



*F*amily Day Care Services

1971-2001



Toronto, 1970

It was rush hour. The breathless city air was close and sour. To the south, high above the lake, towering thunderheads threatened rain. Dorothy hoped she could make it to Christine's house on Cosburn Avenue in time to pick up her two kids and walk with them the three blocks to their tiny flat on Sammon Avenue before the heavens opened and they all got drenched.

As usual, there was standing room only on the O'Connor Drive bus when it hissed to a stop at the corner of Bermondsey Road, where Dorothy stood amidst the homeward-bound women and men who worked in the small factories that lined the nearby streets. It was the same tired group every evening – the men with their tin lunchboxes and rolled up newspapers, the women clutching purses and the occasional plastic tub that had contained a lunchtime sandwich. Though they usually nodded a perfunctory greeting each evening, they seldom spoke, and then only about the weather or some other inconsequential matter that involved no

real commitment beyond the verbal shorthand that so often serves as conversation between people who are lost in their own thoughts and don't wish to be disturbed.

As the crammed bus rolled down O'Connor, lurching to a stop every few blocks to pick up and let off passengers, Dorothy thought about the evening to come. It would be a carbon copy of most other weekday evenings. If traffic weren't too bad, she'd arrive at Christine's in another twenty minutes. As they did each evening, four-year-old Michael and three-year-old Emily would greet her at the front door with something they'd made that day – a picture, maybe a Plasticine figure. Christine would faithfully give an account of everything the children had done since 7:30 that morning, when Dorothy had dropped them off on her way to work. As she talked, Christine would scurry around her livingroom and kitchen in search of stray sweaters, hats, or toys, before giving the kids a quick goodbye kiss. With a small, trusting hand in each of hers, Dorothy would walk with her children along Cosburn and down Pape Avenue to Sammon Avenue.

As Dorothy approached Christine's, she thought about how her life and the lives of her children had at last settled into a reassuring routine,



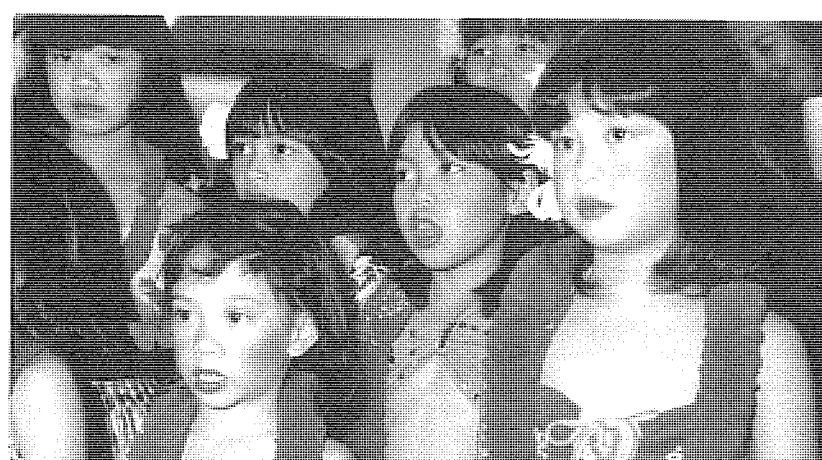
but it hadn't always been so. Her husband, Don, had been killed in a traffic accident eighteen months before, leaving her and the children with very little money, forcing them out of their small east-end bungalow, and plunging the young mother into a deep depression. For a few months, she and the kids lived with a kindly retired couple who attended their church. They didn't ask her for room or board, but Dorothy knew her family's presence placed a financial strain on her benefactors that was proving too much for the man's modest pension. Her mother and father, who were back in Newfoundland, sent what money they could, which wasn't much. Though she had not yet taken time to grieve Don's death, Dorothy knew she'd have to get a job. But what was she going to do with Michael and Emily? She couldn't ask the elderly couple to look after them. She had no close friends nearby who could mind them while she worked. There was only a handful of day care centres scattered across the entire city and they were already full. At the local supermarket, she had seen dozens of notices placed there by working women desperate to find someone to look after their children. The headlines in the papers said over a hundred thousand Metro Toronto children were in need of day care. Even if Dorothy posted such a notice and was fortunate enough to find a woman willing to take

her children, Dorothy knew she could never afford to pay her. She was in a hopeless situation, needing to provide for herself and her children, but unable to pay the full cost of day care herself.

Everything seemed to be working against her until one Sunday, when she saw a notice on the church bulletin board advertising a family day care service run by Protestant Children's Homes in East York. She jotted down the information and called the next day. Before the week was out, she had met with a social worker from the Agency who eventually introduced Dorothy and her children to Christine, who had cared for the children of other working mothers in the past and was the mother of two school-aged children herself. Dorothy liked Christine, and so did the children. An agreement was struck and the following week, when Dorothy started her job, she knew her children would have a safe, friendly place to go.

As Dorothy walked up the steps to Christine's front door, Michael popped his head out and shouted, "Hi, Mommy! Wanna see what we did today?"

Tired as she was, Dorothy knew there was nothing in the world she would rather do.





By the time Protestant Children's Homes changed its name to Family Day Care Services, the Agency's third model of child care and family support was well established. The first model was orphanage care between 1851 and 1930, and the second was foster care, which roughly coincided with the 45-year period between 1926 and 1971 (although a few older teens would remain in foster care until the late 1970s). Day care, as the Agency's new name clearly delineated, represented the third paradigm of child care to be provided by the organization.

In April 1971, three of the original group of four agencies providing child care to Toronto families – Victoria Day Care Services, Cradleship Creche, and Family Day Care Services renewed their alliance, which they dubbed the Group of Three. They and a number of other agencies concerned with the welfare of children continued to press the provincial government for amendments to the Day Nurseries Act. At times, the pressure rankled officials in the province's Day Nurseries Branch, as the

following excerpt from the Agency's minutes for June 15, 1971 clearly indicates:

"Relative to the proposal that ways be found to bring pressure on Queen's Park, reference was made to the article in the *Globe and Mail* on Thursday June 10, headed 'Government Said Dragging Feet on Bringing in Family Day Care. Miss Quiggin reported that she had been contacted by a writer from the *Globe and Mail* asking for comment on a resolution from the Catholic Women's League. The resolution urged the provincial government and the Minister of Social and Family Services to amend the Day Nurseries Act and regulations to allow sponsoring social agencies to be eligible to receive a subsidy from public funds to set up family day care services, and quotes Protestant Children's Homes (whose name would officially be changed one week later) as having operated such a pilot project for seven years. The day the article appeared in the press, Miss Quiggin received a call from a member of the staff of the Day Nurseries Branch stating that the Director of the Branch was concerned about this article and wanted to know why the term 'illegal' had been used to describe this agency's program.



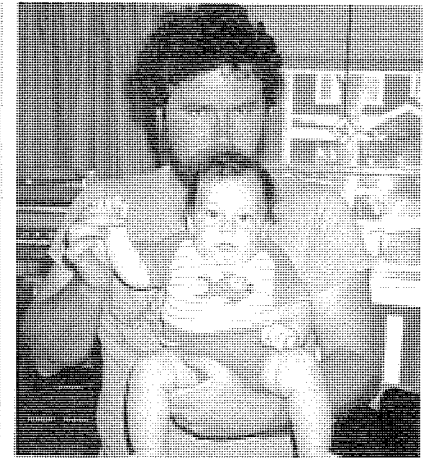
Explanation had been made that the term 'illegal' had not been used, but that this was a misquote of a comment about the lack of licensing and standards for family day care. The significance of the article and the telephone call from the Day Nurseries Branch is an indication that critical comment concerning lack of action by the provincial government is being heard at Queen's Park."

On June 15, 1971 a letter signed by the executive directors of each board of the Group of Three, requesting a meeting to discuss amendments to the Act with Thomas Wells, the Minister of Social and Family Services, was delivered to Queen's Park. Coincidentally, the first National Conference on Day Care was to be held in Ottawa the following week, a fact that ensured public attention would remain focused on the difficulties Canadian families had attempting to secure safe, affordable and adequate day care. The accompanying press coverage kept the issue on the front burner and provided day care agencies with numerous opportunities to comment publicly on the lack of standards and licensing for their services.

Political action and press coverage paid off, for on July 15, the

executive directors of the Group of Three were invited to meet with Mr. Wells and other officials representing his ministry to discuss amendments to the Day Nurseries Act, which had received second reading in the legislature the previous day. The amendments included recognition of family day care in the new legislation. The Group of Three was asked to submit their recommendations for new day care services regulations, as soon as possible. At the meeting, the minister invited the executive directors to meet again before the new law was proclaimed. Royal assent was expected some time early in 1972.

In short order, the Group of Three submitted a five-page document to the provincial government outlining what they considered to be the minimum standards for the delivery of family day care. The standards focused on qualifications, training, ongoing supervision of day care mothers, and the need for them to know and help one another. Although ministry staff developed guidelines for Private Home Day Care in 1973, which many agencies voluntarily adopted, it was not until 1978 that the Day Nurseries Act was amended to require agencies to be licensed, and



not until 1984 that a fully developed set of standards was implemented.

By March 7, 1972, when a meeting took place between the Group of Three and staff of the Ministry of Social and Family Services, the government still had not amended the Act. At that meeting, the government told the day care agencies that the impending changes would deal exclusively with providing subsidies to those families who qualified as “persons in need,” and that the province would assume no responsibility for general standards for family day care. The government took the position that its concern with home day care providers extended only as far as its accountability for spending public money to underwrite a portion of the cost of their services. This was a major disappointment to the Group of Three, who nevertheless urged the government to introduce these funding changes as quickly as possible, believing that the sooner the new legislation was set in place, the sooner its strengths, weaknesses, errors, and omissions would reveal themselves.

By mid-May, the government had still failed to act. Frustrated

by the delay, the executive of Family Day Care Services sent the following telegram to Premier William Davis, with copies to the new Minister of Social and Family Services, René Brunelle, and to Allan Lawrence, the local Member of Provincial Parliament:

“Strongly urge immediate release of Regulations governing private home day care. Extended delay causing grave concern, financial stress and curtailment of service.”

The telegram precipitated a phone call from an administrative assistant in Mr. Brunelle’s office who promised that the regulations permitting cost-sharing of fee subsidies for lower income families would go to Cabinet that week, and that it would be gazetted within two weeks.

At last, in June, the long awaited regulations were enacted. As the following excerpt from the minutes of June 13, 1972 indicates, the regulations were greeted with resignation by Family Day Care Services. The minutes also record the Board’s surprise and deep concern over the government’s decision to designate a much later date for the bill to take effect than was expected.

“The content of the Regulations is much as expected and



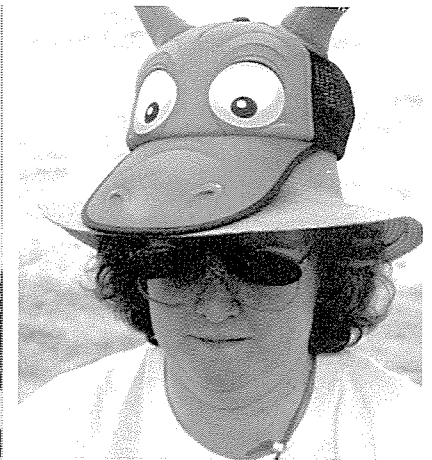
appears to provide a sound and workable basis for initiating family day care programs anywhere throughout the Province. The disappointing factor is the operative date, which has been designated as May 11, rather than the anticipated April 1, or the hoped for January 1.

“This means that 4 1/2 months of service to families who qualify as ‘persons in need’ will not be eligible for subsidy. This amounts to approximately \$60,000 of the \$160,000 anticipated from Metro in 1972. Because our service was maintained at 1971 levels (neither expanded nor cut back) and subject to the Province’s unexpected decision re: the effective date, we find ourselves in a serious deficit position for 1972. It was recognized that these particular circumstances, which were outside our budgetary and service management control, provides grounds for an approach to Metro and to the Province requesting their assistance in meeting the cost incurred in providing service from January 1 to May 11, 1972.”

Letters were sent to Premier Davis and Mr. Brunelle requesting provincial assistance in meeting the 1972 deficit that was incurred

as a result of government delay in enacting the regulations, and its decision not to make them retroactive to the first of the year. In October, the Agency received a reply from a Community and Social Services Ministry official expressing the government’s regret that it could not provide additional funds, “...since our legislation does not permit authorization of retroactive payments for service provided before the date on which the legislation came into effect.”

