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Over the last two decades, Israeli society has been undergoing a process marked by increasing inequality. The notions of equality of opportunity and social justice, once cornerstones of social thought and policy in Israel, are being jettisoned. Wage scales now resemble those in many Third World societies. Contrary to expectation and popular myth, second and third generation Mizrahim – Jews of Middle Eastern origin – lag further behind their Ashkenazi – Jews of European or American origin – cohorts in educational achievements, employment opportunities and housing than the first generation. Women earn less, compared to men, than they did a decade ago, and their political representation is minimal. Palestinian citizens of Israel are employed mainly in blue collar jobs, regardless of their educational achievements. Palestinians from the occupied territories receive the lowest remuneration, and they are not protected by Israeli labor unions. The editors of **The Israel Equality Monitor** aspire to put the idea of equality of opportunity back on the national agenda. They present an up-to-date picture of the state of equality in various areas of social life. The figures are presented as clearly as possible, so as to make them accessible to lay readers. **The Israel Equality Monitor** presents comparisons between various social groups in Israeli society, as well as between the past and the present situation and between Israel and other societies. **The Israel Equality Monitor** is designed for concerned citizens, policy makers, and activists striving to promote equality of opportunity and social justice in Israel.

For Arab children, attendance is much lower. There are no figures for 2 year olds; the estimated attendance of 3 year-olds is 25%, and that for 4 year-olds, 53% according to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), and

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- 40% according to a report of the
- Follow-up Committee on Education of the
- Committee of Arab Mayors.<sup>2</sup>
- In Israel, as elsewhere, early education began
- to expand during the 1960s. Between 1969-70
- and 1979-80, the number of Jewish 4 and
- 5 year olds enrolled in kindergarten increased
- from 107,668 to 246,600.<sup>3</sup> Since the atten-
- dance of 5 year olds was high in the first pe-
- riod, most of the increase can be attributed to
- the expansion of preschools for 4 and 3 year
- olds.
- The expansion of early education was due to
- a number of factors, among them the gradual
- increase in the work force participation of
- mothers: while in 1967, 25% of married
- women were in the labor force, in 1974, 30.8%
- were employed, in 1981, 40.0%, and in 1990,
- 47.3%.<sup>4</sup>
- A second factor was the development of a
- policy of early intervention for Mizrahi (Jews
- whose origins are in Muslim lands) children,
- designed to prevent or reduce the high failure
- rate in school. The policy was reinforced by
- the report of the Prime Minister's Commission
- on Disadvantaged Children and Youth, set up

in response to the Israel Black Panther demon-

strations of the early 1970s.<sup>5</sup>

A third factor was the new interest shown by researchers and educators in preschoolers, as well as the entrance of public and private entrepreneurs into the preschool "market."<sup>6</sup> This interest produced a plethora of activities, clubs, and curricula, which fed into the urgency which young parents, especially those of the middle class, began to feel about preparing their children for school, at a time when the latter was becoming increasingly competitive.<sup>7</sup>

Similar demographic and cultural changes took place in Arab communities in Israel; for example, between 1975 and 1990, the number of Arab women in the work force nearly tripled, and the proportion of women among Arabs in the labor force increased from 10.1% to 15.8%.<sup>8</sup> However, the changes were not accompanied by increased involvement of the local or national educational system in the provision of early education services. Later, in the 1980s, private, partisan, and religious bodies began to set up kindergartens and day care centers. Unlike the corresponding Jewish associations, these organizations do not receive

Attendance Rates for Children Aged 2-5 in OECD Countries, 1987-1988

Country	Age 2	Age 3	Age 4	Age 5
Finland	20.2%	16.0%	19.6%	24.3%
Jugoslavia	19.1	18.5	22.8	35.9
Norway	22.8	31.6	44.1	52.6
Greece	—	9.1	43.2	57.0
Japan	—	15.6	54.6	63.9
Switzerland	0.6	5.4	18.7	67.1
Canada	—	—	41.4	69.2
Germany	9.1	32.3	71.6	86.5
United States	—	28.9	49.0	86.7
Austria	1.0	28.5	63.4	92.3
United Kingdom	1.3	25.9	69.2	—
Ireland	—	0.7	52.1	96.3
New Zealand	8.8	42.6	72.8	—
Belgium	21.6	94.1	98.1	97.1
Holland	—	—	97.9	98.7
France	35.7	96.3	100.0	99.8
Spain	4.5	17.8	90.6	100.0
Israel	56.2	79.3	87.0	95.0

Sources: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Education in OECD Countries 1987-88* (1990 Special Edition). Paris, 1990, p. 107. The figures for Israel are based on the introductory section of this report and refer to the 1988-89 school year.

