

2-1983

Program Evaluation of the Calvin Ed-U-Care, Inc.

Floyd T. Waterman

University of Nebraska at Omaha

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cparpubarchives>



Part of the [Demography, Population, and Ecology Commons](#), and the [Public Affairs Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Waterman, Floyd T., "Program Evaluation of the Calvin Ed-U-Care, Inc." (1983). *Publications Archives, 1963-2000*. 185.
<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/cparpubarchives/185>

This Report is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Public Affairs Research at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Publications Archives, 1963-2000 by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.



**PROGRAM EVALUATION
OF
CALVIN ED-U-CARE, INC.**

A Child Development Day Care Center

February, 1983

by

**Floyd T. Waterman, Chairman
Evaluation Task Force**

Acknowledgements

The members of the Evaluation Task Force gave freely of their time and expertise in order to accomplish this evaluation. The work simply could not have been done without them. They made visits to the Center and filed reports with me. They carefully reviewed the draft and made suggestions for improvement. Internal reviews by my two colleagues, Wilda Stephenson and Rebecca Fahrlander were also helpful and greatly appreciated.

The administration and staff of Calvin Ed-U-Care were very helpful to us. Mrs. Carmen Parson and Mr. William Grayson provided information and arranged visits and interview times. We particularly appreciate the teachers and aides who allowed us to visit their classes and spent time sharing their insights. Every member of the staff was positive and accommodating at every stage of the evaluation.

I am appreciative of Dr. Vincent Webb, director of the UNO Center for Applied Urban Research, for permitting me to take the time to chair the evaluation effort. Word processing of the draft and final copy were the expert work of Willa Martin. As usual, the careful editing by Marian Meier was both necessary and much welcomed. To all of the above, I express my sincere thanks and appreciation.

FTW

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	i
List of Tables	iii
I. AN OVERVIEW	1
Brief History	1
Center Staff	4
Staff Inservice Study	5
II. THE EVALUATION TASK FORCE	9
Evaluation Task Force Members	9
Task Force Procedures	11
Site Visits by Members of Task Force	11
III. SITE OBSERVATIONS BY EVALUATION TASK FORCE	13
Program	13
Strengths	13
Concerns	14
Physical Facilities	16
Building	16
Materials and Equipment	16
Center Staff	17
IV. STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROGRAM	19
Strengths	19
Problems	20
Inservice Needs	20
V. CENTER ADMINISTRATION	21
General Responsibilities	21
Strengths Identified by Administration	23
Concerns of the Administration	23
VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	23
Recommendations	23
Summary	23
APPENDIX	29

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Inservice Hours of Staff Members	5
Table 2: Calvin Ed-U-Care Inservice	7
Table 3: Time Spent in Observation by Community Members	12
Table 4: Time Spend in Observation by Professionals	12

PROGRAM EVALUATION OF CALVIN ED-U-CARE, INC.:
A CHILD DEVELOPMENT DAY CARE CENTER

I. An Overview

Brief History

Calvin Ed-U-Care Center is a child development facility designed to provide quality day care to children who are toddlers (under age 3) up to age 12. Organized and incorporated in 1969, the Center is housed in the Calvin Memorial Presbyterian Church at 3105 North 24th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68110. Mrs. Flossie Miller was its first director; Mrs. Carmen Parson has been director since 1971. Mr. William Grayson, assistant director, has been in his position since 1970. The Center is designed to provide a safe environment for children of working mothers in the low-income community. Virtually all of its clients are from welfare families, and the majority of the children come from homes where the mother is the single parent.

The Center is governed by a board of directors. According to the latest articles of incorporation and bylaws, the board of directors consists of 12 members. At least four of them must be parents and at least one a member of the Session of Calvin Memorial Presbyterian Church. Board members serve a term of three years. The director of the Center is responsible to the board of directors and meets monthly with them.

Physical Facilities

Calvin Ed-U-Care is open five days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The Center is on two levels of the church with most of the activities located in the lower level. The office and the toddler area are on the main floor.

The toddlers' room (936 sq. ft.) includes a kitchen used only for water supply. No food is served on this level. The restroom facilities for these children are located on the lower level. The office (323 sq. ft.) is located off a fellowship multi-purpose room which is the access to the rest of the Center, but this room is really not part of the Center area. Access to the playground and a bathroom with a tub are on a stair landing. The toddler room also has access to the outside by a doorway and stairs to the parking lot.

On the lower level the three-year-olds meet in a room (1,995 sq. ft.) that the church designates as the dining room. It is adjacent to the Center's eating area and the kitchen. Books and toys are housed on a stage (315 sq. ft.) at one end of this room. Children in the older group must go through the room for three-year-olds to get to their own area, to the eating area, the water fountain, or the stage. A wide aisle down the center of the room provides access. A television set and two interest areas are on one side of the aisle while painting and other general activities are on the other.

The eating (255 sq. ft.) and kitchen (120 sq. ft.) areas are at the east end of the room for three-year-olds. The kitchen is equipped with modern commercial type refrigerators, dishwashers, and ranges. The kitchen also has commercial size mixers and pans. It has a serving window as well as door access to the dining area. Child-sized tables and chairs accommodate about 20 to 25 children at a time. Three groups are scheduled for breakfast, lunch, and snacks in order to avoid overcrowding. An electric drinking water fountain has a step stool approach. A sink in this area can be used for water for art experiences.