Throughout the protracted struggle to positively influence the regulatory requirements that would introduce subsidy funding for family day care, the Board of Family Day Care Services was also busy on another front. In June 1971, Miss Quiggin had been approached to help develop a day care centre in Flemingdon Park, a high density, subsidized housing project in North York. By the following year, the Agency had helped to establish a group care program for school-aged children, in a room in the Flemingdon Park Community Centre. The children were cared for from 7:00 a.m. until school began, at noon, when they would receive a nutritious lunch, and again between 3:00 and 6:00 p.m., when they



would again be in the care of their parents.

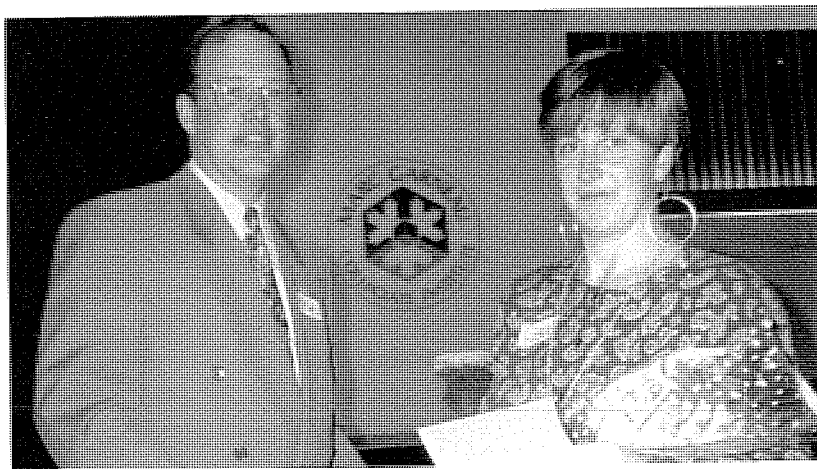
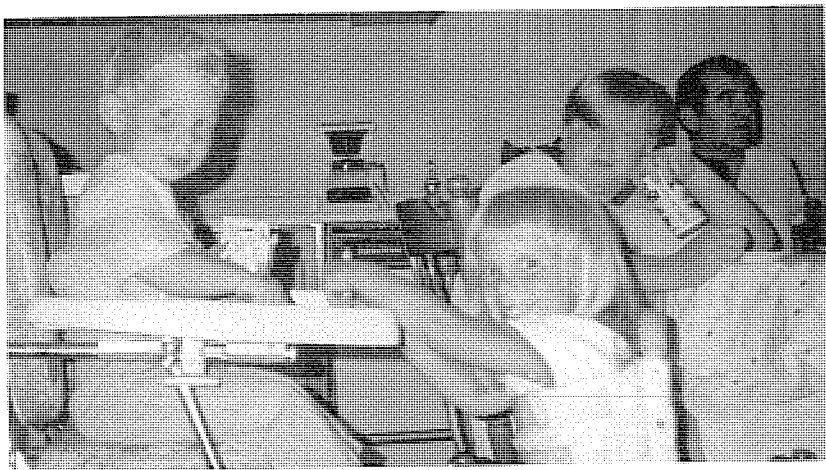
Also in the early 1970s, the Group of Three wrestled with the question of whether or not to amalgamate. Each agency assigned a number of staff members to sit on a joint committee to examine the pros and cons of such a merger. Between 1971 and 1973, they conducted a lengthy series of meetings, which ultimately led to a decision, in May 1973, to forego any further discussion of combining the three agencies into a single large one. Though they did not join forces under a single banner, the process deepened their reliance upon one another and served to strengthen their collective voice when speaking to government.

The members of the Group of Three were not the only child care advocates who had difficulty being heard by various levels of government in that period. In Metro Toronto, in the early 1970s, mounting frustration over the piecemeal way in which the municipality funded day care centres compelled the operators of a number of them, and a group of single mothers, to band together and take their case to Metro Council. The group included Irene Kyle, a children's program director at Central Neighbourhood House.

"At the time," says Kyle, "there was a lot of work being done at the community level to build day care. Funding was the big issue: how did you go about getting the necessary dollars? There were no ground rules, no workable system. So, we decided to get together to press for proper budget guidelines."

Maria de Wit, who founded and directed the York University Co-operative Day Care Centre, was also a member of that delegation to Metro Toronto.

Recalling those days, de Wit says, "It took us years to find out that there was a Social Services Committee (of Metro Council) that actually made the decisions about child care. Nobody seemed to know how anything worked. At the beginning of every month, a man would come and check our roll book for the previous four weeks – huge, red journals, the kind they used in the eighteen hundreds. And he paid us for the previous month's attendance. He'd pay our invoice right then and there. But every 'A' in the roll book would cost us money – 'A' meaning absent. And each one cost us ten dollars. This went on for a long time until we eventually found out about Metro's Social Services Committee. So, Irene Kyle



from Central Neighbourhood House, Julie Mathien from the Toronto Board of Education, and I, and a number of community members, tried to make a presentation to this committee but we couldn't get on the agenda. There had to be a child care issue already on the agenda, otherwise you couldn't stand up and speak. And you couldn't simply ask them to put such an item on. You just had to wait until one came up.

"We attended the committee's meetings six or seven times and still weren't permitted to speak. It was getting extremely frustrating and so, for the first time in my career, I agreed that we should bring our kids to a public meeting. Each time we brought the kids, they got noisier and noisier until, at last, Metro Chairman Paul Godfrey said, 'Maybe we'd better hear these people.'

"We stood up and tossed those big leather-bound roll books across the table and I said, 'It doesn't make sense to do things this way. The system isn't working. We think we have ways to improve it based on enrollment, not attendance.' We were told to meet with Metro staff to work out a different system. That turned out to be another long process, but eventually we succeeded.

"Our presentation to the Social Services Committee led it to create a standing sub-committee on child care issues. Thus, Metro's first Child Care Advisory Committee was established, and we sat on that. It was the first such committee anywhere, a forerunner. Before that, child care had had no local voice. No one knew where the funding for child care came from, or that it was a combination of federal, provincial and municipal dollars."

Out of that advisory committee came the impetus for Metro staff to develop the policies and procedures to set up the budgetary process that the community organizers of day care had been asking for.



Decades of Change

As the following pages will show, the years between 1971 and 2001 were decades of profound and rapid change for Family Day Care Services. The Agency's leadership, specifically, the composition and philosophy of its Board of Directors, would, over time, undergo a fundamental change, as would the management practices and program priorities of successive Executive Directors. Of course, changes in leadership and management had a direct impact on staff, whose numbers and range of professional skills increased to keep up with more and varied child care programs that the Agency would offer. Since 1971, the number of children cared for has risen from a few dozen to over 4,800, and revenues have increased nearly 100-fold, from \$250,000 to almost \$25 million in the year 2,000.

Betty Quiggin retired from Family Day Care Services in 1976 and was replaced by Rev. Howard Watson, who stayed with the

Agency for approximately a year and a half. In 1978, John Pepin, who proved to be both innovative and entrepreneurial, took over as Executive Director and launched the Agency into a decade that is remembered by longtime staff members as one of the most exciting in the organization's long history.

Program Director Liz Colley, who joined Family Day Care Services in 1982, remembers Pepin's penchant for pushing the limits of the Agency's mandate, in the sense that he was always looking for new approaches to child care.

"He was always trying new ideas and new ways of providing service to families," recalls Colley.

Pepin was the first executive director to actively pursue private corporate sponsorship for some of the programs the Agency undertook during his tenure. In 1982, he was one of the key people behind the founding of the Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario (later, the Home Child Care Association of Ontario), which sought to address the specific concerns of licensed home day care.



“There’s no doubt about it,” says Administration and Finance Director Janet Tipton, who came to work at Family Day Care Services in 1980, “John Pepin was an entrepreneurial man. Prior to his arrival, we’d been a very conservative agency. He brought in many innovative changes, which meant that some of the staff moved on to make room for a new team of people who were ready to take the organization in new directions. And for the most part, the Board approved of his initiatives. It was hard for some staff to make the transition from a conventional social service agency to a more commercial service that was bottom line-driven. John was sometimes hard to read, and he had a way of tossing everything upside down and making us look at them in different ways, which was a very different approach for an organization like ours.”

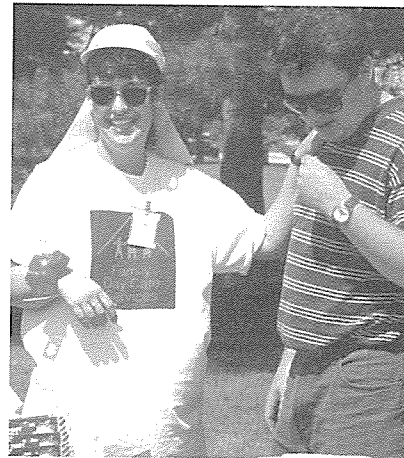
Pepin himself recalls that the transition was not always easy. Betty Quiggin and her Board, composed chiefly of men and women from Rosedale and Canada’s financial centre, Bay Street, ran the Agency in much the same way that their predecessors, the Lady Managers, had run the Protestant Orphans Home and Female Aid Society, more than a century and a quarter before. They were

extremely dedicated people who were committed to serving the needs of children. However, recalls Pepin, the Board tended to be conservative in its outlook and carefully measured every step. Pepin, on the other hand, was a risk-taker. The two in combination worked to strengthen the Agency.

“The Junior League played a major role on the Board of Family Day Care Services,” says Pepin. “It’s composed chiefly of younger women who engage in charitable volunteer work within their communities. We always had at least one placement on our Board from the Junior League.”

Under Pepin, the Board remained influential, acting as strong advocates for children and their families. In later years, a change began in the composition of the Board of Directors that would continue well after Maria de Wit had assumed the executive directorship of the organization in 1988. During that period of transition, the Board gradually came to include people representing a broader spectrum of society.

During the Pepin years, the Agency began to project a higher public profile by sponsoring child care workshops and publishing



articles on the subject and making them available to interested parties, not just in Toronto, but across Canada. As well, John Pepin was able to secure funding from the Levi Strauss Corporation to sponsor child care management workshops across the country.

In the 1980s, the property-casualty insurance industry suffered a case of nerves, thanks to a number of multi-million dollar court awards that had been made to injured persons. Virtually overnight, the industry refused to insure a surprisingly long list of clients, including child care centres, claiming they were a bad risk. As a result, many service providers turned to the Private Home Day Care Association of Ontario and Family Day Care Services to act as their advocate on the issue.

"I was on Peter Gzowski (CBC's national morning radio show, *Morningside*) a number of times. We just lobbied like crazy, did a lot of PR work, and forced the insurance industry to insure child care centres. So, we used our clout and our size to have a major influence on child care issues."

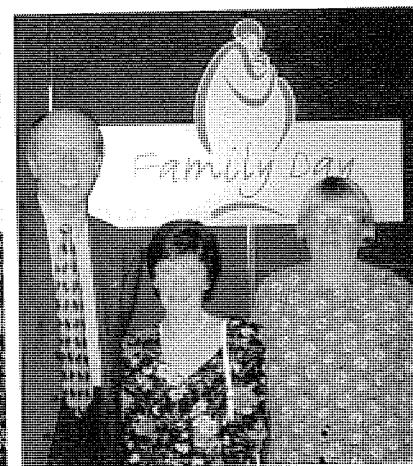
Pepin also changed the way in which the Agency was funded. He set up a number of revenue centres. One such revenue centre,

and the only one completely funded by the provincial government, was the Private Home Day Care for Developmentally Handicapped Children (known after 1991 as the Home Child Care Program for Children with Developmental Delays). Pepin is especially proud of this groundbreaking initiative, because, to get it up and running, he had to overcome resistance from certain naysayers who claimed regular home day care was not an option for developmentally challenged children.

"This was the first such program anywhere. It was a major coup. Children with and without developmental challenges were integrated into the homes. We provided special training, equipment and support."

Since Family Day Care Services was the first agency to provide such a service, the regulatory structure to deliver such a program had not yet been set in place.

"All the funding and all the government policies, the entire legislative framework flowed from that experience," says Pepin. "But it took us about two or three years of lobbying to convince people we could do it, and that the children didn't have to be in



institutional settings. I'd say that was one of the most important contributions we made in that period.

"Originally, some people in the field were not positive about it because they didn't think that we could care for the children in private homes; we couldn't have paraprofessionals doing a good job. So, we had to convince them – first by agreeing to work only with 'easier' kids. But almost immediately, we were inundated by applications to care for children with multiple challenges and we demonstrated that we could work with them.

"That was really great! And it was a significant part of the whole normalization process that was taking place during that era. I think that was a big contribution, from a program standpoint, that the organization made."