Note: In the United Kingdom, compulsory education begins at age 5; in New Zealand, despite the fact that compulsory education begins at age 6, most 5 year-olds are in school; the same holds for Australia.





**Day Care Attendance of Jewish 2 and 3 Year Olds, by Size of Household, Employment of Mother, and Housing Density, 1988-89 (in Percentages)**

	Household Size		Mother's Employment		Persons per Room	
	1-4 persons	5+	Employed	Unemployed	Fewer than 2	2 or more
Age 2	54%	46%	70%	30%	86%	14%
Age 3	61%	39%	79%	21%	91%	(9%)

Source: CBS, 1990. Kindergarten and Day Care Attendance of Children Aged 2-4. Table 13 (Hebrew).

government assistance; some are able to obtain grants from international funds. The absence of government financing is reflected in the inadequacy of the facilities and equipment of kindergartens in Arab communities, and in their lack of qualified personnel.

Private initiatives have not succeeded in reducing the disparity between Jewish and Arab communities in educational services available to children under 5. The majority of Arab working mothers rely on relatives for child care or work part time. Some leave the work force or refrain from joining it, because the

fees for child care or preschool, if such are available, take up a good part of their earnings.

The expansion of early education – which occurred mainly in Jewish communities – is reflected in the national expenditure on education: in 1965-66, kindergartens accounted for 5% of expenditures on education, while by 1988-9, their share had increased to 8.6%.<sup>9</sup>

While 96% of elementary education is financed by the state and by local governments, 30% of kindergarten revenues come from non-governmental sources – non-profit organizations or user fees.<sup>10</sup>

#### • **Limitations of the Attendance Figures for Children Aged 0-4**

The CBS attendance figures for 2,3 and 4 year olds cited in this report are estimates based on questions asked of a population sample in the framework of annual work force surveys. Neither the Ministry of Education nor the CBS publish data on the number of public and private kindergartens for children of various ages, so that there is no way to confirm the above figures.

It is especially difficult to ascertain the number of private institutions operating in the big cities. For example, in Tel Aviv, the municipality operates kindergartens for children aged 3 and 4, but not all toddlers attend them; in 1991, 4,420 5 year olds were enrolled in municipal kindergartens, compared with 3,460 4 year olds and 1,290 3 year olds. Assuming that the age cohorts are of similar size, these figures indicate that a good many of the 3 year olds are not in municipal kindergartens.<sup>23</sup>

A survey conducted in the old city center by the Association of Residents for Quality of Life in Tel Aviv found that in addition to 3 day care centers operated by Naamat and WIZO and 8 municipal kindergartens for 4 year olds, the area had 35 private kindergartens and home day care services, attended by 350 children aged 1-4.<sup>24</sup>



In Jewish communities, kindergartens for 5 year olds comprise separate, independent units run by kindergarten teachers, who receive a salary increment for administration and are supervised by Ministry of Education kindergarten inspectors.

In contrast, in Arab communities, kindergartens for 5 year olds are an integral part of the elementary school, whether or not they are actually housed in the same building. Kindergarten teachers are subordinate to school administrators and supervisors, like other members of the school teaching staff. The school principal is the one who receives the increment for administration.

About 80% of the structures housing kindergartens in Arab communities are sub-standard. Many lack small toilets and playgrounds. They also suffer from a shortage of equipment and teaching materials.

There are a total of 700 kindergarten classes in the Arab sector; making early education universal for 4 year-olds would require 500 additional ones.<sup>13</sup>

## Who is Responsible for Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education can be described as the "last frontier" of the Israeli educational system. Unlike elementary education, which is under the Ministry of Education and operates according to uniform curricula and clearly defined general aims, early childhood education is characterized by the diversity of organizations offering services – private, public (meaning: operated by NGOs supported by the government) and governmental. The field itself has yet to be mapped out, and reliable attendance figures are unavailable. Yet, the absence of central control does not mean that significant work is not being done: on the contrary, early education is characterized by an abundance of activity and innovation.