Four- and five-year-olds and older children who come after school are in the largest instructional area (2,616 sq. ft.), also on the lower level. This room is divided into an area for arts and crafts and two other general areas. It is adjacent to the restrooms which are equipped with child-sized toilets and washbasins. Two doors provide access so that supervision of the restrooms is easy.

All areas of the Center except the restrooms, kitchen, and food serving areas are fully carpeted. All areas are well lighted, have cheerful colors, and include some "Fat Albert" cartoon characters for decoration. Although the lower level areas have some barriers (support poles), the staff have found creative ways to utilize the space.

Apparently no way exists to control temperature except by opening the door (thus letting heat outdoors), and as a result a lot of energy is wasted. The building is frequently extremely hot in the winter time because of the lack of zone control.

Storage areas are inadequate, and toys must be locked up over the weekends. The Center has a fenced playground, but most of the equipment was vandalized, and as a result it is quite barren.

In 1973 the evaluation task force recommended the installation of a hand rail on the stairs from the parking lot on the north side of the building. This has been done.

The total area of 6,245 sq. ft. does not include the bathroom with the tub nor does it include the playground space outside or the 790 sq. ft. of the fellowship multi-purpose room used as access to the office area. Sometimes this area is used for staff meetings and for monthly board of directors meetings.

The church has committed a sizable proportion of its total space to the Ed-U-Care activities.

Center Staff

The staff members of Calvin Ed-U-Care, their positions, and their length of service at the Center are:

Carmen Parson, B.S. degree, director - 12 years
William Grayson, B.S. degree, assistant director - 13 years
Hester Allen, teacher aide - 2 years
Ida Bryant, assistant teacher and van driver - 3 years, 5 months
Norma J. Freeman, teacher - 8 years
Mattie Lewis, food specialist - 10 months
Paul McGraw, volunteer foster grandfather - 7 years
Doris Parker, teacher aide - 2 years
Grace Payne, volunteer foster grandmother - 2 years
Doris Walker, teacher aide - 2 years, 10 months
Florence Walker, teacher - 13 years

Of the current members, four were on the staff at the time of the last evaluation, Mrs. Parson, Mr. Grayson, Ms. Freeman, and Ms. Florence Walker. All of the teachers and aides have completed high school and have taken from eight to 45 credit hours of college work in early childhood education. All staff members are currently meeting requirements of the Nebraska State Welfare Department for inservice clock hours. Eight child care workers including the administrators, one food specialist, and two volunteers from the Foster Grandparent Program are on the staff. The two foster grandparents serve as teacher aides and help children with their wraps, obtain materials, tie shoes, and give general assistance with the work of the group. The foster grandparents also provide a great deal of affect and warmth for the children. Since most of the children come from homes without a father present, Mr. Grayson and Mr. McGraw provide an important male image, and the children obviously enjoy them.

Staff Inservice Study

State regulations require a total of 12 clock hours of inservice education per year for all administrators, teachers, and aides of day care centers. For persons involved in food preparation, a total of four clock hours of training in the area of nutrition and food service is required for the first year of employment. Calvin Ed-U-Care supplied the evaluation task force with a staff profile indicating the type of inservice activity, the number of clock hours, instructor, and content of the study. The state regulations have been met. Table 1 indicates the number of inservice hours of each staff member for the period between 1979 and 1982. Only four of the eight professional staff were at Calvin over the four-year period.

Table 1

INSERVICE HOURS OF STAFF MEMBERS

<u>Staff Member</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>	<u>1981</u>	<u>1982</u>	<u>Total</u>
Allen	NA	5.0	15.00	12.5	32.50
Bryant	4.0	12.5	14.75	12.5	43.75
Freeman	NA	16.0	11.75	12.5	40.25
Grayson	4.0	24.5	14.00	12.5	55.00
Lewis (cook)	NA	NA	NA	5.0	5.00
McGraw (volunteer)	0.0	0.0	0.00	12.0	12.00
Parker	NA	5.0	15.00	12.5	32.50
Parson	16.0	15.5	15.00	30.5	77.00
Payne (volunteer)	NA	NA	0.00	12.0	12.00
Walker, D.	NA	5.0	10.75	12.5	28.25
Walker, F.	7.5	19.0	12.75	12.5	51.75
	<u>31.50</u>	<u>102.50</u>	<u>100.00</u>	<u>147.0</u>	<u>390.0</u>

These data have variability because some persons were not on the staff for the entire year. Records on staff members indicate that they are willing to participate in inservice activities when these are available. For example, most of the staff participated in the Iowa Association for the Education of Young Children Conference held at Iowa Western Community College in 1982.

Opportunities for inservice activities are greatly restricted by budget limitations and the discontinuance of formerly funded programs. For example, in 1980 and 1981, the Department of Public Welfare funded inservice activities for day care providers at University of Nebraska at Omaha. In 1982 no opportunities of this type were available, and most of the inservice activities were held at the Calvin Center itself. More individual readings and use of filmstrips were evident in 1982 (see Table 2) accounting for 81 clock hours at the Center as compared to 66 outside.

At a time when outside resources are at their lowest level, the Center must provide an increasing amount of its own inservice activity. Table 2 demonstrates the trend toward more Center generated activities in place of those conducted at professional associations, in colleges, or elsewhere in the community.