Under John Pepin, the Agency also devised and operated some decidedly commercial ventures, which were a radical departure from the standard not-for-profit services it had come to be known for. As an example, in 1979, the Agency introduced Day Care Finders, a full-fee home day care program for Metro Toronto parents who could afford to pay the entire cost of their children's

care. Over the next four years, this program expanded into Mississauga, Brampton, and the Region of York. In 1986, after five children and a private day care provider (not associated with the Agency) died in a house fire in Bolton, the Ministry of Community and Social Services freed up funding for family day care to allow the Day Care Finders program to expand into that community. The following year, the program was expanded to include fee-assisted families from York Region. And in 1988, Day Care Finders began serving the employees of Toronto's Hospital for Sick Children. The program would change and expand even further under Maria de Wit.

In the early years of the Pepin era, in 1980, the Agency began offering day care consulting services to large, private corporations. Another enterprise, which was sold to employers for their employees, was an employee assistance program that specialized in child care information, referral, and counselling. Called the Working Parents Day Care Assurance Program, it was inaugurated by Pepin in 1982.

"We created this program and then we franchised it. And it



was the first time a charity had ever franchised anything. We sold the idea to a commercial (day care) vendor in Ottawa and to a charity in British Columbia," says Pepin.

The program expanded into Montreal. In 1991, under Maria de Wit, it was streamlined with yet another of the profit-making initiatives taken by the Agency in the 1980s, the Elder Care Program, later known as the Elder Life Plan. Acting upon a management study that concluded there was a need for elder care in Toronto, the Agency offered seniors private home day care in their own residences. The Working Parents Day Care Assurance Program and the Elder Life Plan were combined in 1991 to form part of the Agency's Corporate Support Services. Their client list contained the names of 17 major companies, including the Xerox Corporation. Agency staff met face-to-face with the employees of their corporate clients to advise them of their day care options. It was a trustworthy nationwide service that linked employees with approved day care providers across Canada. However, it could not compete on price with lower cost automated services that required only a phone operator and a computer-driven database. In 1995,

the Agency was obliged to withdraw the service.

These programs did much to enhance the quality of employee assistance programs (EAPs) across Canada. Previously, EAPs had confined themselves to the health and well being of the individual employee. By focusing attention on child and elder day care, the Agency raised awareness in Corporate Canada that healthy families were as fundamentally important to their employees as their employees' health. Organizations learned that if they provided employees with programs designed to meet their family needs, their employees grew more at ease and were better able to function productively at work.

In the mid-1980s, the Agency also established the Temporary Child care Program, yet another form of respite care. This program was offered on an emergency basis to working parents whose children were ill and unable to go to their regular home child care giver. In such cases, the Agency sent a caregiver to the child's home until the child was well enough to resume a normal day care routine. This program was eventually cancelled by the Agency in 1989 for lack of adequate funding.



The needs of young mothers were also of great concern to Agency staff. In 1981, Family Day Care Services joined community advocates, such as writer June Callwood, the Ministry of Community and Social Services, Metro Toronto's Public Health Department, the Children's Aid Society, and individuals living in downtown Toronto, to establish Jessie's Centre for Teenagers, a support service for adolescent parents and their infants. Young mothers were encouraged to drop into the centre, where they would receive professional counselling and the support of their peers. A Family Day Care Services worker was seconded to Jessie's to deliver a 24-hour-a-day emergency respite care program for teen moms who experienced difficulties coping with their roles as parents. Once the program was established and operating successfully, Jessie's assumed full responsibility for its own operation. Today, Jessie's continues to offer much needed assistance to approximately 500 families.

There was even a brief attempt to launch a nanny service, but it was soon abandoned because the Agency could not ensure that the service would be financially viable, or that its reputation for

high standards would be maintained.

The Home Day Care Program, which began in East York, is one program that has grown significantly over the years in response to growing demand. It exists today as one of the two core programs provided by Family Day Care Services to families living in the Regions of Peel and York and certain districts of the City of Toronto. In 1980, the program expanded into Etobicoke, when the Agency took over that municipality's Home Day Care Program, which had been run by a non-profit agency that had intended to terminate it. In 1986, the program expanded into Scarborough. For the next seven years, the number of families served by it in East York, North York, Etobicoke, and Scarborough remained stable. It was not until 1993 that the Home Day Care Program got its biggest boost, which came in the form of the Agency's biggest challenge. Before that happened, though, John Pepin would leave the Agency and Maria de Wit would join Family Day Care Services.

After leaving York University's Co-operative Day Care Centre, which she ran between 1972 and 1979, de Wit worked for ten years as the Assistant Director of the Metro Toronto Children's Services



Division, where she developed policy and program activities in the field of child care. She had a background in finance and business administration and was a popular lecturer in the Early Childhood Development Program at George Brown College. Over the years, she had also been seconded several times to the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Clearly, Maria de Wit was eminently qualified for the job of Executive Director of Family Day Care Services. But she was also extremely well connected politically and knew that the provincial government was considering changes in the way home day care was operated. She was faced with the decision of staying in a secure job with Metro that she thoroughly enjoyed, or taking on a new position with an organization whose future might be very much in doubt. Nevertheless, when she was asked in what direction she would take the Agency, if she decided to accept the job, she answered, "I'd expand its services and integrate the home-based child care programs the Agency already runs with centre-based care."

Prior to Maria de Wit's preliminary discussions with Family Day Care Services, the provincial government had announced that

every new primary school built in Ontario had to include a child day care centre.

"There you are!" said de Wit to the members of the search team. "There's your capital. You go for every school in the communities where you already provide home day care, and you give the parents a choice."

De Wit's recommendation was passed onto the Board. It was made clear that if they decided to hire her, they would have to make a commitment to expand into centre-based child care. On May 1, 1988, Maria de Wit became the new Executive Director of Family Day Care Services.

Shortly after the Agency submitted and received approval of proposals to the Peel and York Boards of Education to establish Family Day Care Centres in some of their soon-to-be-built elementary schools.

Recalling the Agency's entry into centre-based care, Liz Colley said, "Family Day Care Services was in the right place at the right time. With all the new schools that were opening up in the regional municipalities of Peel and York, once we'd been approved



for one or two, it was natural that we should have been contracted for more. Best of all, we didn't have to pay for the buildings. The Ministries of Education and Community and Social Services were in partnership. The school boards provided the space, the provincial government paid for supplies and equipment, and Family Day Care Services hired the staff to operate the program in each centre."

There followed a series of school-based child care centre openings in Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, Markham, Richmond Hill, Thornhill, and Newmarket. As part of this period of rapid expansion, in 1993, the Agency was given the responsibility of managing the Ministry of Community and Social Services' conversion initiative whereby commercial child care centres were converted to non-profit operations. In 1994, a partnership agreement with the Dufferin-Peel Separate School Board led to the opening of the St. Francis Xavier Child Care Centre for infant children to age six, in Mississauga. Since the first school-based centres opened in 1989, the Agency's network of centres in Toronto and the Regions of Peel and York has expanded

to 25. Collectively, they care for approximately 2,400 children, or approximately half of all the children served by the Agency, the other 2,400 being cared for in private homes affiliated with Family Day Care Services.

Of particular interest is the child care centre that was established in Hagerman House, a pioneer farmhouse built around 1855, now designated as a heritage building, at the corner of 14th Avenue and Birchmount Road in Markham. After acquiring the property in 1994, an ambitious capital campaign was launched to underwrite the cost of restorations and renovations. The centre opened a year later to serve children from six weeks to six years of age. Incorporated within the centre are the administrative offices for the Agency's centre-based and home care operations in the Regional Municipality of York.

According to former Board chair, Dr. John Fauquier, the acquisition and transformation of Hagerman House illustrated very well Maria de Wit's considerable capabilities as a manager.

Fauquier and the rest of the Board had already seen ample evidence of their Executive Director's ability to seize an



opportunity for the Agency and, with the help of senior staff, finesse it to a successful conclusion. The year before, on July 12, 1993, the Regional Municipality of Peel's Social Services Commissioner, Paul Vezina, had announced that in the fall the municipality would no longer provide home day care to approximately 1,000 children in Peel. This decision was taken because of the fear that discussions about provider unionization in Toronto and Ottawa would spread to other areas of Ontario, and if providers were granted employee status, it could lead to significant cost increases that would not be matched by government funding.

Cheryl Rogers, who used to work as a supervisor in the Region's home child care program, and who now manages the program for Family Day Care Services, was as surprised as the rest of her colleagues at Vezina's announcement.

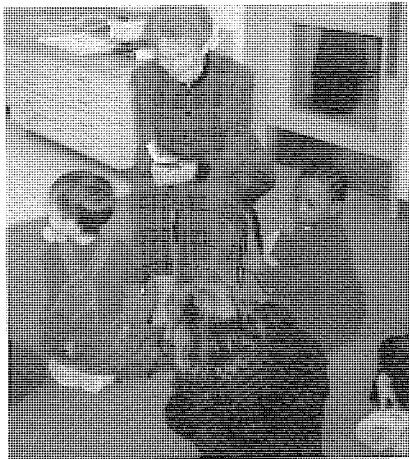
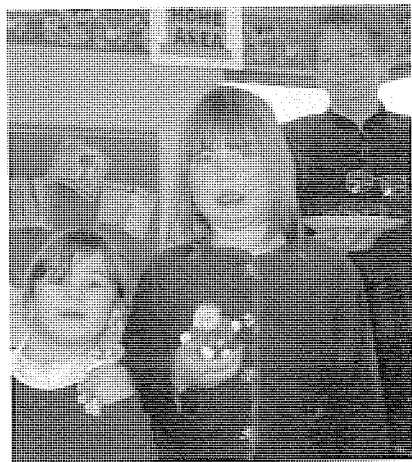
"It came right out of the blue," she recalls. "We were just called in and told that as of September 4, the program was closing. No one had any idea what would happen to the children or to the caregivers. The Region had approached COMSOC (the Ministry of Community and Social Services) in search of someone else to

operate the program. The parents, the caregivers, the children, Peel employees like me – all of us were in limbo. Letters were sent to all the parents."

Caregivers from across the Region banded together to fight the decision, but it was to no avail. Council had made up its mind. As staff members, Cheryl Rogers and her co-workers had always been discouraged from attending council meetings. But after the announcement was made and the issue heated up, they were asked to be present. Caregivers, parents, and children packed the public gallery.

Rogers said, "People got up and made presentations, but it was a *fait accompli*. The councillors weren't really listening. They just said, 'Sorry. Social Contract.' (an erroneous reference to a fiscal initiative taken by the NDP government of Premier Bob Rae that had nothing whatever to do with the real reason the Region had withdrawn from home day care). Roads, water, sewers come before day care."

When representatives of the provincial government asked Maria de Wit if Family Day Care Services would be interested in



taking over Peel's home day care program, she referred the matter to the Board.

"We had to make a decision," says John Fauquier. "Did we want to take on something that would compel us to almost double the size of the Agency? We decided that we were prepared to do that, but the provincial government would have to come up with the money to pay for our transition costs. Which they did."

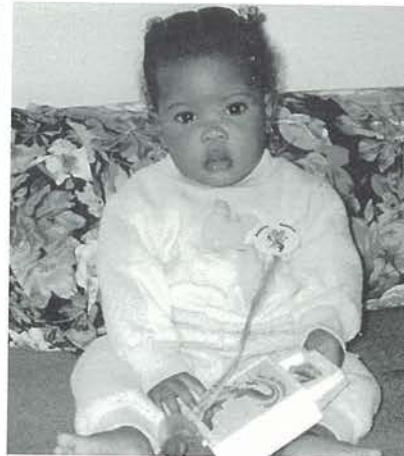
The Agency was committed. And with only a matter of weeks before the Region of Peel's program came to an end, leaving hundreds of households with no day care, Maria de Wit and her staff got busy.

"My respect for Maria had been growing steadily," recalls Fauquier, "but she utterly astounded me this time! Our first meeting with the province took place in mid-August. By October 2 – about a month and a half later – our first satellite office, located at the corner of Derry Road and Tomken Road, had been rented, decorated, furnished, equipped, staffed, and was up and running. And in that time, she and her staff had virtually doubled the size of the Agency."

Jean Wise, Program Manager for Peel Home Child Care, remembers the excitement she felt during those frantic six weeks. She divided her time between interviewing prospective employees, parents, and caregivers. There was also an enormous amount of paperwork that had to be dealt with and information transferred from the Region before the transition was complete.

"We had no office, so I had to work out of the trunk of my car," she recalls. "I would go home at the end of the day exhausted and say to my husband, 'I can't do this! It's just too overwhelming!' But then I'd get up next morning and do it all over again."