Direct governmental responsibility for early childhood education is divided between the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The former is responsible for the operation of day care centers and home services for children aged 6 months to 3 years. Guided by regulations set in 1968, based on the Supervision of Day Care Centers Act of 1965, it fixes standards for structures in which day care centers are housed<sup>11</sup> and helps finance day care centers through progressive fee subsidies based on income. The content of day care is the responsibility of the organizations running the centers, foremost among which are Naamat (Pioneer Women), WIZO and Emunah. These organizations develop curricula and employ supervisors to monitor the pedagogical aspects of the service. The latter receive guidance and training from the Ministry of Education.

The Compulsory Education Act of 1949 gives the Ministry of Education responsibility for kindergartens, which at the time were for 5 year olds only. In recent years the Ministry has been working to lower the age of children under its supervision. The Law of Supervision of Schools of 1969 gives the Ministry authority to grant licenses to bodies operating educational institutions providing systematic instruction to more than 10 pupils.<sup>12</sup> In effect, supervision has been extended to kindergartens for children aged 3 or older. In May 1992, the director-general of the Ministry promulgated a directive to extend supervision to institutions for 2 year olds. The directive took effect in September 1992 in the Haifa, Tel Aviv, and Ramat Gan districts, to be followed by others.

It should be pointed out that the control of both the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare

is not all-encompassing. The latter supervises day care centers run by non-profit associations, like Naamat, WIZO and Emunah, which serve only a small proportion of the 0-3 age cohorts. Many private organizations also offer services, with much less, or no governmental supervision. The same is true for the 3 and 4 age cohorts. Alongside local government preschools for children aged 3 and 4 and state kindergartens for 5 year olds, there are numerous private preschools, beyond the ken of the Ministry. No comprehensive list of institutions is available; as this report goes to press, the Ministry of Education is in the process of preparing a computerized list of kindergartens run by the state and by local authorities.

## Who Utilizes Public Day Care

No government, public or private institution has complete figures for day care. The Ministry of Education has no computerized list of institutions or of children in day care.<sup>14</sup> The CBS publishes figures only for age 2 and above, based on questions addended to labor force surveys conducted annually on a sample of households.<sup>15</sup> The figures for age 5 are based on an estimate.<sup>16</sup> For ages 0-3, the only figures available are for children who attend day care centers under the supervision of the Department of Women's Employment and Status at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. According to a Department estimate, in 1990 some 60,000 children aged 0-3 were enrolled in day care, including children attending kindergartens adjoined to day care centers. This figure is evidence of a 6-fold increase in attendance since 1969, when the figure was 10,000.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, the 1990 figure represents only 15% of the age group.

The above figures refer to Jews only. In Arab communities, the number of day care centers receiving support from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare is negligible. Comparable services, albeit on a smaller scale and, for the most part, at a lower level, are provided by local NGOs, like Dar al Tifl al Arabe, al Tufula, The Trust of Programmes for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education, and a number of church associations.

Available figures for 1989 show that the day care attendance rate for Jewish children aged 2 and 3 was highest amongst smaller households characterized by low housing density and working mothers. Thus the greatest patrons of day care are members of the middle class. Amongst 2 year olds born in Israel to foreign-born parents, the attendance rate for Mizrahim was higher than that for





Photo: Rolly Shalem

Ashkenazim.<sup>18</sup> The data also show that day care is an option utilized by 42% of working mothers of 2 year olds, compared with 20% of mothers not in the labor force. The highest day care attendance is amongst 2 year olds: in 1988-89, nearly a third of Jewish 2 year olds were in day care.<sup>19</sup>

The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has established priorities for day care admission. At the top of the list are children at high risk in the family, who are referred to day care by social service agencies. These are followed by children whose mothers are employed in industry and in hotel services, in professional military and security services, and in hospitals. Lower on the priority list are children from one-parent families, children from families with 4 or more children who are referred by social service agencies, and children whose mothers work at least 40 hours a week. At the bottom are children whose mothers work fewer hours, like teachers.<sup>20</sup> Existing data

from the CBS and the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare do not permit a breakdown by the above categories. Ministry figures do show that in recent years there has been a decrease in the proportion of children referred to day care by social welfare agencies, and an increase in the attendance of children whose mothers are in the labor force (see table on p.3).

### Who Attends Public Kindergartens

There are two types of state-funded kindergartens: those for 3 and 4 year olds, and those for 5 year olds. Attendance at the latter has been compulsory since 1949, with the passage of the Compulsory Education Act. According to the CBS estimate, 95% of the age 5 cohort among both Jews and Arabs attend kindergarten. The exceptions include Bedouin children not residing in permanent settlements, as well as some of the new immigrants from Ethiopia who are still housed in absorption centers.