Table 2
CALVIN ED-U-CARE INSERVICE

<u>Year of Activity</u>	<u>Staff Participating</u>	<u>Clock Hours</u>		<u>Total Hours</u>
		<u>At Center</u>	<u>Outside</u>	
1979	4	0	31.5	31.5
1980	8	28	58.5	86.5
1981	8	48	47.0	95.0
1982	11	81	66.0	147.0
		157	203.0	360.0

The types of inservice in which the staff participated include:

- Professional association meeting sessions (AEYC, Iowa & Nebraska)
- Workshops with speakers at Calvin Ed-U-Care
- Workshops at other agencies (e.g., Lincoln, State Department of Education, Meyer Rehabilitation Center)
- Funded workshops at UNO
- Assigned and voluntary readings in journals or books
- Films or filmstrips with discussions at the Calvin Center
- Formal coursework taken at Iowa Western, Metro Tech, or UNO

The content of the inservice is displayed in the general categories outlined below. Some overlapping is obvious, but this shows the general trends followed over the last four years.

<u>Human Growth and Development</u>	<u>Special Education</u>	<u>Language Arts</u>
Motor development	Down's syndrome	Children's books
Worries	Mainstreaming	Language arts
Feelings	Special education	Creative expression
Sharing	Retardation	Drama
Creative movement	Disabilities	Mime
Child abuse		Reading
Day care for infants		

Health and Nutrition

Nutrition
Foods and children
Snacks and lunches
Playgrounds
Alcoholism

Art/Music

Singing
Art

Others

Parent involvement
Insurance (foster grand-
parents)
Stress (foster grandparents)
Memory (foster grandparents)
Retardation of aging
(foster grandparents)

This categorization shows a lack of inservice and training in basic child development, early childhood practices, nature of language, speech, muscle development, dance, music activities, art activities for young children, special problems of toddlers, movement and growth of children, how to converse with children, and crafts work. These are areas that are needed by all early childhood workers and require continual review and attention because of staff turnover and new developments.

Another useful inservice activity would be a review of the stages of children's development and psychological factors that help staff understand children's behavior. Some of the observations of the evaluation team underscore this need. These observations will be discussed later.

During the interviews of staff members, Dr. Waterman visited with each person about inservice activities in which they had engaged. Then each person was asked what she (or he) felt to be the most pressing inservice need. The following items were mentioned:

- Behavior of children
- Fingerplays
- Developmental stages
- Math/science concepts for young children
- Self-expression
- Outdoor activities
- A one-semester course at the Center
- Survival--to help the children learn how to take care of themselves
- More knowledge of child development
- Arts, crafts, poems, rhymes
- Creativity
- Cooking ideas

Children's literature
Drama
Training in handling the handicapped, especially multiply handicapped
Health care
Supervising toddlers
Courses at colleges for credit
Language skills for children

These inservice education needs expressed by members of the staff are consistent with the observation of the evaluation team. These observations will be discussed at a later point in the evaluation report, but the listing of staff inservice activities, plus the expressed needs of the staff and the evaluators, seem to point to the need to give the matter of inservice education serious attention. Perhaps one of the ways that the Center could build upon skills of staff, provide a "fringe" benefit, and also improve the quality of care is in paying for a college course for all staff members.

II. The Evaluation Task Force

Evaluation Task Force Members

This evaluation was a community service volunteer task force assembled at the request of the Calvin Ed-U-Care board of directors. None of the members of the task force was paid for professional services nor reimbursed for any expenses involved. The task force included two members of the board of directors who are community residents and one who is a professional in social services. Dr. Vincent Webb, director of the Center for Applied Urban Research, University of Nebraska at Omaha, was contacted and asked if Dr. Floyd Waterman could assemble the group to conduct the evaluation. The request for Waterman was due to his service as the chairman of an evaluation in 1973.

Every effort was made to have a task force who were competent in the educational areas as well as representative of the parents, board of directors, and professional persons knowledgeable about child development and day care operations. The task force represented persons who were familiar with educational programs and goals for low-income communities and had various backgrounds in training and in program administration. Men, women, and bi-racial representatives were included. A list of the task force membership follows:

Mr. Gary Willis, chairman, Calvin Ed-U-Care board of directors
Mr. Warren McGee, member, Calvin Ed-U-Care board of directors
Ms. Sheila Bradley, parent of a child at Calvin Ed-U-Care Center
Ms. Mary Ann Bianchi, director, Early Childhood Education,
District 66, Westside Public Schools, Omaha, Nebraska
Ms. Eloise Dillon, member, Calvin Ed-U-Care board of directors, and
child care supervisor, Child Saving Institute, Omaha
Ms. Annie Ruth Green, special education supervisor, Omaha Public Schools
Mr. Leotis Swopes, assistant principal, Dominican High School, Omaha
Dr. Kenneth Smith, assistant professor of early childhood education,
University of Nebraska at Omaha
Dr. Floyd Waterman, professor of education and director, Center for
Urban Education in the Center for Applied Urban Research, UNO

Mrs. Green, also a member of the 1973 evaluation team, has had experience in both early childhood education and in special education programs. Ms. Dillon works as a child care supervisor. Mr. Swopes is completing a doctorate in curriculum and instruction and is experienced in school administration. Ms. Bianchi has worked in low-income areas in early childhood education and operates a day care center as well as handling early childhood instruction for the Westside Public Schools. Dr. Smith is a specialist in early childhood education and teaches courses for prospective teachers in the area of pre-school and early childhood. Dr. Waterman has a background in administration as well as childhood education and considerable background in development of training programs for low-income areas. He served as chairman of the evaluation task force.

