a predictably politicized campaign, including legal representation for the Parents' Association, was organized in support of the Centre. Protests scaled up to top levels of University governance but were to no avail. The Board of Governors sided with the dean's decision in February 1997 and planned for future uses of the Centre's facilities. In January and March 1997, the Chair ruled against allowing a motion to intervene stand, indicating that the closure of the CSC did not fall within the Senate's purview.<sup>121</sup> The CSC closed its doors on 30 June 1997.

The history of the UBC CSC is a tale of competing interests among stakeholders. Parents wanted their children to experience a modern, progressive preschool. Paying tuition fees for this privilege, they viewed their interests as paramount. Over time it became ever more apparent that scientific instruction was the predominant interest of parents, scientific models of preschooling the interest of educators, and scientific research the predominant interest of the institution. For a time, differences in interests were fairly invisible, submerged under the Centre's day-to-day activities; but then they would surface in meetings or with regard to limited resources, only to disappear once more into the fabric of everyday demands. Indeed, boundaries were blurred between science for preschools and preschools for science.

The UBC CSC and the clash of interests that sealed its fate reiterate enduring questions about childhood, children, education, and science. Contingent and fragile, structures such as the CSC were

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 7. Also see "UBC's Child Study Centre to Close in June 1997," Media Release, UBC Public Affairs, 19 December 1996. Accessed 6 November 2011 at: <http://www.publicaffairs.ubc.ca/media/releases/1996/mr-96-92.html>.

<sup>121</sup>UBC Senate, Minutes, 19 March 1997. Accessed 5 November 2011 at: <http://www.senate.ubc.ca/vancouver/minutes.cfm?article=minute96-97/mar/March.pdf>.



assembled to resolve some of these questions, many of which are simultaneously biological, cultural, psychosocial, and historical. The CSC provides a productive case for connecting the micropolitics of education with trends throughout the twentieth century that made these centers both commonplace and impermanent. Historians may find that it is these relatively short-lived structures that give the long-term institutions stability.