In the midst of all this expansion, the Agency remained committed to providing quality programming to the children and families it served. The Day Care Finders program became known as the Agency's Home Child Care programs in Peel and York Regions, and in Toronto. In 1993, the High/Scope Curriculum was introduced into all child care centres. The curriculum was first developed in the United States in the early 1970s as part of the work to strengthen Head Start and other early childhood development programs, and had grown out of the work of



American developmental psychologist, Dr. David Weikart.

According to Program Resource Consultant Jill Poisson, who first introduced High/Scope into Family Day Care Services child care centres, the curriculum is highly enriching for children and a major departure from conventional, teacher-initiated learning, which relies on large group activities with the teacher at the centre. With High/Scope, all activities are performed in small groups with one staff member for every eight children.

“High/Scope provides a much more practical approach, since children learn best when they learn actively,” says Poisson. “We discourage a lot of teacher-initiated learning because the children are not at an age when they can physically or intellectually cope with that kind of environment.”

The children plan their own day. Everything they do is based on what are referred to in the High/Scope lexicon as “key experiences.” For example, before children can learn to read and write, they need to know how to classify things, seriate (put things in their proper order), group things together, and separate things. And before they can learn to tell time, they must first understand

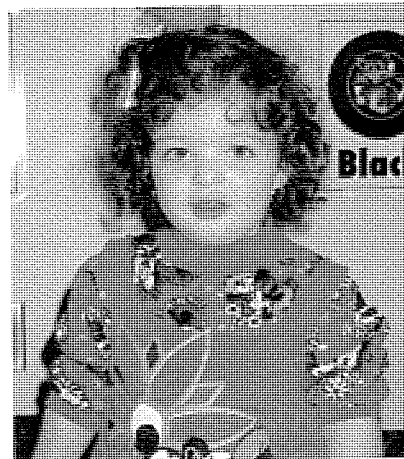
what is meant by “before” and “after.”

Program Resource Consultant Lisa Pecarski says, “We set up our play room with all of these key experiences in mind. That’s how we’re able to observe the children develop, and we’re then able to share this information with the parents.”

Though introduced a few years later in Canada, High/Scope has been around long enough in the U.S. for David Weikart to have charted its impact on the lives of the people who were introduced to the curriculum as children 30 years ago. He has been able to compare their development and performance against that of children who experienced conventional child care curricula or none at all.

Says Pecarski, “Weikart found that nearly 30 years down the road, the children who were exposed to the High/Scope curriculum earned higher than average incomes, stayed in school longer and thus attained higher levels of education, ran afoul of the law less often – though when they did, for some curious reason they tended to commit acts of vandalism more often than their peers did.”

Weikart’s curriculum also carries within it lessons on how to



get along with others. Children are exposed to several key experiences that help them to build social relationships with those around them. One of these is conflict resolution. The children learn how to listen and to talk to one another. Infants and toddlers learn to take turns, to share toys and equipment and to build relationships with their teachers and the other children in the room. Incorporated within the program is an anti-bullying component and lessons that teach children how to resolve conflicts with one another without the need for their teacher to intervene.

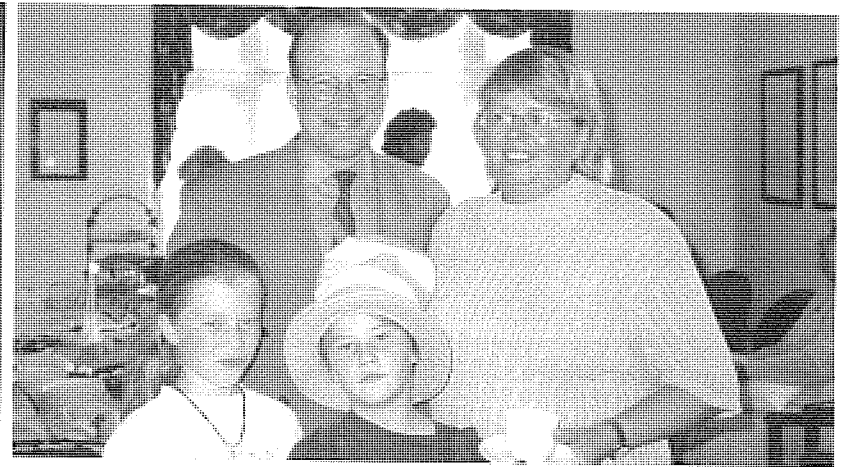
By the time the children reach school age, they have become experienced problem solvers, say Pecarski. "We are now going to work with our children in all Family Day Care Services child care centres to compile our own studies that we hope will tell us if conflict resolution techniques have a long-lasting effect."

Because Canada lags behind the United States, where many jurisdictions have adopted the High/Scope curriculum from kindergarten to grade eight, the program does not mesh well with the Canadian kindergarten program, which relies, of necessity, on

large group, teacher-led experiences. "Nevertheless," says Lisa Pecarski, "High/Scope provides children with a good start."

Home caregivers are actively encouraged to incorporate into their work some of High/Scope's core principles. Though contracted, trained, and supervised by Family Day Care Services, home day caregivers are self-employed. They care for children who range in age from infancy to pre-teens, who arrive at, and leave, the day care home at different hours each day, and who, developmentally, are at different stages in their lives. Moreover, home care providers don't have the expensive play and educational equipment that the centres do. Nevertheless, home caregivers provide a higher degree of one-on-one care, which many parents want for their children. The Agency assists home caregivers to set up an environment that is conducive to learning.

Says Lisa Pecarski, "A program's only as good as its environment. So we try to teach the same environmental concepts to home care givers that we use in the centres. That means that in the day care home you have a book area where kids can read or look at pictures quietly. You put your block play area near your



pretend play area because the activities that go on there tend to be a bit noisy, but it allows for a lot of creativity and a lot of big movement.”

Five times a year, the Agency’s 600 home caregivers receive resource kits, large plastic “goodie bags” containing glue, craft and tissue paper, stickers, and pages of suggestions for fun and creative activities in which the children can involve themselves. Since the caregivers and the children represent a rich and diverse ethnic and cultural mix, none of the activities are sectarian or tied to any ethnic group. Instead, they celebrate seasonal changes or activities that all of the women and children can participate in. Thus, instead of celebrating Halloween, which is associated with the Christian tradition, the goodie bags contain activities connected to the colour orange. In December, the theme may be snow pals instead of snowmen and Christmas. The care that Lisa Pecarski and her colleagues take in selecting materials for their resource kits demonstrates their determination to be as inclusive of every cultural and ethnic background and tradition as they possible can. It also speaks to their commitment to Family Day Care Services’

Anti-Racism Policy, which was drafted by the Agency in 1992, and which was the first step taken by any Canadian child care agency to address a growing serious societal problem. In fact, the Agency led the way in fashioning an HIV/AIDS Policy in 1994, and harassment Policy in 1999.

The relationships that exist between the Agency’s home and centre-based day care workers and the children who trustingly come to them every day has long been recognized as special, something to be protected and nurtured. Their bond is as strong as those that existed between the orphans and matrons during the Agency’s orphanage years, and those that existed between foster mothers and children during the Agency’s foster period.



Introducing Strangers to Strangers

In Ontario, in 1995, approximately 9% of home child care arrangements were regulated; the rest were informal arrangements worked out between parents and relatives, friends and, in a large number of cases, strangers. Provincial standards under the Day Nurseries Act govern only child care providers who are affiliated with agencies; they must also meet local fire, health, and safety regulations. Child care advocates like Maria de Wit often wonder if every person who provides day care services to non-relatives should be directly licensed and, therefore, accountable for the quality of the care they provide to children.

In respect of accountability she says, "I've always wondered why people need a license to drive a taxi, or run a restaurant, but nobody needs a license to look after children.

"As far as Family Day Care Services is concerned, we hold the licence, so we are accountable for the care our home care providers give. And since these women are with the children every day, and our supervisors are there only so many days a month, the Agency has to strengthen the ability of these women to do a good job. And we've been doing things this way for 35 years. Quality is not determined by standards and licensing alone. It has everything to do with *how* you support, encourage and help to educate caregivers to provide services that will meet our standards."

Since the vast majority of home child care arrangements are unregulated, de Wit is sometimes asked why there is a need for an agency like Family Day Care Services in Greater Toronto.

"In a vast urban area like this, families don't know each other the way they used to years ago. And many of them certainly don't know the people who look after their children every day. So, we introduce strangers to strangers."

Over the years, Family Day Care Services has grown to become Ontario's largest provider of home and centre-based child care services, but according to Maria de Wit, the Agency's



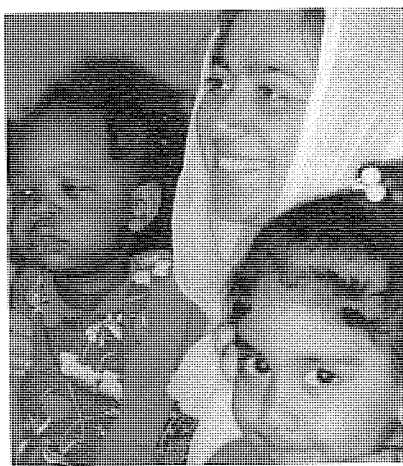
pre-eminence has more to do with the willingness of the members of its management team to involve themselves in the communities they serve than with its \$25 million a year operating budget.

“Every member of the management team spends time in the community, helping out with a range of grassroots initiatives that sometimes have to do with our business, but often don’t,” says de Wit. She herself exemplifies that spirit of involvement by chairing Toronto’s Child Care Advisory Committee, and by sitting on a number of other committees, such as the Children and Youth Action Committee.

One of the ways Family Day has continued to demonstrate leadership in home child care during the 1990s has been through its work with other agencies to resolve a number of issues arising from the lack of clarity about providers’ employment status in child care and labour legislation. When home child care was first introduced, it was seen as a variation of foster care. The idea was that mothers who were already at home caring for their young children could take in a few extra children to help out their neighbors who worked outside of the home, and, at the same time,

earn a few dollars on the side. “Good” care was seen as an extension of “good” mothering.

Over time, however, with increasing agency involvement and a growing professional interest in promoting quality care, agencies began to introduce a number of orientation, training and support programs for providers. In 1978, with the introduction of government regulations for home child care, expectations of providers became more formal, and so providers were subject to inspection not only by agency home visitors, but also by municipal and provincial government officials. Although the demands on providers increased, they continued to be paid as though they were independent workers, and so were not eligible for minimum wage or basic benefits such as vacation and maternity leave, or unemployment insurance. The combination of long hours of work, increased professional expectations, together with government-set provider rates that were often lower than the going community rates, led to discontent among some day care providers. In 1995, in the hope of addressing some of these problems, providers from Macaulay Child Development Centre and Andrew Fleck Child



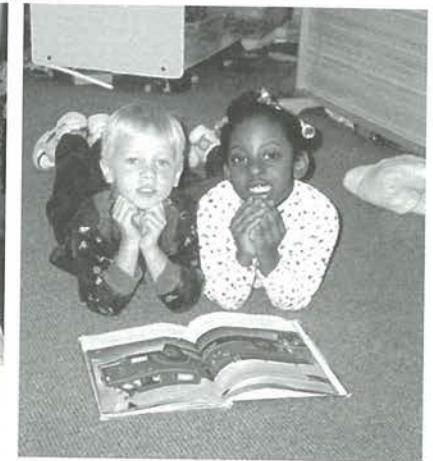
Care Centre in Ottawa initiated a unionization process.

This process raised a number of questions about providers' employment status. Although home child care agencies and child care legislation had always assumed that providers were independent workers, when challenged, their status under labour legislation was unclear and inconsistent – in some assessments they were judged to be employees, in others, as dependent contractors or independent workers. This lack of clarity about provider status, together with fears about the increased costs associated with employee status and the potential changes in the way of work associated with it, led a number of home child care agencies to initiate a review of the way home child care was operated. In 1994, under the umbrella of the Home Child Care Association of Ontario, a number of agencies participated in discussions to develop three alternative models of home child care that would clarify providers' employment status, preserve quality, and still be economically viable. While officials from the Ministry of Community and Social Services sat in on the discussions and initially expressed a willingness to fund the development of pilot

projects to test out these new approaches, government funding to support these efforts was cut when the Conservative government came to power. As a consequence, the issues related to providers' status and the development of an alternative model of home child care were never tested or resolved.

In 1996, the question of provider employment status resurfaced again, when a home child care provider from Wellington County filed a complaint with the Ontario Pay Equity Commission claiming employee status and expressing her concern that providers had been left out of the region's pay equity plan. While the Commission's hearings were lengthy and took a number of years, the Tribunal's decision was that the provider was an employee and therefore eligible for pay equity payments. This decision was appealed by the County and was still under litigation at the end of 2000.