Task Force Procedures

Dr. Waterman and Dr. Smith held a preliminary meeting and obtained a site evaluation form that was used as the basis for all observations. An organizational meeting of the task force was held at Calvin on November 29, 1982. At this time the group met Mrs. Parson and Mr. Grayson, director and assistant director. A tour was made of the Center, and the chairman outlined the procedures for the task force. Each member was asked to visit at least twice, to fill in the site evaluation form, and to write additional notes to accompany it. All materials and observations were sent to the chairman.

The chairman agreed to assemble the materials and observations and to write a draft of the report to be reviewed by the task force. He also agreed to interview all of the staff members at Calvin Ed-U-Care.

Site Visits by Members of Task Force

During the organizational meeting, the chairman suggested that each person on the task force visit the Center at least once for a minimum of 40-45 minutes. Two visits were strongly recommended. Members of the task force subsequently made a number of visits to the Center and gained fairly clear perceptions of the program. The visits by community members were equally useful to those of the professionals in determining the overall quality of the program at Calvin.

Community members of the task force spent a total of 28 and one-half hours in observation. The breakdown by age groups is shown in Table 3.

Table 3

TIME SPENT IN OBSERVATION BY COMMUNITY MEMBERS

<u>Observations</u>	<u>Toddlers</u>	<u>3's</u>	<u>4's & 5's</u>	<u>Totals</u>
2	3.30	---	3.70	7.00
3	3.30	3.70	3.70	10.70
<u>3</u>	<u>3.30</u>	<u>3.70</u>	<u>3.70</u>	<u>10.70</u>
8	9.90	7.40	11.10	28.40

The professional members of the task force visited a total of approximately 17 hours. Table 4 shows the breakdown.

Table 4

TIME SPENT IN OBSERVATION BY PROFESSIONALS

<u>Observations</u>	<u>Toddlers</u>	<u>3's</u>	<u>4's & 5's</u>	<u>Totals</u>
3	1.25	.75	1.25	3.25
2	2.50	---	1.25	3.75
3	1.25	.75	.75	2.75
3	.75	.75	2.00	3.50
3	.75	.75	.75	2.25
<u>2</u>	<u>----</u>	<u>.66</u>	<u>.66</u>	<u>1.32</u>
16	6.50	3.66	6.66	16.82

To summarize, the members of the evaluation task force made 24 observations involving over 45 hours. Each submitted a form (Appendix 1) with other written comments to the chairman. Some of the comments totaled several pages in addition to those on the form. The observations are listed and summarized in a separate section.

III. Site Observations by Evaluation Task Force

The task force used the site evaluation form (Appendix 1) supplied by Dr. Kenneth Smith of the University of Nebraska at Omaha as a basis for observation. The discussion that follows summarizes comments made on the evaluation form and the additional written comments by observers. The observations are grouped into three general categories: program, physical facilities, and staff.

Some observations were made by almost everyone (e.g., the need for dividers in the toddler area), others were made two or three times, and some were mentioned only once. Since all of the observations were deemed valid, no attempt is made to quantify them. Each of the categories is discussed separately.

Program

Strengths. The evaluators felt that Calvin Ed-U-Care is a strong, quality program and that it is a facility providing a service that might not otherwise be available to the low-income area. Repeatedly, the evaluators mentioned the warmth that staff members have for children. Evaluators recognized that a more structured program is offered than may be found in middle-class neighborhoods. The following are characteristic of the remarks made by observers:

- Warm, structured group
- Transitions guided, well planned
- A lot of language usage during mealtimes
- A lot of happy talk observed
- Warm atmosphere between teachers and children
- Teachers kind to children
- Child management is smooth and gentle, avoiding conflicts
- Nice interpersonal, supportive atmosphere for children
- Grandparents add warmth and affect to program (mentioned four times)

Cook is good with kids
Children know staff love them
Staff provided for emergencies; adequate procedures are posted
Staff supportive of each other
Adequate staff/child ratio provided
Program provides a variety of activities.
Structured program is related to home life of children (e.g., few
limits placed on child at home, poor language habits.

Concerns. While the evaluators recognized that the vast majority of the children are transported from their homes via Center van, that most of the mothers are working, and that little opportunity for parent interaction is available, they nevertheless felt more parent/teacher and parent/children interactions would be a wonderful addition to the quality of the program. The teacher and teacher aide who drive the bus have an opportunity to visit with many of the parents. The director and her associate frequently talk to parents on the telephone during the initial intake interview and in times of emergency, but the general contact with other staff members is limited.

Recognizing this limitation, the director invites parents for special occasions such as morning coffee and breakfast or a Christmas luncheon. The Christmas luncheon is also an opportunity to have some of the members of the Calvin congregation, and the parents of children participate.

Beyond the lack of parental involvement, which is understandable, other concerns related mostly to the need to encourage children to converse with adults and among themselves. Staff members should examine the nature of American English including its various dialects, its richness, and its use in formal, standard, and informal settings. Adults as well as children should be helped to preserve the cultural heritage that is carried through language. However, constant use of dialects by adults in school settings limits options for children. Most teachers could profit from a speech

class that stresses diction, clarity of speech, appropriate modeling of "standard" usage, and the use of poetry, rhyme, and the art of conversation.

The majority of the program concerns centered around language and its usage. Ten different comments were made about language--most were about the need to encourage conversation between teachers and children and between children and other children. One evaluator observed:

"The single most important need for stimulation was in the area of language. There is a great deal of emphasis on naming, and labeling, but more modeling of behavior and encouragement for the use of language is required."

