



Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc.

101 Marietta Street Bldg. • Atlanta, Georgia 30303 • 525-6854

T. M. Parham
Executive Administrator

March 7, 1969

Mr. David C. Cowley, Director
Human Relations Commission
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Dear Mr. Cowley:

This is an reply to your letter of February 24, for information regarding child care plans for low-income and working mothers.

The Community Action Agency, Economic Opportunity Atlanta, Inc. was faced with this dilemma at the very beginning of the program since Atlanta has a large number of low-income working mothers who are heads of households.

We began by going to voluntary agencies, churches, civic organizations, etc., which were based in low-income areas and asking these organizations to consider organizing day care centers for low-income families. We are now contracting with ten (10) autonomous agencies which are under contract to run eleven (11) centers caring for 715 children between the ages of six months to nine years. Ninety percent (90%) of the children are between the ages of 3-6 years.

Originally, we were running as straight day care agencies and charged a fee per family based on family income. About fifteen percent (15%) of our income was derived from fees. Twenty percent (20%) came from the community in the form of voluntary services or in-kind contributions. The rest of our income came from Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) funds. It is to be noted that we may rent at only one facility, the rest of our housing is donated. We are using facilities in five churches, three housing projects, two remodeled houses and one warehouse. The cost per child is from \$75 to \$90 per month.

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About two and one-half or three years ago, we were incorporated into full-year, eleven hour, head start. The major changes were in the improved ratio of adult to child and extended medical services. As of April 1968, OEO had us discontinue charging fees.

Our present structure consist of a coordinating headquarters staff including a director, assistant director, program coordinator, volunteer coordinator, and program evaluator. There is an overall Policy Advisory Committee consisting of parents, parent representatives, interested professionals and members of the local community. Each Child Development Center is separately incorporated as an autonomous agency with its own board and staff. Within the guidelines as set forth in the Head Start Manual, each board sets its own program of instruction, personnel policies, parent organization, etc. Each must raise its twenty percent (20%) community contribution.

We have had central recruitment and training of volunteers. We handle purchasing and finance centrally through the Community Action Agency. Also each program is reviewed centrally for quality control and improvement of operation. We have availed ourselves extensively of staff training opportunities afforded us through OEO. We also have regular in-service training.

We were faced with many serious problems from the outset, many of which are still not resolved. Because our local boards were made up largely of the poor with little or no community experience, many errors in judgment were made in handling funds, staff selection, and social services. Time and experience has helped somewhat but we still have a long way to go. Another area of concern is the lack of qualified staff. Our state offers no certification for pre-school teachers and there is very little training through the local colleges, although the Atlanta Board of Education has inaugurated an extensive program of evening classes for people in day care on a non-credit, low fee basis. Perhaps our greatest handicap is insufficient funds

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to attract top quality staff and to extend our services. The estimate is that 10,000 low-income children need day care and we are providing for only 715.

I hope our experience has been useful to you. I wish you well in your enterprise.

Yours truly,

(Mrs.) Gloria S. Gross
Consultant in Child Development

GSG/jm

cc: Mr. T. M. Parham
Mr. Dan Sweat