- Public kindergartens for 3 and 4 year olds are a relatively new development. In the past, pre-school services were private enterprises. The expansion of the network of public kindergartens for 3 and 4 year olds – which occurred, again, only in Jewish communities – was the main factor accounting for the increase in the kindergarten attendance of younger children, which rose from 83,400 in 1976-77 to 127,100 in 1988-89.<sup>21</sup>
- The expansion of public kindergartens was accompanied by a reduction in the number of private ones. In the mid-seventies, 36,100 3-4 year olds were in private kindergartens, while at the end of the eighties, the figure was 18,900.<sup>22</sup>
- The high attendance of Jewish 3 and 4 year olds can be attributed not only to the expansion of local and state services, but also to government subsidies to selected population groups (see box on p. 7), instituted in the early 1980s.

The operating expenses of kindergartens for 3-4 year olds, including kindergarten teachers' salaries, are financed by tuition fees. In the 1980s, a sliding tuition scale was instituted, with the Ministry of Education subsidizing 75% of the discounts; the tab for the remaining 25% is picked up by the local government. These arrangements apply only to public kindergartens, i.e., those which receive government financing.<sup>25</sup>

The buildings that house public kindergartens for 3 and 4 year olds are constructed by local governments. In the past, the Ministry of Education helped finance construction, but in recent years such assistance has not been available.<sup>26</sup>

In Arab communities, despite the increasing participation of women in the labor force and the concurrent need for early childhood education, local governments have generally been unable to finance kindergarten construction, due to low revenues from taxes and government transfers. Moreover, early childhood



## Kindergarten Attendance of Jewish 3 and 4 Year Olds, by Type of Kindergarten

		1972-73	1976-77	1988-89
3 Year Olds	Total	47,400	57,100	72,700
	Public*	55.7%	51.0%	77.6%
	Private	44.1%	49.0%	22.4%
4 Year Olds	Total	51,200	62,400	73,300
	Public*	74.8%	87.0%	95.5%
	Private	25.2%	13.0%	3.5%

Source: CBS. Statistical Abstracts of Israel 1991. Table 22.11.

\* "Public" includes kindergartens run by the state, by municipalities, and by NGOs receiving state support.

education is at the bottom of the priority list of Arab local governments. No assistance is available from either the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Housing, the latter of which finances the construction of school and kindergarten buildings in Jewish development areas.<sup>27</sup> The option of renting space is not feasible, due to the budgetary limitations of Arab local governments; while the Ministry of Education provides rent subsidies for kindergartens for 5 year olds, it does not offer the same for preschools for younger children.<sup>28</sup> The low income level of the Arab population gives local governments cause for fear that parents will not be able to pay the tuition fees and that the burden will fall on them. When in 1991 the State Comptroller examined 23 Arab local governments, she found locally-financed kindergartens for 4 and 3 year olds in only 8 of

them.<sup>29</sup> Most of the preschools for Arab children aged 3-4 were initiated by private, religious or partisan organizations with financial backing; their fees are considerably lower than those of state and municipal services.<sup>30</sup>

Past experience shows that educational services available to Jews were instituted in Arab communities only when they became mandatory by law. A good example is junior high schools, established beginning in 1968, when compulsory education was extended to age 15.<sup>31</sup> It appears that Arab communities will have to wait for education to become compulsory for ages 3-4 before early childhood education can become universal, unless the state decides to make services for Jews and Arabs equal by setting up and financing preschools in Arab communities.

### Who Receives Government Subsidies for Preschools?

Tuition fees for 3 and 4 year olds are on a sliding scale. In 1992-93, the tuition for children in households with a monthly per capita income of 383 NIS or less paid only 10%; those in households with 655 NIS or more paid the full tuition. The Ministry of Education subsidizes 75% of the tuition waived, while the local government pays the bill for the remaining 25%.<sup>33</sup>

Sliding scale tuition assists parents in those communities in which there are preschools for 3 and 4 year olds. They are meaningless for communities without such institutions, like the majority of Arab towns and villages in Israel.

Additional subsidies are available for the following groups:

- In development towns, public kindergartens for 3 and 4 year olds are tuition free.
- Parents residing in neighborhoods slated for renewal are entitled to a 90% discount for 4 year olds.
- New immigrants and residents of new communities in Israel and settlements in the occupied territories are entitled to a 90% discount for 4 year olds.
- Kibbutzim and moshavim receive 78% of their total operating expenses, including the salaries of kindergarten teachers and teachers' assistants, from the state.