In the meantime, however, many agencies were becoming increasingly concerned about the potential financial impact on their services if other providers followed suit. Agencies were caught in the middle – they were expected to comply with pay equity



requirements on one hand – while on the other, child care funding did not recognize these additional costs. In the absence of government support, the Board of Family Day Care Services took the initiative and sponsored a “think tank” bringing together many of the larger home child care agencies in the province. The group, which met at the Elora Mill in May 1999, shared information about the current dilemmas facing home child care and reaffirmed the need to re-think the way home child care was delivered and to test out other approaches to service. Following these meetings, a working group of agencies, “the Elora Group” – Family Day Care Services, Andrew Fleck Child Care Services, Macaulay Child Development Centre, Network Child Care Services, Today’s Family – Caring for you Child, and the Home Child Care Program of the Regional Municipality of Waterloo, began follow-up meetings to consider what might be involved in an alternative framework for the provision of home child care.

After much background research, group members remained convinced of the need for change – not only to resolve questions about providers’ employment status, but also, of the need to

improve the quality of care and extend it to more children and families. Further, they thought that it was important to adapt the service to the newer, more holistic thinking that sees home child care as a family support service, and part of an integrated network of community services.

As part of the background research, the Board of Family Day Care Services commissioned Irene Kyle to carry out a critical review of the theoretical and research literature on quality in home child care settings. This monograph was subsequently supported by the City of Toronto and the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, as well as by other members of the Elora Group. The long-term goal of the group is to develop an alternative model of home child care and to carry out a demonstration project to evaluate its feasibility and effectiveness. While the details of the model are still being worked out by group members, the goal of their work is to develop an alternative framework that maintains and enhances the quality of home child care for all children by requiring all providers (caring for unrelated children) to be licensed; extends education, resource and support programs to all



community caregivers; raises the value of carework and the status of providers; enhances the partnership between providers and agency staff; and develops supportive linkages with other child and family services in the community.

A Change of Leadership and Name

Since the mid-1990s, as a result of a recruitment drive that enticed an ethnically richer and more gender-balanced group of people to join the Board, the leadership of Family Day Care Services has also been more involved in the community than it had ever been before.

“We put an ad in the *Toronto Star* and got 150 applications. Here we were advertising for board members who wouldn’t receive a dime for their time, and in fact might even find themselves being ‘hit up’ for money sometimes. We ranked the applications, which included a biography of each person, and conducted interviews. We ended up with a more egalitarian Board whose members really do represent the ethnic make-up of the community – with all the respect that is due the members of previous boards, but who tended

to occupy only the top rungs of the economic and social ladder,” says Board member John Fauquier.

Another Board member, Bob Hollingshead, worked with Fauquier and de Wit on the selection team.

“I remember how impressed the three of us were by the qualifications of these people,” recalls Hollingshead. “Many of them were highly qualified in the field of child care. As a result, the contribution that the Board has been able to make has been tremendous.”

The quest for new blood on the Board also attracted a number of professionals representing other disciplines.

“Of course we have lawyers and accountants,” says current Board president, Liz Howson. “You need people who understand the law and numbers. But we also have social service workers, a psychologist, management consultants, parents who are clients, a labour specialist, and any number of people who understand public policy issues.”

Not long after the Board reconstituted itself, it tackled the issue of governance – the way in which the Agency would be run



and the direction it would take. The guide for this important board renewal exercise, called *Carverization*, would be the work of U.S. management consultant John Carver, who asserted that all boards of directors, especially those that run non-profit organizations, should concern themselves exclusively with means, and that staff should concern themselves only with ends. In other words, the Board should deal with global issues, the organization's policies, its budgets, and the overall direction to be taken, while staff members put into action Board decisions. The result was a Board that was much more involved and better informed.

Says John Fauquier, "When I joined the Board in the 1980s, we were assigned to sit on various committees – personnel committee, program committee, finance committee, those sorts of things. They tended to meet around noon. Often, the meetings were rushed and we found that the staff had already done their work. All we seemed to do was rubber stamp their reports. There was poor information flow and very little governance. We did a Board renewal exercise in the mid-90s and imposed the principles of John Carver. I think we were quite successful because today, there are no longer any

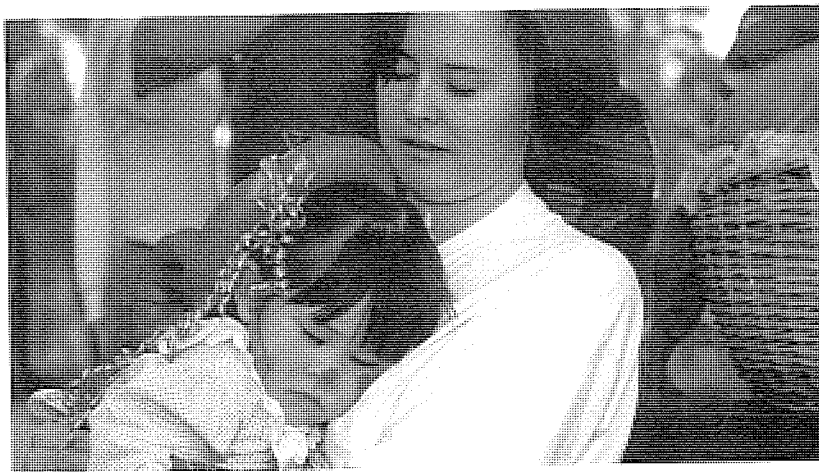
standing committees, just the odd ad hoc committee, say, to deal with short-term projects like selling our building. Instead, we have general committee, or committee of the whole, and board meetings are fun. We get things done. When we table government policy issues, or advocacy issues, things get pretty passionate!"

Maria de Wit agrees that the Carverization of the Board has yielded wonderful dividends.

"But," she says, "sometimes, when we have a meeting, I can't get them to leave!"

Changing the way in which the Agency markets and promotes itself was among the dividends that accrued from scrutinizing and improving Agency governance. In 1995, with the assistance of a newly appointed marketing consulting firm, the Agency developed a new name, a new logo, and a new slogan. "Family Day" became the Agency's brand name, under a simple but powerfully expressive line drawing of a child being held in the protective arms of an adult, above the slogan "Next to You, We Care the Most."

Says Maria de Wit, "With these changes, we found a way to express what we had known all along: that parents are first and



foremost in the lives of children, and we, as an Agency, are the helpers. We support families, and we can never care as much as their families.”

Two years later, the Agency also conducted in-house customer service training to deepen staff and board members’ understanding of what it really means to serve children and their families. The central thrust of customer service training was reinforced by in-house family-centred training, which the Agency conducted at the same time.

“When we looked at both of these training initiatives, we suddenly experienced a blinding flash of the obvious,” recalls Maria de Wit. “They were one and the same. And we realized that, to be successful, every staff and board member had to internalize the principles of customer and family-centred training.”

Since Family Day employs approximately 300 people, that internalization process did not happen overnight. However, by the time every staff member had been through the training, a period of a year and a half, it did happen. People talked about it informally over coffee and in staff meetings until, eventually, everyone had

both heard and absorbed the message.

Today, all of Family Day’s policies and practices are based on family-centred child care, which sees families from an ecological perspective, meaning staff considers the child in the context of the total family and the larger community. There is recognition of the interrelationships and interconnectedness between the child, his or her family and community, and society at large. Families have strengths, they’re unique and multidimensional. Most importantly, families are the primary influence on the lives of their children.



Mississauga December 1995

Jordan Richards is a very happy and excited two-year-old. This is his first day at the Hazel McCallion Child Care Centre. He can hardly wait to get through the door. Throughout the past week, Jordy's mother, Kim, and Syl, his father, have been preparing their son for the moment he would wave goodbye, strike out on his own, and meet new friends. Since Kim is obliged to be at her office this morning, Syl must take Jordy to the Centre. He unzips the toddler's winter coat and tugs off his toque to reveal a mass of black curls and a pair of cheeks that neither of his grandparents have been able to resist pinching since he was born.

Jordy's teacher, Beth, greets father and son at the front door. With no hesitation, Jordy walks confidently into the brightly-lit and colourfully decorated room and begins to play with the other children. Summarily dismissed, though grateful that his son hadn't dissolved into tears, Syl has a quick word with Beth and leaves.

Later that day, when Syl arrives to pick Jordy up, Beth hands him a card in the shape of a snowman. On the card, she wrote:

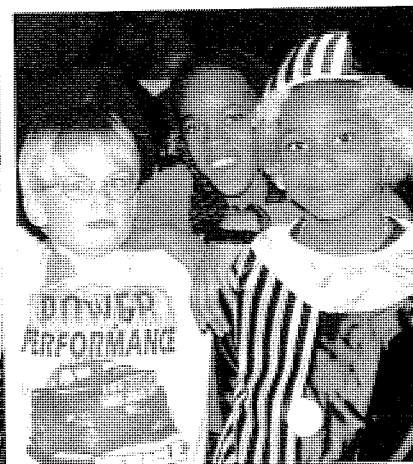
"Kim and Syl:

"Jordy had a great first day! He said goodbye to Dad with no tears and participated in all the activities. He had a few tears during transition times, but settled down quickly once we were involved. He ate half a serving of lunch and settled down on his bed nicely (no crying, fell asleep about one o'clock). We sang a lot of songs and had a lot of cuddles. He's a great addition to our room! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to see me. — Beth.

"p.s. The ABC song brought quite a reaction."

When Beth sang the ABC song to Jordy, as she was changing his diaper, the little fellow burst into tears and sobbed, "My mommy sings me that song."

In the course of the next year, Jordy settled comfortably into what his parents came to regard as his "second home." Their relationship with Beth deepened until she was thought of as a member of the family. But everything comes to an end, and Beth's association with Family Day was no exception. She had decided to further her education. She would leave the Agency early in the New Year.

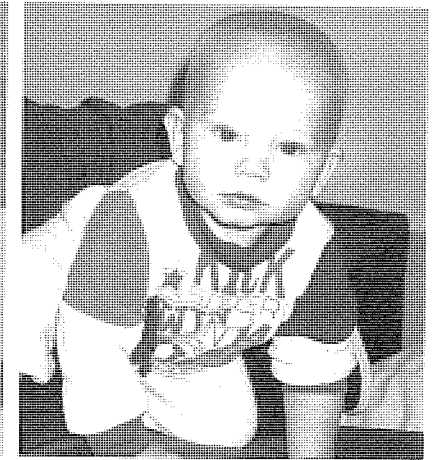
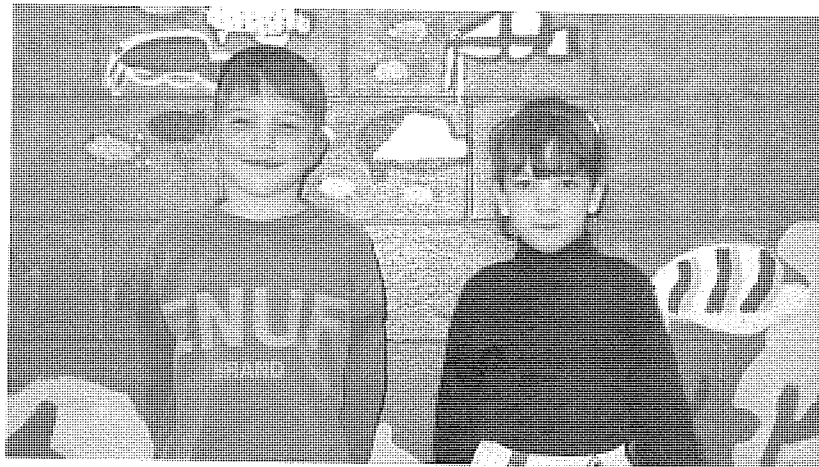
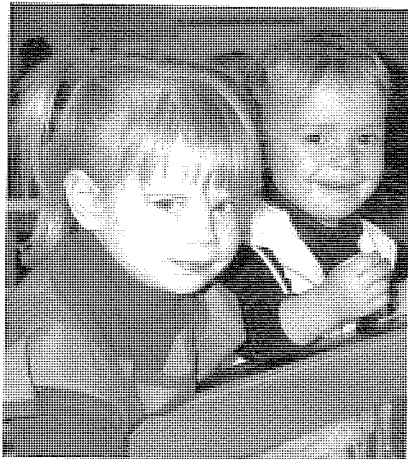


Mississauga January 1997

"Kim and Syl:

"It's hard to believe the time has come to say goodbye. I don't have to tell you how much I've enjoyed working with Jordy and getting to know you both. Jordy is an incredible little boy with a lot of spunk and drive. His charm has made my stay here a memorable one. He is a happy little boy who's sensitive and bright. You've done a wonderful job with him. He's even inspired me to have kids (in the future, that is). I will miss him terribly and think of him often. – Beth.