Other program concerns were expressed in comments such as the following:

- Most children transported; little parent involvement
- Nap time is only break for staff members
- Not much exposure of children to books
- Music comes solely from records
- Are we stressing order and quiet at the expense of development in the older children?
- Children are rotated into activities with limited choices
- Grandparents should be used as "extra" to provide affect and not counted in the staff/child ratio
- Adult ideas dominate art work; children need more freedom to express themselves
- TV should not have a place in a day care program
- Peabody kit with toddlers is artificial; young children don't "learn" language; they use it
- More of the children's art should be displayed
- More movement and motion for toddlers and three-year-olds
- Physical environment for toddlers limits; interest areas needed

Perhaps the above comments reflect a direction for inservice activities. While they are listed as concerns, they do not suggest a displeasure with the Calvin program. The Center has a good basic program, but it can be vastly improved by attention to these areas.

Physical Facilities

Building. The building meets fire and safety codes, and while it has some limitations for a day care facility, it is workable, and the staff are to be commended for the creative ways they have used the available space. The kitchen is excellent and is superior to that found in most day care facilities. Evaluators' comments centered mostly on the excessive heat (which has to be a financial consideration for the church) and the inconveniences experienced by two groups being required to travel to the bathrooms. The bathtub is a useful addition. Fire extinguishers are adequate.

Some of the support poles are a minor inconvenience, but they do not render the facility inadequate. The room for the toddlers is the one that requires the greatest attention. Dividers of some type are necessary there to separate the older and younger children and to establish more interest areas.

Characteristic of the physical facility comments were the following:

- Access and availability of materials is a problem because of Sunday use of the rooms
- The "Fat Albert" pictures for the 4's and 5's brighten the room
- Building is terribly overheated
- The 3's must travel to bathroom; others travel to get drinks
- Dividers are needed for toddlers (with dividers, the toddlers could be more self-directed and activities less adult oriented which is what they need for best development of children)
- Toddler room so large (without dividers) it is overpowering
- More display areas are needed for children's artwork
- Playground is vandalized and inadequate.

Materials and Equipment. In the past, when it had a healthier financial situation, the Center purchased good quality materials and equipment and in sufficient quantities. Now, however, some of these materials are showing signs of wear, are inadequate for the toddlers, and some have

fallen into disrepair. Some of the dividers for the toddlers' area could be storage lockers, screens, or material that is less permanent than actual construction.

A number of comments were made about the toddler area, but this is the Center's newest program and the one in most need of equipment and materials. While the materials are adequate, sturdy, and appropriate, some are getting older, worn, and somewhat outdated. The Center will shortly need to look to some major equipment and materials purchases. The comments listed below summarize equipment needs:

- Didn't have any building blocks in toddler area
- There is a need for big wheels and riding toys for toddlers
- Some crayons broken and in need of replacement
- Few books available
- Books on the stage less accessible to all age groups
- Necessity to lock up materials (because of Sunday use of building)
means some materials not as readily accessible to children
- Two chairs were broken and should be replaced in 4's and 5's area
- Materials on hand were of good quality but begin to show wear
- Manipulative materials and exploratory materials for all ages
important.

Center Staff

The consensus of the evaluators was that the staff were concerned, caring, and supportive. The staff seemed to get along well together and worked as a team when they were interacting with children. While evaluators agreed that the ratio of staff to children was within state regulations, they felt that additional staff should be hired if possible. Since children from poverty backgrounds have severe learning deficiencies, an enriched educational background is doubly important. Language is such a critical area that having more staff is certainly advisable so that they may interact with children, stimulate them in use of language, and carry out alternative activities within groups.

The foster grandparents add a dimension of affect and warmth that is a definite plus to the Calvin program. Having a foster grandfather is particularly nice since the only other male member of the staff is the assistant director. Some evaluators felt that the foster grandparents should be added dimensions of warmth and assistance rather than being depended upon as part of the child/staff ratio in view of the obvious enjoyment of the foster grandfather and the need to encourage children to engage in conversation.

In her interview, the director identified the staff as one of the great strengths of the program. The staff are indeed dedicated and hard-working, but some of the comments revealed that the Center may be "pushing luck" when it operates with such a small number. Sometimes both the director and assistant must be counted in the staff/child ratio in order to cover the groups while the teacher and aide are delivering children in the van.

Typical comments regarding staff were:

I like the caring attitude of the staff
Warm, supportive atmosphere for children
Staff cares about children and they know it
Just enough staff to meet licensing ratio
Only time staff has for a break is during nap time
Team of staff cooperative and work well together.

Calvin cannot add a significant number of children to its present average enrollment because of the diversity of the program and the size of the present staff. Such an increase would cause problems of staff/child ratio and perhaps place considerable stress on an already overworked staff.

IV. Staff Perceptions of the Program

Every member of the staff was interviewed by Dr. Waterman, and an extensive exit interview was conducted with the director and associate director. The perceptions of the teaching staff as to strengths and weaknesses are highly correlated with those of the evaluation task force. This section will deal with staff perceptions but does not include those of the director and assistant; these will be described in a separate section.

Strengths

The teaching staff feel that Calvin Ed-U-Care is providing a unique and useful service to parents, particularly to young, inexperienced mothers who are on limited incomes or who are working full time. The parents are often lacking education and some basic parenting skills. The Center, for example, was forced to purchase disposable diapers because mothers often sent children without changes. If children are in need of baths, the staff attends to this basic necessity. Some teachers have purchased changes of clothing for children. One staff member rides the van and has a high degree of parental contact; she often helps mothers by taking a child over a weekend. Another staff member feels that mothers are not going to be able to help children learn the social and self-help skills (dressing, shoes, etc.) that prepare them for kindergarten, and thus the program at Calvin is particularly attentive to such "survival" skills.