- 14 villages in which Druze reside are exempt from tuition for 4 year olds: Abu Snan, Beit Jan, Maghar, Julis, Khurfesh, Yanoakh-Gat, Yarkah, Kufr Samia, Kufr Kama, Sejur, Peki'in, Rikhaniah, Rama, and Ein al-Assad.

- In 5 Bedouin communities – Bosmat Tivon, Tuba, Nujidat, Arab a-Shibli, and Bir al Mansur – some of the 4 year-olds are exempt from tuition, and the local government divides the subsidy received from the Ministry of Education for these children among all the families with kindergartners.

### The Israel Association of Private Kindergarten Teachers

- Teachers who run private kindergarten services, once the mainstay of early childhood education in Israel, no longer dominate the scene. Many have been replaced by public kindergartens. The Israel Association of Private Kindergarten Teachers has 1,100 members. According to Shoshana Hadar, Association chairperson, there are about 2,000 private kindergarten teachers presently working in Israel. In the past, most of their charges were 4 and 5 year olds. With the expansion of public services for 3 and 4 year olds, the private teachers took in younger and younger children, and some offered a longer school day than the public facilities.
- Private preschool services are concentrated primarily in the big cities in the center of the country, and are patronized by parents who can afford the higher tuition fees. Most private teachers are certified. Association members include secular, religious, and ultra-orthodox teachers, but not Arab teachers.<sup>32</sup>



# The Kindergarten Day Plan and Curriculum

## The Intensive Approach

The intensive approach stresses "the active roles of the kindergarten teacher," along with "working on language skills, arithmetic concepts and science . . ."<sup>37</sup>

The method required reorganizing the school day and dividing it up into small, more defined units of time; in other words, the kindergarten began to resemble the school classroom. The intensive method stressed the cognitive aspects of kindergarten activities, as these were considered vital to success in school, leaving much less room for the development of personality through spontaneous activity, play and creativity.

- From the pre-state period to the 1950s, the day plan in most Israeli kindergartens was based on a conception that stressed spontaneous learning; the major role of the kindergarten teacher was to create an atmosphere that would arouse the children's curiosity.<sup>34</sup> During the 1950s, it was found that many of the children of new Jewish immigrants from Muslim lands were failing the lower grades of elementary school. Educators concluded that this was the result of faulty preparation in the home and community. Attention shifted to the kindergarten, and a change in method was called for, "because 'teunei tipuah' (children in need of special nurturing) show evidence of limited ability to learn by the spontaneous method . . ."<sup>35</sup> The change involved basing kindergarten activities on directed learning.<sup>36</sup> Thus the method which came to be known as "the intensive approach" developed.

- Ironically, the intensive method was soon adopted by the majority of kindergartens in Israel, including those in affluent neighborhoods.<sup>38</sup> This was apparently due to the fact that it made the kindergarten teacher's work easier, as it provided "a framework, direction, more clearly defined and specific tasks . . . and, for the first time, the structural possibility of checking achievements."<sup>39</sup> To this may be added the influence of competitiveness and achievement-orientation in the schools, which

resulted in pressures to prepare children for school as early as possible.

There were those who opposed the intensive method from the very start.<sup>40</sup> Today, the foremost among them is Gideon Levine, Director of the Oranim Teachers' College Children's Center.<sup>41</sup> Based on the development theory of Piaget, Levine calls for a kindergarten program that follows "a natural flow." The emphasis is on the children's own initiatives, to be encouraged by a large variety of opportunities for activity provided by the kindergarten teacher, rather than by a set program of activities. His basic assumption is that learning through one's own activity is more significant, lasting and relevant for the development of personality than learning through listening and carrying out repetitive tasks set by the teacher. The differences between a structured day plan and a one based on flow are presented in the chart below.<sup>42</sup>

Very few kindergartens utilize the spontaneous approach. This is a model whose advantages are generally acknowledged, but whose implementation is considered problematic, one "honored more in word than in deed."<sup>43</sup> Critics contend that the spontaneous approach requires kindergarten teachers with special personalities and skills, rare in a system of state-supported, compulsory mass education. Whatever the case may be, the dominant approach is the cognitive one.