"p.s. My mornings won't be the same without those hugs!"



The Fourth Paradigm

What lies ahead for Family Day? After 150 years of meeting the needs of children and their families, what services, or package of services, as Bob Hollingshead refers to them, will the Agency offer to families?

“Quality day care is and always will be of fundamental importance, especially in the early years of a child’s development,” he insists. “For us to survive and to thrive, we’re going to have to be very open-minded about new ideas. Of course, what happens to Family Day is important to a large number of people. The Agency is considered a leader in promoting quality child care. And we’ve always been committed to finding solutions to families’ needs. That’s where our strength lies.”

One way in which Family Day might provide solutions for families, says Maria de Wit, is in the area of caregiver training and education.

“I see us extending our education programs to include parents,” she says. “If we had some community resource programs, they could be available to everyone who cares for children, whether they be parents or caregivers. But we’d have to find a way to do that efficiently. The trouble is space. It’s expensive. And the government funding for family support services is still very limited. Perhaps there’s a solution somewhere. We’ll have to explore it.”

“We’re going through a paradigm shift, and it’s towards the support of families. It’s not only by providing child care that we can support families. The Agency should be in any business that helps families raise good citizens,” says de Wit.

John Fauquier agrees. He and his colleagues on the Board are in favour of any initiative that will raise the bar higher.

“It’s about quality care. We’re constantly asking ourselves, ‘Where we can take child care from here? What more can we do?’ We constantly push ourselves into research, push ourselves into policy issues.”

With Fauquier as its driving force, the Board of Family Day has, for the past few years, pursued the development of Canada’s



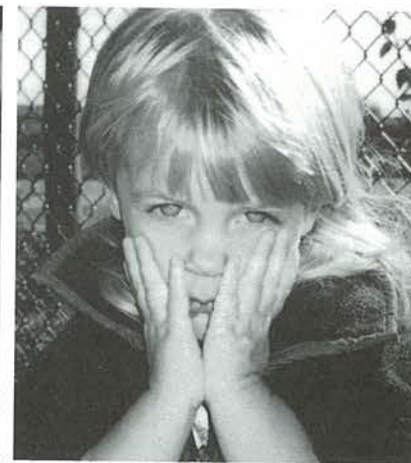
first Centre for Child Care Excellence. When he first proposed the idea, his fellow Board members wanted to know what this “institute” would be like. He told them that at first there’d be no bricks and mortar, not even an office. Instead, Family Day would sponsor working luncheons and seminars. Perhaps, he said, they’d fund child care research. They would celebrate excellence within the Agency among staff members, and they’d strengthen connections with the academic community and their sister agencies in the field. And because Family Day is a major presence in that field, the Agency was in a great position to make things happen. Eventually the Board endorsed the concept of a Centre for Excellence.

The first initiative the Centre took was to sponsor research being conducted into home child care by Irene Kyle, who then was a doctoral student at the University of Guelph. Kyle’s interest in doing the study grew out of a concern that much of the existing research in home child care had not consulted with providers directly about their knowledge and experience and had often ignored their needs as care workers. Rather than taking providers

and their work for granted, the study took provider’s experiences as the starting point and sought to learn more about how providers made sense of their work of caring for other people’s children. Kyle interviewed 15 agency-affiliated and 15 independent home child care providers in Toronto and several smaller communities in southwest Ontario. Providers’ accounts of their experiences of caring for children were very insightful and helped Kyle to understand the supports and working conditions providers require if they are to nurture children and support their families on an on-going basis. Kyle is clear about the important role the Centre played in helping to support her research: “In Canada, it is difficult to find funding to support any research in child care. Without financial and on-going moral support from Maria de Wit and the Board, I wouldn’t have been able to carry out this study.”

Providers’ comments about what made for “good” care led to an interest in how quality is defined in home child care, and eventually to Kyle’s preparation of the background report on quality for the Centre.

Says Fauquier, “The thing that really got the Centre off the



ground, though, was our association with Professors Bruce Ryan and Donna Lero of the Department of Family Studies (now the Department of Family Relations and Applied Nutrition) of the University of Guelph.”

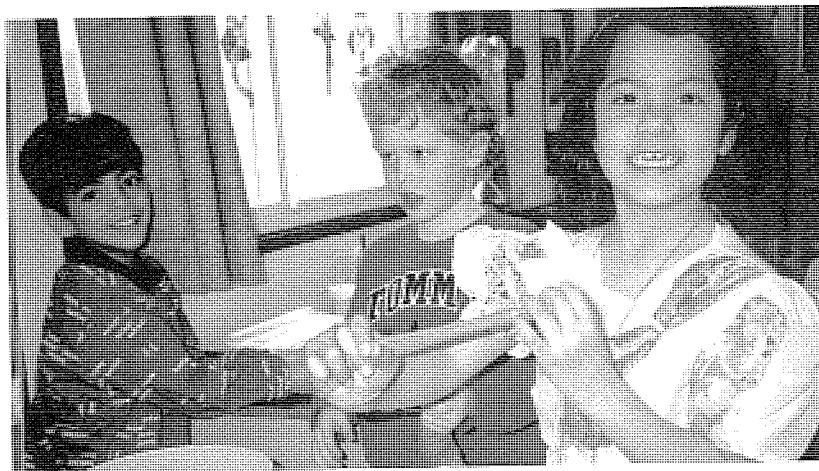
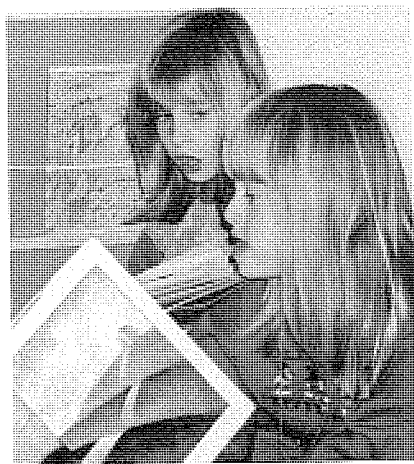
It was agreed that in May 1998, Family Day and the University would sponsor a conference at the Metro Convention Centre at which faculty members and graduate students would present papers on child care. The papers dealt with applied research because both the Agency and the University sought to extract practical ideas for use by the entire field of child care.

“Our working relationship with the folks at the University was divine from day one,” recalls Fauquier, “Family Day looked after the logistics – provided the facility, did the promotion, helped get the papers published in the *Canadian Journal of Research in Early Childhood Education*. For their part, the University put out notices for papers, reviewed the abstracts that were submitted by the students – the academic piece of the puzzle. We stuck to our respective roles and recognized the mutual benefits that would accrue to the University and the Agency. Our keynote speaker was

children’s author, Robert Munsch, who had been an adjunct professor in that same faculty at the University. We all felt the day was a great success because that kind of thing had never been done before.”

The notion of a Centre for Child Care Excellence blends well with Maria de Wit’s desire to extend child care training to anyone who might be interested, and could one day lead to Family Day making a wide range of helpful child-based information available on its web site.

“There are no limitations on new ways of communicating, new ways of providing services,” says Fauquier. “But more than anything, will the Centre for Child Care *Excellence* – and that’s the key word – raise the bar in child care? Will it provoke people to serve children and their families better – more efficiently and in a caring way? If it does, we will have succeeded.”



Postscript

In 1851, illness or death of one or both parents was the primary reason a child came into the care of the Protestant Orphans' Home and Female Aid Society. In those days, the Lady Managers believed it was their mission to rescue the city's underprivileged and homeless children. Since the task they set for themselves was born both of religious conviction and recognition of their duty as members of the ruling class, they set about it with the kind of missionary zeal that many in today's secular world would regard with cool condescension. But no one should be smug about their efforts, for with virtually no government support, and in the face of overwhelming need, the Lady Managers and their sisters operating the handful of other child rescue agencies throughout the city, offered the only hope many children had of escaping disease, starvation and, all too often, death. Long before women won the right to vote and to hold public office, the Lady Managers

established themselves as leaders in the field of child welfare. They maintained their presence throughout the foster care years until, in the early 1960s, the Agency transformed itself into Greater Toronto's primary home day care provider. But all through the years, the commitment to quality services for children and families remained unshakable.

Generations have passed since a homeless orphan named Tom had to scavenge for food amid the wharves and back alleys of a dirty colonial town. And yet a bond exists between him and well-loved, well-fed Jordan Richards. That bond is a venerable agency that celebrates its 150th anniversary in 2001. In that time, it has been a sanctuary and, in a very real sense, a second home to thousands of orphan, foster, and child care children, whose lives have been and will continue to be profoundly changed for the good by the experience.

In each period of Family Day's history, the Agency, always in touch with and responsive to community needs, devised and delivered programs to children and their families in advance of government financial support or regulation. Indeed, in the initial

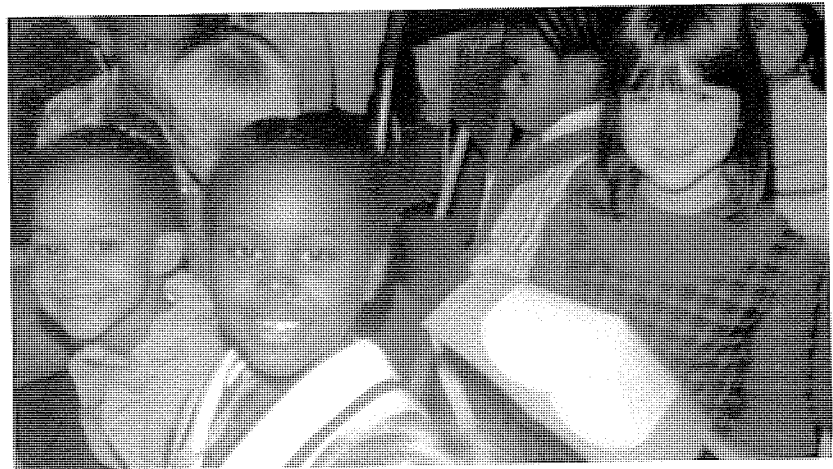


stages, the programs they provided invariably met with official indifference or outright resistance. In time, and given enough advocacy and prodding in the media, various levels of government would yield to public pressure and support a particular initiative.

As Family Day begins its 151st year, it is once again faced with the challenge of re-inventing itself. It faces the challenge of transforming government perception yet again by encouraging legislators to recognize the need for a new way of thinking about child care. Instead of thinking about child care as a welfare service, current research suggests that it should be regarded as a child development and family support service offering children valuable care and educational experiences and supporting parents in their efforts to raise their children. Quality home child care also contributes to the community by freeing parents to work, by enabling them to become reliable workers who are able to provide financially for their families, pay taxes and otherwise contribute to the economy.

As we have seen in these pages, the history of the agency has exemplified the vital leadership role that voluntary agencies play

in our society by continuing to evolve, to initiate new programs to respond to changing social needs and new thinking about children and families. And, while there has been progress in many areas over the last century and a half, the need for continuing stewardship remains. As in earlier times, it is not clear where the new work of developing an alternative framework for family child care will lead, nor how it will become more integrated with other agency and community programs. What is clear, however, is that the guiding principles of high quality, of continuing care and concern for children and families' well-being will remain intact and be reflected in whatever programs and services are developed. There is also little doubt that the next 150 years of Family Day will be as challenging as the last.



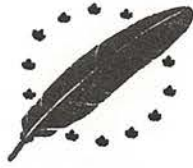
The United Way of Greater Toronto



Family Day Care Services has been a member agency of the United Way of Greater Toronto since the United Way's inception here in 1956. Over the past 45 years, the United Way has contributed more than six million dollars in support of Family Day's Toronto Home Child Care Program. These funds have allowed Family Day to provide a higher level of support to low-income families with children in care.

In addition to this annual support, the United Way has provided special funding for a number of projects initiated by Family Day, including a home child care pilot project in East York and a community resource centre in Flemingdon Park.





Community Chest of Greater Toronto

From 1945 to 1955, Protestant Childrens' Homes received financial support from The Community Chest of Greater Toronto's annual Red Feather Campaign. The Agency received a total of \$683,880 during this eleven-year period in support of its foster care program for children.

Federation For Community Service of Toronto

The Federation For Community Service of Toronto initially provided funding for both The Protestant Orphans' Home and The Girls' Home from 1921 to 1925. In 1926, the Federation assisted in bringing about the amalgamation of the two organizations, then provided financial support for The Protestant Children's Home until 1944 with an average annual gift of \$22,000.