Not surprising, therefore, is that some of the staff say, "We give parents help in child rearing." The staff also feel that they provide a good developmental program in nutrition, health practices, and learning environment for all ages served. Characteristic of strengths identified by the teaching staff are the following:

We help parents, especially single parents
Pleasant working conditions
Staff is united and supportive of each other
We are trying to get children ready for school
We stress communication and self-expression
We teach responsibility because they come from homes where it is
not taught
Our program is child oriented
I learn from the staff and from Ms. Parson
Staff works like a small family
We have a good program.

Problems

Staff placed lack of funds at the top of the list of problems and generally agreed with those identified by the evaluation task force. One staff member said, "Materials are getting old, but we have to make do with what we have." The other problems or weaknesses were identified as follows:

More money for outdoor equipment
A partition in the toddler room
More staff members
More parent involvement
More field trips
More toys, especially riding, greater variety
More music for the little ones, more singing
On-site inservice training
Visits to other centers to see how they operate
The church groups get into our toys and leave a mess
More exploratory experiences for toddlers
More outside activities
More toys for the younger children.

Inservice Needs

Inservice and/or staff development needs identified by the task force and the members of the staff are also closely related. Inservice training needs ranked very near the top of the list for activities that would reflect directly upon the quality of the Calvin Ed-U-Care program.

V. Center Administration

General Responsibilities

Both the director and assistant director are well prepared in the area of early childhood development. Both Mrs. Parson and Mr. Grayson have been involved in the Calvin Ed-U-Care Center since its early days of operation and have been providing continuity there for the last decade. Both were in their present positions when the last evaluation was conducted in 1973.

Both director and assistant share in the responsibility for supervision of inservice activities. The director is the primary contact with the Douglas County Department of Public Welfare, with the parents, and with the state in terms of regulations, licensure, and general operating guidelines. The director does most of the intake interviews with parents and also communicates Center policy to parents either directly or by monthly newsletters. These are mimeographed sheets telling about vacation activities for children available in the city, schedules of the Center, and ideas for child rearing. A sample of the newsletter is attached as Appendix 2.

The director begins her day by making a health check of the children, greeting the staff, shopping, banking, bookkeeping, or visiting with children who have been hospitalized. She also has frequent meetings with the Douglas County Welfare Department. When the driver of the van and the aide are out delivering children, she and the assistant director become part of the teaching staff to maintain staff/child ratio.

Once a month the director conducts a staff meeting. Once a week during break time she meets with each group to discuss plans, problems of staff members, and any problems with children. She also makes arrangements for field trips. The director handles any problems of discipline. She and the

assistant director conduct an annual evaluation of each staff member.

The assistant director provides general assistance to the director, has the major responsibility of daily Center administration, opens the Center each morning, and checks the children as they get off the van. He observes the breakfast, and checks lesson plans, outings, and schedules. He checks attendance of children and calls parents or the welfare case worker about children not in attendance. He also serves as the secretary and custodian for the Center since those positions have not been refilled due to financial conditions. The assistant director has more of the direct supervision of the staff since the director handles all social service matters.

Occasionally, the assistant director will conduct a demonstration with a group of five or six children for the benefit of teachers or when he sees a particular need. He also gives suggestions to teachers on units and on their lesson plans. The assistant director makes up the menu with the assistance of the cook and is responsible for the purchase of food and paper products. He cleans the kitchen while the teachers are responsible for cleaning the bathrooms. He walks the children who attend Lothrop School to and from the Center and becomes part of the adult/child ratio in the late afternoon when the other staff members are delivering children in the van. He closes the Center about 6:35 p.m. each day after the last child has been picked up. He takes messages from parents as to where the van is to deliver children at the end of the day if they are not going home. About two hours of each day are devoted to custodial work and another two to secretarial work.

Strengths Identified by Administration

Both administrators are appreciative of the dedication of the staff and feel that the Center is providing a needed community service. Both feel that the staff is a hard-working and dedicated group. The nutrition program was identified as a strong point especially important in terms of the home environment of the children serviced.

Concerns of the Administration

Concerns of the administration centered around budget, the need for additional staff, equipment for the toddlers, playground equipment, and building limitations. Inservice needs fell into two general categories: language development and general knowledge of child development.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

The members of the task force are in agreement that the Calvin Ed-U-Care is a good basic program that is serving a genuine need for a low-income community. The staff is a warm, supportive, caring staff willing to go the extra mile to help the parents and children served. While equipment needs are a concern, the facilities are safe, clean, and are within state regulations. The ratio of staff to children is in conformance with state regulations. Fire, safety, and health requirements are being met adequately. The program is serving a need, is providing quality care, and should be continued.

Recommendations

1. The administration of the Center should seek out inservice opportunities for the staff that can be provided with little cost to the Center. While college credit cannot be obtained for such inservice workshops, their

content could be designated to meet critical needs of the Center staff.

Individual faculty members at local colleges have expertise and skills that would be helpful to the Center staff, and occasionally the faculty members will donate their services for this purpose.

Volunteers cannot provide all of the expertise needed, but they should be utilized to the fullest extent possible. Contacts with professional organizations should also be exploited for possible volunteers.