## Structured Day Plan

- Long concentration periods for all
- Most activities are carried out by the entire class at the same time
- Activities are structured according to the day plan
- Limitations on the number of activities
- Day and week plan fixed in advance
- Initiatives determined by plan
- Formality
- "Children also have to learn how to do things that aren't convenient or pleasant."
- "Children have to do what they're told."
- The kindergarten teacher directs her words to the whole class and sometimes to individual children

## Natural Flow Plan

- Short concentration periods
- Most activities are carried out in small groups
- The day is structured in accordance with activities
- Many opportunities for many different activities at the same time
- Preference for individual activities in accordance with children's initiatives
- Initiatives determined by children
- Flexibility and directness
- "Children have to take advantage of their own initiatives to develop their curiosity."
- "Children have to learn how to choose and make decisions."
- The kindergarten teacher directs her words to individuals and sometimes to the class as a whole

Source: Gideon Levine. 1981. *A Different Kindergarten*. Tel Aviv: Ach, pp. 98-99.





Photo: Meir Kfir

### Multi-Culturalism in Early Childhood Education

In many Western countries, especially the United States and Western Europe, the last decade has seen a new development: recognition of the right of minority groups to give expression to their cultural traditions, outside as well as inside the framework of the educational system. In Israel, in contrast, a country with a large national minority – Palestinian Arabs, in which the Jewish majority is composed of many different ethnic groups, multi-culturalism is not an issue. During the mass immigration of the 1950s, the dominant approach was the melting pot, which involved a concerted effort to create a uniform "Israeli" culture.

In the Arab communities, the educational system was separate, and the language of instruction, Arabic. This arrangement had nothing to do with multi-culturalism, but rather simply preserved the segregation that had existed during the British mandate, a division that received reinforcement from the military government under which Arab citizens of Israel lived until 1966.

The new curriculum devotes very little space to Muslim, Christian and Druze holidays, and to the cultivation of the traditional values of Arab culture. Each national group is to learn its own holidays and values. Jews will not be asked to learn about Arab symbols and holidays, and vice versa. In elementary schools, in contrast, Arab pupils study the Hebrew language and Jewish

history and literature, while Jewish pupils learn next to nothing about Arab culture.

As far as the cultural traditions of the various Jewish ethnic groups are concerned, the "melting pot" approach still dominates. The kindergarten teachers in the Eshkol region who welcomed Ethiopian children to their kindergartens (see p. 15) defined their task as "turning the children into Israelis."

The new curriculum does not take the existence of Jewish communities with different cultural traditions into account. Under the rubric of "the cultivation of social and cultural values," the official curriculum discusses general social values, like honesty, patience and tolerance, as well as "love of the people, land and heritage of Israel." For state religious kindergartens, the program adds "the commandments that pertain to relations between men, relations between man and God, and those connected with the land."<sup>45</sup> Under the heading of "teaching the worlds of content, knowledge and cultural baggage," the program mentions acquiring language skills, acquaintance with the arts, developing a positive approach to the world of science and technology, and "elementary concepts of Jewish tradition: prayer, Sabbath, Torah, commandments, holidays, etc." All these are presented as if they had only one possible content, uniform for all the Jewish groups in Israeli society.

### New Curriculum for Early Childhood Education

In 1992 the Israel Ministry of Education developed an early childhood education curriculum, which reflects the cognitive approach currently prevailing in the Ministry. It includes a variety of subjects similar to those taught in elementary school. Despite numerous declarations concerning the importance of the emotional development of the child, the curriculum focuses on instruction and learning, and goes into detail with regard to the items that a child ought to know by ages 3, 4 and 5.

The curriculum takes on added significance in view of a program submitted to the Ministry of Education by Shimshon Shoshani, recently-appointed director-general of the Israel Ministry of Education. The plan calls for beginning education at an early age (2-4) and creating a 13-year continuum of study, making high school graduation possible at the age of 16.<sup>44</sup>

The combination of the new curriculum and the Shoshani plan may result in kindergartens for 3 year olds and older becoming an integral part of the school system, with all that change implies, including, possibly, early separation of children into classes according to achievement level.