Extract From the Federation For Community Service of Toronto's 1926 Annual Report:

"The Protestant Orphans' Home and "The Girls' Home," two of our oldest and most honored member organizations, have, after mature consideration secured enabling legislation, amalgamated their work and resources and will in future, operate as one organization. This is an indication that the institutional type of care for children has diminished, for in former years both these organizations were taxed to capacity. Now the institutional population is relatively small and increasing numbers will receive supervised care in well selected family boarding homes. It is gratifying to be able to report that this difficult end was achieved by these Boards in a fine spirit of devotion to what they conceived to be the best present day standards of social work for dependent children. The new organization known as "The Protestant Children's Home" will have the congratulations and the good wishes of its many friends. In giving the community long years of faithful service as separate Institutions and now in merging their resources, traditions, affections and interests in one organization which will operate along lines of service approved by social workers today, these Boards have placed the community under a lasting debt of gratitude, and in addition have given Toronto an example of how a difficult adjustment may be made to meet new conditions and standards of work."

Federation for Community Service of Toronto



OSLER,
HOSKIN &
HARCOURT

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS 

Community Partners

Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt has been a leading community partner with our Agency for more than a century. This renowned Toronto-based law firm has supported us over the years with in-kind contributions of legal services. In addition, since the late 19th century, many of the firm's senior staff and their family members have served on our Board of Directors, and made generous financial contributions to support us.

PriceWaterhouseCoopers, an international professional services firm, has been helping Family Day Care Services for more than three decades with in-kind contributions of financial planning services. As well, a number of the firm's staff members have provided leadership on our Board of Directors and given personal donations to support our child care programs.



These community partners are to be commended for providing continuous support and leadership to our Agency, and for their long-standing dedication to enhancing child care services in the Province of Ontario.

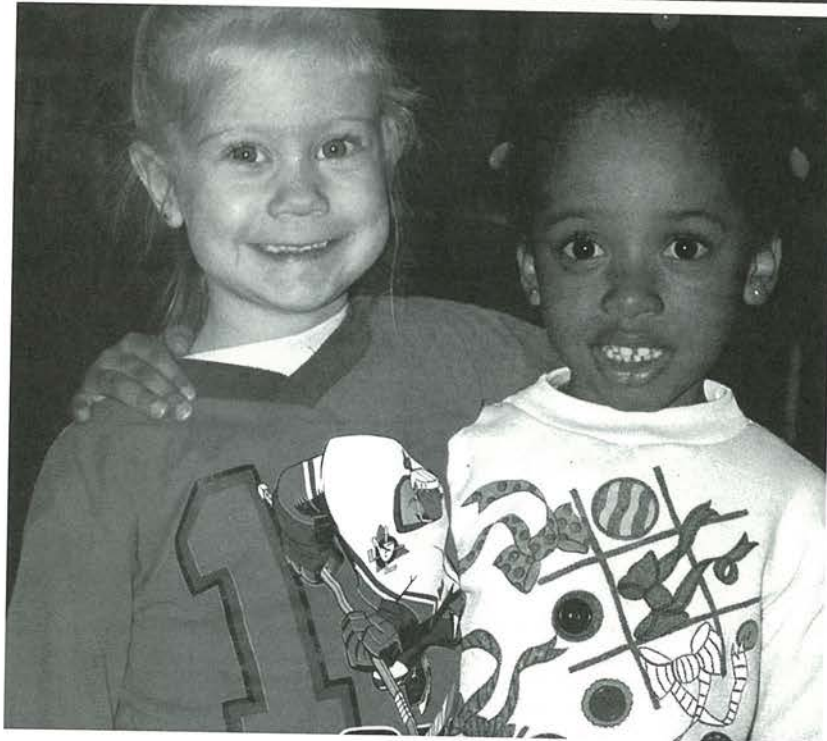


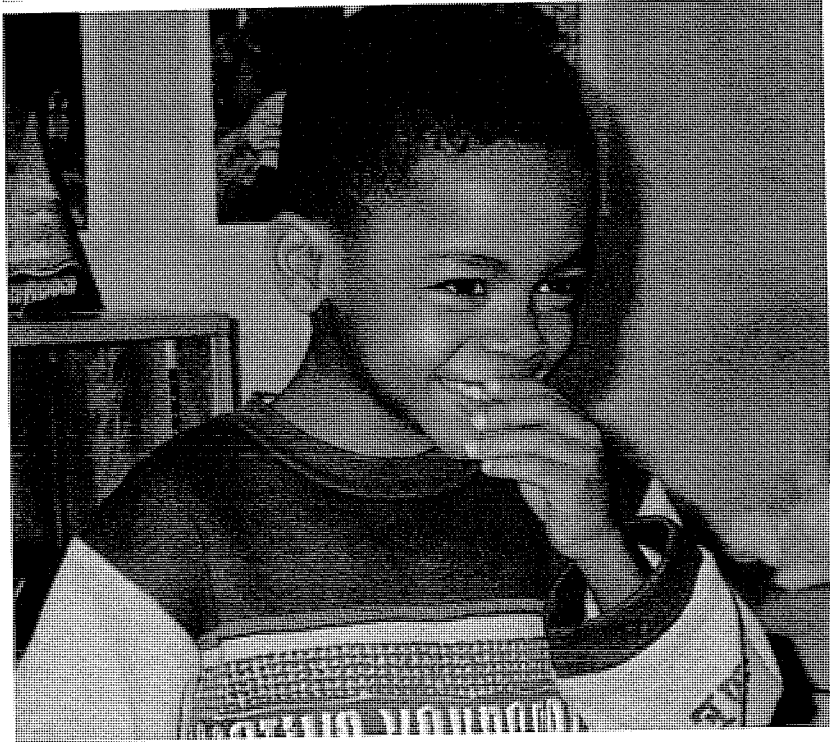
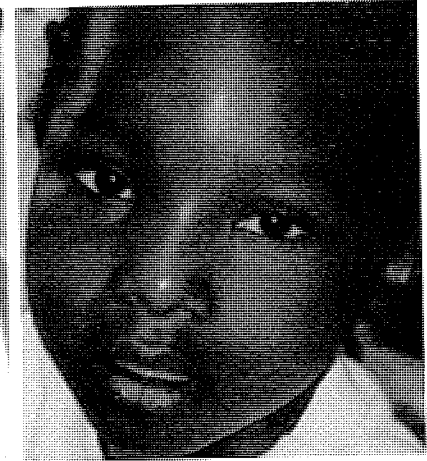
For the Children

... and their future.













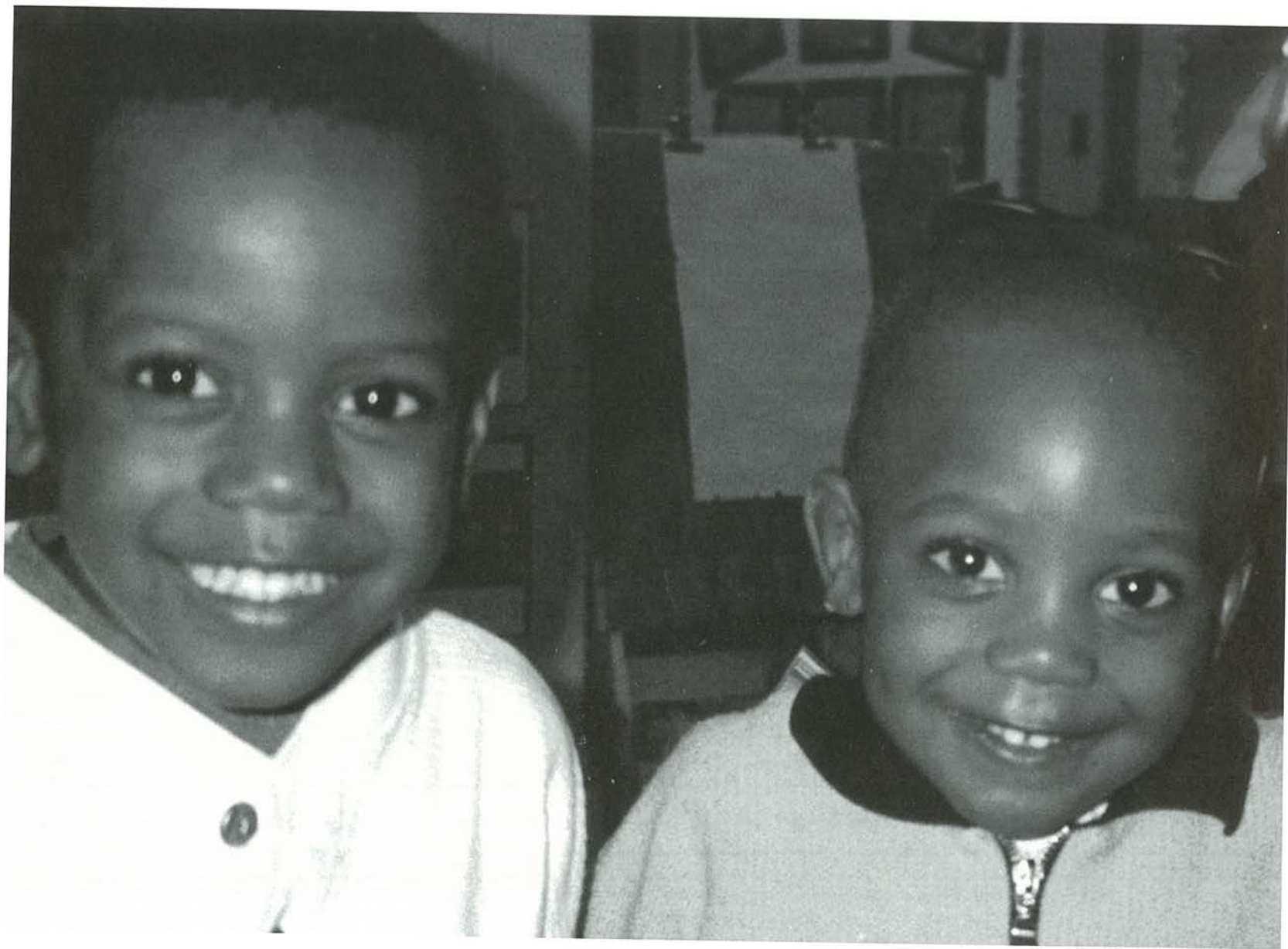
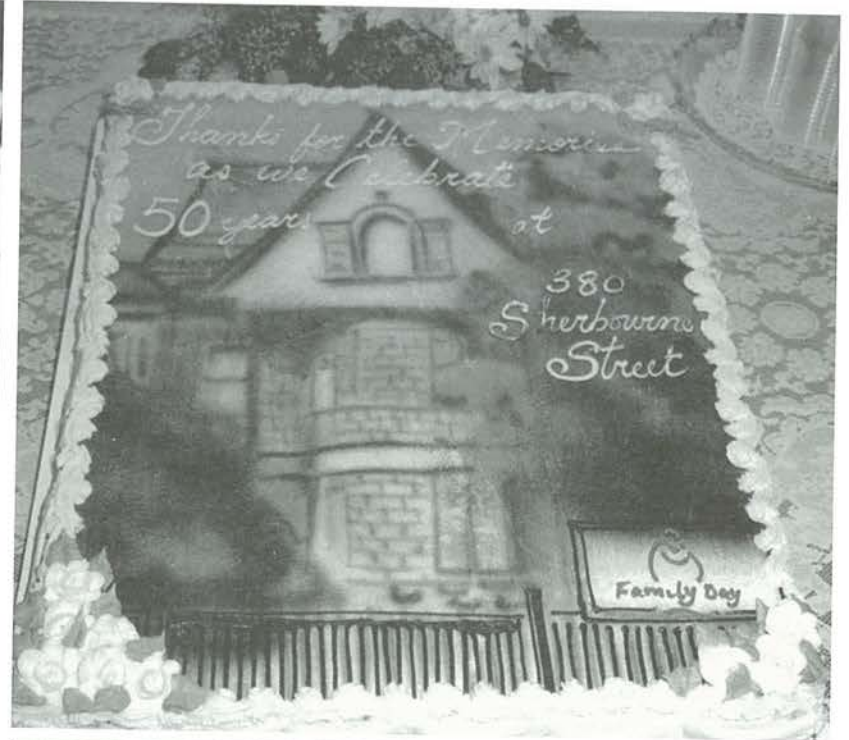
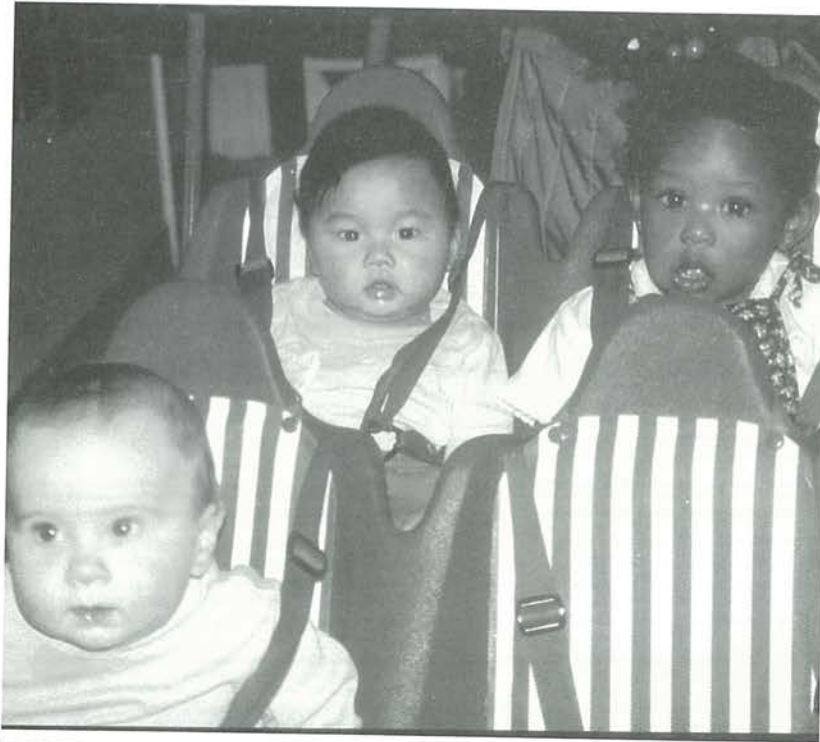
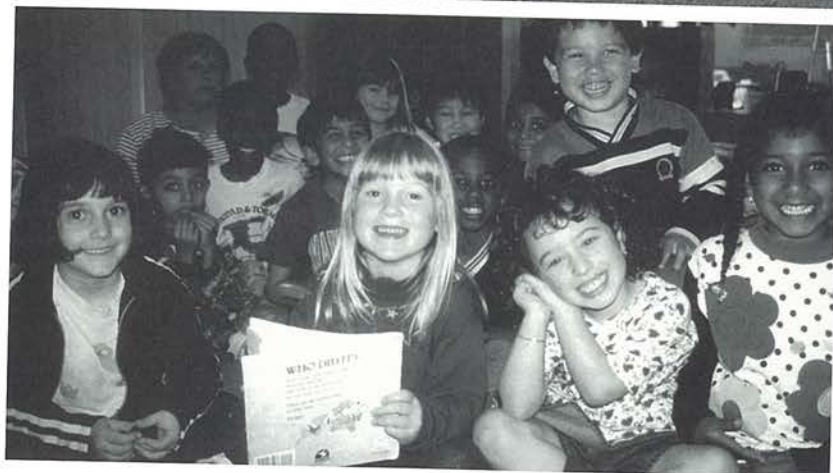


