

TO DAVIS WEAT

FOR
Pete Jones

I understand that of the hard-core unemployed or under employed in the poverty areas of Atlanta, that somewhere between 95 and 98% are women who are heads of households and that these female heads of household each have an average of four dependent children. A large part of the employment efforts directed by Federal, State and local sources have been aimed at job placement of these hard-core unemployed or under employed.

Present efforts are being made toward prevocational education and training and then job development and placement. This presumes that once these people are placed on jobs, they will be able to become assimilated into the main stream of production at a living wage.

Once the person is placed into a job such person has to provide her own resources for the care of her dependent children. Such citizen faced with inadequate income, poor living conditions in a poor area makes her job training and placement doomed to failure.

If efforts to place female heads of household into profitable jobs should be a success there must first be made provision for the care of the youngsters in proper and acceptable conditions. EOA now operates Day Care Centers to accomodate some 750 children. Such Day Care Centers are not located in the highly concentrated ghetto populated areas. EOA funded centers only scratch the surface of the real need of such accomodation. I feel that a major effort with Federal financing needs to be provided to establish good child care centers so that female heads of households can be relieved of this cost and they can then undertake to provide with income from their jobs enough to cover expenses of living and support of their homes. If they must earn enough to support their homes and pay for their childrens day care, they will never ~~make~~ it. The providing

of Day Care at no cost would relieve the strain of mothers to the point where they could maintain themselves and their families in an acceptable home atmosphere. Such Day Care Centers will need to be operated on a six-day week with hours from 7 A.M. or earlier until late in the evenings which to permit the mother to enter the children in the Day Care Centers before work and to receive the children after completion of her day's work.

This will have another very desirable effect if Day Care Center conditions were made to accomodate the children in a good atmosphere with food, clean clothing, sanitation, etc. so that the children would come to realize a desirable standard of living and be motivated in their very early years toward the desirability of self betterment and the need for a level of education that would result in the elevation of themselves from the type of life into which they were born and first accustomed.

I have seen the effects of this in the Country of Venequela where the children were taken at an age of about two years and were provided a kindergarten or day care type facility from early morning to late evening of each day of the week except Sunday. These children who came from homes which had dirt floors, no sanitation, improper food habits, with parents with little or no education entered into and learned a new way of life which they appreciated and enjoyed. Upon returning to their homes in the evenings they saw the great contrast between their manner of living at home and their manner of living in the day care center. They voiced their dissatisfaction with traditional plight of their parents and demanded the better things of life. This had an effect on the parents and in many cases caused the parents to make a real effort to improve their homes and manner of living in order to better satisfy the children. In these pre-school years of the children they themselves determined to have a better life than did their parents. This motivation continued into their

elementary school age and then on into their high school years. Many continued on into college. This definitely would not have happened had they not been thoroughly indoctrinated into a better way of life during the very early years of their lives. As a result of these programs, Venequela now have a fast growing middle class element in its population whereas previously it had only two classes - the very poor and the very rich.

I believe that the main approach to solving these social problems should be aimed at the early years of this large group of socially depressed children. We will never succeed by directing major attention to the adolescents and adults who were born into and raised in poverty, in slums of rural and urban areas and because of such factors will be most difficult, if not impossible to educate, motivate and change into fully self-supporting masses.