# Training Kindergarten and Day Care Teachers

## Professional Status: Kindergarten Teachers

Kindergarten teachers who work in accredited kindergartens supervised by the Ministry of Education belong to the Kindergarten Teachers' Section of the Histadrut Teachers' Union. The Section includes some 10,000 teachers employed in 6,400 institutions, including kindergartens operated by women's organizations.<sup>40</sup>

The salaries of kindergarten teachers are nearly equivalent to those of elementary school teachers. Prior to 1991, graduates of teachers' colleges with Early Childhood Education majors preferred to work in elementary schools rather than in kindergartens, since the former involved fewer hours of work for the same pay and more prestige. In fact, kindergarten teaching was so unattractive that many graduates preferred unemployment. Data from the CBS indicate that in 1985, only 28% of teachers' college graduates majoring in Early Childhood Education were actually employed in kindergartens, a proportion much lower than that of other education majors.<sup>41</sup>

The situation changed following the Ministry of Education decision to provide incentives for kindergarten teachers: a 5-day week for mothers of children under the age of 17, and every other Friday off for others. According to the director of the Pre-elementary Education Department of the Ministry of Education, the outcome was

cont. on p. 11

- The training program for kindergarten teachers has changed over the years. Up to the late fifties, their educational qualifications were lower than those of other teachers; candidates for elementary school teaching certificates required 4 years of high school and a matriculation certificate for admission, while candidates for kindergarten teaching certificates needed only 3 years of high school.<sup>46</sup>
- In 1957, when an Early Childhood Education major was first instituted at teachers' colleges, admission standards were raised. The program introduced was based on the British model of the Infant School, designed for 5, 6 and 7 year olds. Graduates could choose between teaching kindergarten or the primary grades.
- The new admission requirements were 4 years of high school and a matriculation certificate.
- The professional status of kindergarten teachers also rose: kindergarten teachers who worked in kindergartens for 5 year olds, previously paid by local governments and other public bodies, became state employees, and their salaries were nearly equated with those of elementary school teachers.<sup>47</sup> Towards the end of the 1960s, the teachers' colleges instituted a program for training "senior kindergarten

teachers." Referred to as "apprenticeship training," it involved an additional year of study, which included 3 days of course work and 3 days of field work per week. At first this was a privilege reserved for top students, but eventually it became the norm; veteran kindergarten teachers received in-service training to upgrade them to the level of "senior teachers."<sup>48</sup>

At present the training program for "certified senior teacher" or "certified senior kindergarten teacher" lasts 3 years. Those who continue their studies for another year qualify for a B.Ed.

Arab kindergarten teachers study at the Haifa Arab Teachers' College and at the Beit Berl Arab Teachers' College. The Haifa college can confer the degree of "senior kindergarten teacher" but not a B.Ed. degree, as it lacks academic accreditation.

## Day Care Workers

In the past, day care workers had no formal training and required no formal educational achievements. Day care centers were viewed primarily as baby-sitting services for working mothers.





During the 1970s, with increasing awareness of the importance of the early years in human development, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare set up a commission to fix standards for day care workers. More important, it created an extensive in-service training program. At the time, only 15% of day care workers had received any preparation.

By June 1992, 4,000 day care workers, or more than 50% of the total 7,500 day care workers in Israel, had been certified. The Ministry expects to upgrade all remaining day care personnel within 5 years' time.<sup>49</sup>

Day care workers are no longer accepted with fewer than 12 years of schooling, and the tendency is to employ only those who show promise of passing the training course.

The Department of Vocational Training at the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare also offers training programs for day care workers. A few dozen women took the course in 1992, which consists of 500 hours, offered in the afternoons.

Finally, a number of vocational high schools offer a day care workers' program, the graduates of which receive high school completion certificates. However, most students who major in day care do not seek employment in day care centers.



The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare also offers courses for day care center directors as well as for women providing home day care. The latter is a 210 hour course, a prerequisite for persons wishing to set up home services. Candidates have to be approved by an admissions committee.

The above courses for day care workers are attended mainly by Jewish women, as there are very few day care centers in Arab communities accredited by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. Moreover, the Ministry of Labor does not have day care schools in Arab communities. The only government courses attended by Arab students are those for providers of home day care services.

Training programs for Arab day care workers are provided by Arab women's associations: Dar al Tifl al Arabe and al-Tufula. Courses are also available in the village of Sahnin and at the Jezrael Valley Regional College. The above courses consist of 720 hours of instruction, and graduates receive certificates from the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. In addition, there is a vocational program for day care workers in the Kufr Yassif village high school.

- Cont. from p. 10
- that the available supply
- of kindergarten teachers
- entered the labor force.<sup>52</sup>
- The problem does not exist
- in Arab communities, in
- which kindergartens are an
- integral part of the schools
- and kindergarten teachers
- have the same status as
- school teachers. Moreover,
- Arab schools have always
- had a 5-day week.
- Kindergarten teachers' assis-
- tants, whose duties include
- cooking, cleaning and pur-
- chasing supplies, are on the
- payroll of local governments
- and belong to the Histadrut
- Union of Clerical Workers.
- Their qualifications are low
- relative to those of kindergar-
- ten teachers - 10 years of
- schooling. Their pay is
- slightly more than half the
- pay of kindergarten teachers.
- They have a five-day week.