Films owned by school districts and universities can be obtained for a moderate cost (or occasionally without cost) and should be sought out for possible inservice activities. The film should not be the sole exposure to the ideas and content, however. Films could be the basis of discussions led by either the director or associate director to follow readings in journals and/or books.

Of particular value and importance are the areas of language development, movement, and general knowledge of how children develop and learn. The staff, Center administration, and the task force all confirm that these areas need attention at this time. Art for young children is another area that should be pursued.

2. The Center must now make a long-range plan for the acquisition of additional materials and equipment to replace some that are becoming worn or broken. Unless attention is given to this matter immediately, a major purchase program will be needed in the near future.

Screens or dividers for the toddlers are needed as well as some big wheel toys. Playground equipment replacements are also a need at this time.

Immediate priority should be given to the purchase of equipment and materials for the toddlers and then gradually start replacing the other equipment. Greater access to the books for all ages should be provided, and the Center should seek out additional display areas to exhibit children's work.

3. The Center should explore the possibilities of getting one or possibly two more teachers who have had extensive experience with early childhood education programs. Such persons could help in providing in-service activities to other staff members in the areas of child development and learning as well as modeling appropriate behaviors as they work with children.

This recommendation grows out of the finding that when teachers and aides are out of the center with the van, both director and assistant director must become part of the staff/child ratio. The Center currently meets requirements, but no provision is made for staff members who might become ill. Furthermore, the present staff have few times for breaks from working with the children all day.

Language development of children is identified as a critical need in low-income area families. An additional staff member could free the two grandparent volunteers to work with more groups and not be part of the staff/child ratio, thus providing conversations and language stimulation for the children. The foster grandparents provide good affect, and this should be their major role.

4. If possible, funds should be found for a secretary and/or a secretary/custodian. With all of their responsibilities with children and with general administration, the teachers and the assistant director

should not be carrying the additional burden of cleaning, nor should the assistant director be serving as a secretary. He has a good knowledge of child development, and his expertise could be better utilized by working more directly with children. In this way he could be demonstrating techniques to teachers and also giving children more contact with a male member of the staff.

5. The Center should explore the possibility of obtaining volunteers from the Omaha Volunteer Bureau, or the Calvin Memorial Presbyterian Church itself. One of the ways to implement Recommendation #4 would be through the use of volunteers as cleaners and as secretarial assistants to relieve the director and assistant director somewhat so they could be working with teachers.

More general communication is needed between the congregation of Calvin Memorial Church and Calvin Ed-U-Care. Assisting the day care center is a ministry of service, and probably individuals in the congregation would be pleased to do volunteer work or make donations. Calvin Ed-U-Care should develop a printed "wish list" of items that a particular size donation would obtain for the Center.

6. The church should be asked to explore the possibility of purchasing better temperature controls. Such an investment would probably pay for itself in savings on energy costs. When the doors are opened to let out some of the excess heat, children and staff may suffer from chill with resulting health problems. Serious consideration should be given to this matter.

7. The Center should explore the possibilities of funding some inservice opportunities beyond those identified in Recommendation #1: items such as teachers and aides attending nearby workshops or conferences so that they can be exposed to other programs, ideas, materials, and techniques. Volunteers might be used as teacher aides (related to Recommendations #3 and #5) for a day so teachers and aides can visit other day care centers for observation and exchange of ideas.

Funded workshops built around a content area needed by a majority of the staff may be necessary to accomplish the objective of uniform program development. If all staff members had common inservice experiences in the area of language development, for example, more effective programs for the children would result. Recommendation #1 speaks to the type of inservice opportunities that can be obtained at no cost, but this recommendation is a recognition that such services may not meet all of the Center's needs and therefore must be purchased.

8. The Center should do no further program expansion. The administration and staff of the Center are very service oriented and very mindful of the problems and needs of the low-income community, and might be tempted to go into a program of infant care, for example. The need is great, but the Center cannot afford to embark upon any new programs until such time as it has the resources to implement the recommendations above.

The toddler program currently in operation is an example of the Center's willingness to meet community needs. It is a new program that was started within the last decade, and yet the Center has staffing and equipment as well as inservice needs that are now in need of attention. Without the infusion of vastly improved funding, extending beyond the present

program would push the quality of the present program into borderline compliance.

Summary

The task force determined through observations and interviews that the Calvin Ed-U-Care Center has a high quality program. Some needs were identified and these are outlined in the eight recommendations. Funds will be required to continue and maintain the quality of the program. A dedicated staff works in an environment of cooperation and support for children and parents in great need. The program should be continued, but some needs must be met and additional resources will be required to meet them.

Appendix 1
Site Evaluation Form

EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTER
SITE EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Name of Center _____ Phone _____

Director _____

Address _____
street and number city state zip

Type of program _____

Number of children:

Age 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____

Number of staff? _____

Name of Evaluator _____ Date of Evaluation _____

(This form is adapted from one by Dr. Kenneth Smith, University of Nebraska at Omaha.)