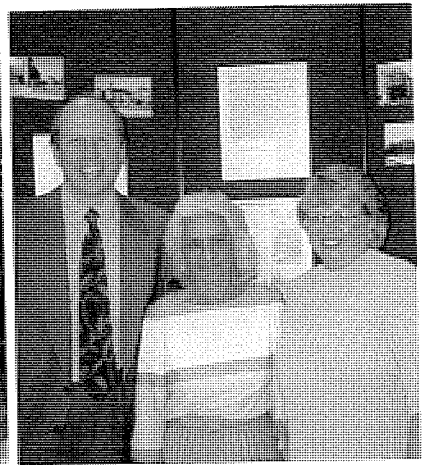
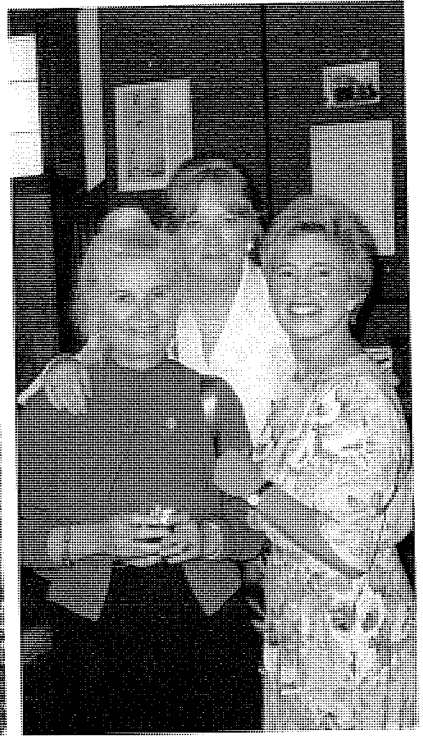


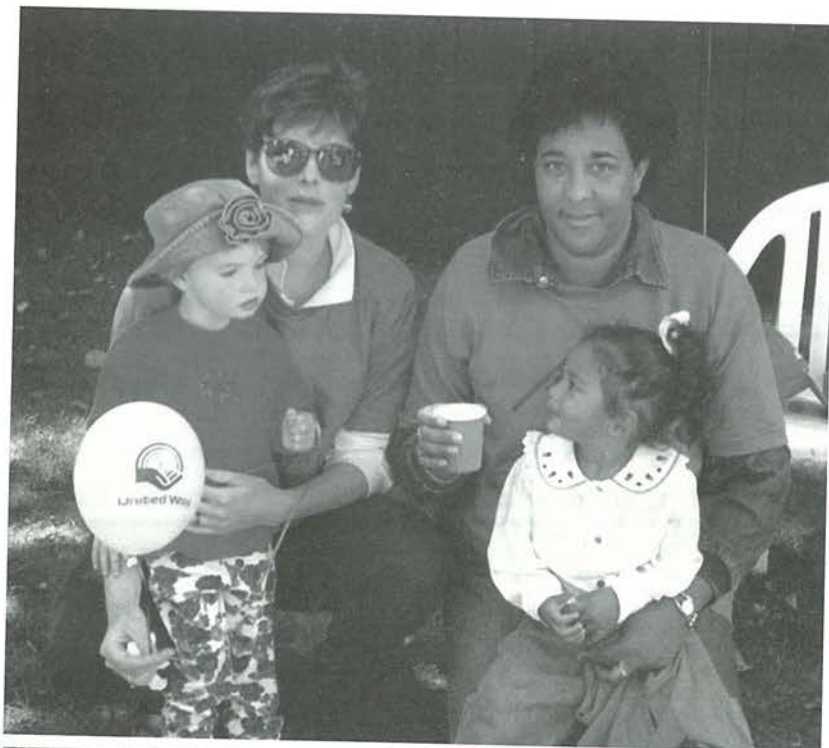
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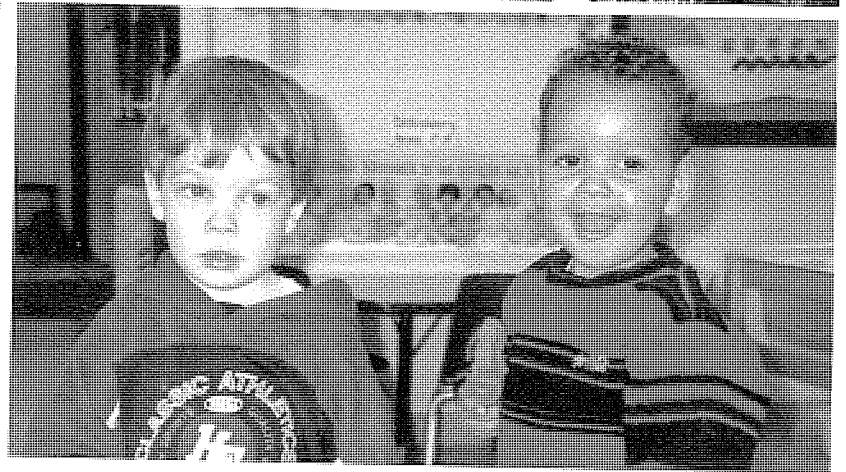
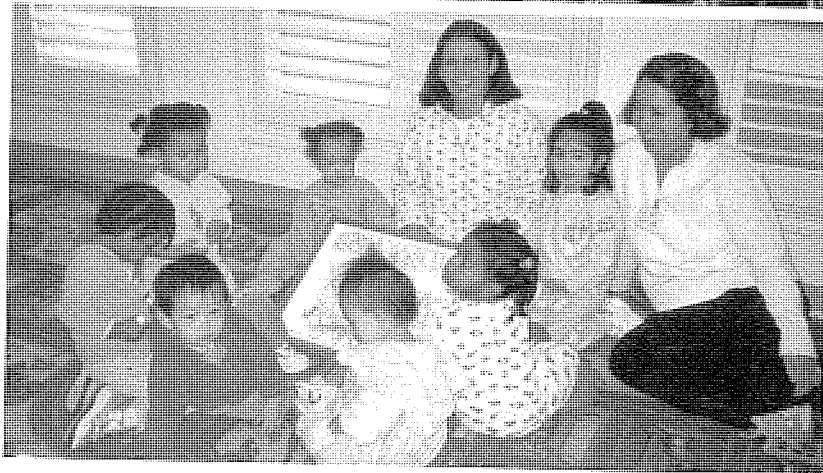




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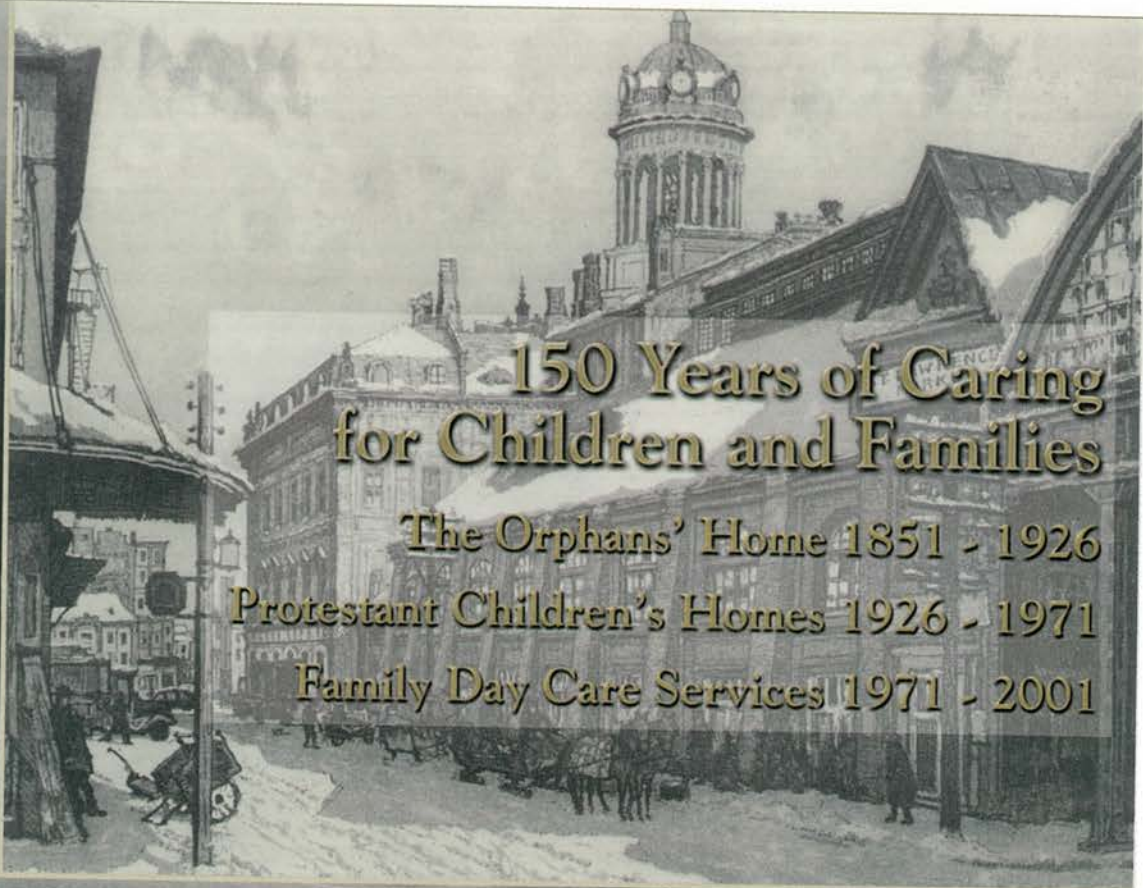
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150 Years of Caring for Children and Families

The Orphans' Home 1851 - 1926

Protestant Children's Homes 1926 - 1971

Family Day Care Services 1971 - 2001

THE ORPHANS HOME
ERECTED BY THE LADIES OF TORONTO
AIDED BY A DONATION FROM JENNY LIND.
1852.