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
A. Physical Environment			
1. Is storage space for equipment adequate and safe?	_____	_____	_____
2. Is the room arrangement suitable for large group, small group, and individual activities?	_____	_____	_____
3. Is sufficient outdoor equipment and open space provided?	_____	_____	_____
4. Is the physical environment colorful, brightly lighted, friendly, and inviting?	_____	_____	_____
5. Are separate areas for active and quiet play provided?	_____	_____	_____
6. Are interest areas well defined?	_____	_____	_____
7. Is physical environment sufficient and developmentally appropriate to facilitate a balanced program of spontaneous and structured activities?	_____	_____	_____
8. Has an attempt been made to minimize noise level of the classroom through the use of rugs, draperies, or acoustical tiles?	_____	_____	_____
9. Are display areas for children's work provided at their eye level?	_____	_____	_____
10. Are other physical facilities readily available (i.e., playground, gym, library, kitchen)?	_____	_____	_____
11. Are toilet facilities easily accessible to children?	_____	_____	_____
B. Materials and Equipment			
12. Are materials available, appropriate to the developmental level of each child?	_____	_____	_____
13. Are the materials usable and in good condition (i.e., without missing pieces and broken parts)?	_____	_____	_____
14. Does the program provide nutritional snacks and/or meals?	_____	_____	_____
15. Is a variety of instructional materials readily available to the teachers?	_____	_____	_____

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
16. Are materials and equipment within easy access to the children?	_____	_____	_____
17. Are books available to meet the interests of individual children?	_____	_____	_____
18. Do the children experience a variety of media in art work?	_____	_____	_____
19. Is musical experience varied?	_____	_____	_____
20. Is the supply of building blocks adequate?	_____	_____	_____
21. Is water play available for exploration and experimentation with various containers and objects?	_____	_____	_____
22. Are varied manipulative toys and games immediately available?	_____	_____	_____
23. Is the reserve supply of materials adequate so that those available to the children can be changed?	_____	_____	_____

C. Human Resources

Are parents given opportunities to participate in the developmental program of the children by:

24. Assessing their own child's needs and setting goals with the teacher?	_____	_____	_____
25. Continuing their own child's program experiences by follow-up at home?	_____	_____	_____
26. Becoming a volunteer part of the total teaching team?	_____	_____	_____
27. Conferring with teachers and other staff as appropriate, to discuss their own child's progress, individual needs, and prescribed activities?	_____	_____	_____
28. Offering their own specific skills as an additional classroom resource?	_____	_____	_____
29. Does the program have a planned and coordinated system for communication with the parents of all children on a regular basis throughout the school year?	_____	_____	_____

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
30. Does the teaching team create a warm, stimulating, and cooperative learning environment?	_____	_____	_____
D. Teaching Strategies			
31. Are children encouraged to talk frequently to other adults and peers?	_____	_____	_____
32. Are the children encouraged to do as much as possible for themselves, to acquire independent behavior?	_____	_____	_____
33. Do the children assume personal responsibility for clean-up?	_____	_____	_____
34. Do children understand limits or rules for use of materials and equipment?	_____	_____	_____
35. Does the teaching team encourage children to try new experiences?	_____	_____	_____
36. Are definite plans written for each day's activities?	_____	_____	_____
37. Do the day's plans include a balance of types of activities?	_____	_____	_____
38. Does the teaching team eat with the children?	_____	_____	_____
39. Does the teaching team interact with the children during playtime?	_____	_____	_____
40. Are children given the opportunity to choose among activities?	_____	_____	_____
41. Are alternatives provided for children who choose not to participate in a certain activity?	_____	_____	_____
42. Are the transitions from one activity to another accomplished smoothly?	_____	_____	_____
43. Is the atmosphere relaxed and unhurried?	_____	_____	_____
44. Is "snack time" learning time too?	_____	_____	_____
45. Does the staff agree on the resolution and management of conflict between children?	_____	_____	_____
46. Does teacher behavior demonstrate acceptance and respect for children?	_____	_____	_____
47. Does the staff purposefully model the desirable behaviors they wish the children to acquire?	_____	_____	_____

Appendix 2
Sample Center Newsletters

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER



CALVIN ED-U-CARE
CARMEN PARSON, DIRECTOR

SEPTEMBER 25, 1981

IMMUNIZATIONS

The Calvin Ed-U-Care Staff would like to take this opportunity to thank you for selecting the Calvin Day Care Center.

Parents it is a State requirement that all children attending Licensed Child Care Centers must be properly immunized.

The Day Care Center strives to provide Quality Child Care to the clients we serve. Please share with us compliments or complaints so that we can continue to improve the quality of our program.

Please help us meet the State requirements by making sure that we have a copy of your child's immunization record on file.

WELFARE REGULATIONS

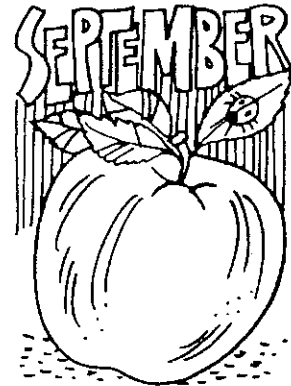
LABELING CLOTHING

Attached to newsletter you will find Federal Regulations that will affect ADC recipients. There will be a meeting to discuss these new regulations on Thursday Sept 29, 1981. If possible please attend.

Parents please label your children's coats and sweaters. With the coming of Winter; the center will have many coats and winter garments to handle.

AROBIC DANCE CLASSES

Arobic Dance Classes are being held at North Christ Child. If interested contact Karen (451-1603) for additional information.



NUTRITION PROGRAM

The Calvin Ed-U-Care Center plans very nutritious meals for your children. The Cook prepares daily meals which are appealing and meet all nutritional requirements.

Parents please don't send additional candies, snacks and other treats with your child. Unfortunately it suppresses their appetites and they will not eat the balanced meals which are prepared daily.