#### Professional Status: Day Care Workers

- Child care workers in day
- care centers run by Naamat
- and WIZO belong to the
- Histadrut Union of Clerical
- Workers. Child care workers
- in other organizations do not
- belong to the above union
- and are not organized. The
- salaries of most day care
- workers are similar to those
- of kindergarten teachers
- assistants and amount to
- slightly more than the mini-
- mum wage.<sup>53</sup>
- In day care centers in Arab
- communities, most of which
- are under private ownership,
- salaries are lower.



# "Special Nurturing" in Early Childhood Education

## The Policy of "Special Nurturing" – No End Goal

If the policy of special nurturing were intended to bring children to a level at which they no longer need special programs, it would stipulate an end point – which would make it possible to check whether or not the various programs achieved their goals.

However, this is not the case: there are programs for children designated as "teunei tipuah" at all levels, from kindergarten to junior high school. Each level works in isolation from the others: it appears that each of them develops its own "special nurturing" programs, including diagnosis, selection and evaluation.

"Special nurturing" is not designed as a continuous process, with check points along the way. Rather, children simply pass from one situation of "special nurturing" to the next situation of "special nurturing." Instead of being a process with an end point, it turns into a chronic state. Moreover, in Mizrahi neighborhoods and development towns in which the proportion of "teunei tipuah" is high, elementary schools are characterized by low achievements and a high proportion of students in slow classes, while the high schools are usually low-level vocational schools.<sup>70</sup> Thus, children who have the benefit of a Milo kindergarten and the Hippy and Hataf programs end up in local schools in which their opportunities are limited from the very start.

- During the 1960s, the Israel Ministry of Education instituted a policy designed to narrow the educational gaps between children residing in Mizrahi neighborhoods and development towns and those living in more affluent neighborhoods. Pupils whose fathers were born in Asia or Africa and had few years of schooling and large families were defined as "teunei tipuah," or "in need of special nurturing."<sup>56</sup>
- Special programs and enrichment activities were developed for them, and their teachers received special training. This policy remains intact, despite the changes instituted over the years.
- In time, the term "teunei tipuah" became the object of criticism; it was argued that the policy of "special nurturing" contributed to the perpetuation of the very situation it purported to remedy.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, the division of schoolchildren into regular pupils and those "in need of special nurturing" resulted in the establishment of low expectations for the latter. The most extensive survey ever conducted of elementary school achievements in Israel found that teachers' expectations of schoolchildren defined as "teunei tipuah" were extremely low.<sup>58</sup> A recent Ministry of Education internal report came up with the same finding.<sup>59</sup>
- The category "teunei tipuah" was not designed for kindergartners but rather for schoolchildren.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, the concept of "teunei tipuah" forms an important element of early childhood education services. The Educational and Social Welfare Services Department of the Ministry of Education devotes over 40% of its budget to 3 such projects: enrichment centers for kindergarten children (Milo kindergartens), Ha-etgar (Hippy), and Ha-taf.<sup>61</sup>
- The above programs are based on the assumption that one of the reasons for poor classroom performance is the lack of intellectual stimulation thought to typify Mizrahi family and community life. A study conducted in the 1970s, which showed a gap between the IQ's of "teunei tipuah" and other children beginning at age 2,<sup>62</sup> served as the empirical basis for these efforts. The project designers argued that early intervention in the kindergarten and at home would prevent a further lowering of the children's IQ level.<sup>63</sup>
- It should be pointed out that comparing IQ levels at such an early age is controversial, in light of the developmental theory of Piaget.<sup>64</sup> Others argue that unlike motivation and self-esteem, the intelligence of children does not appear to be much affected by conditions of deprivation.<sup>65</sup>

The difference in IQ levels found at age 2 had far-reaching implications for the designers of special programs for "teunei tipuah." It was reflected first and foremost in the low level of expectations they harbored for the target population. For example, the expectations of the creators of Hippy are minimal: not repeating a grade and not being placed in special education.<sup>66</sup> These expectations may have contributed to the actual entrenchment of low achievement standards among kindergarten teachers, mothers and children participating in the program; in other words, instead of providing the children with the intellectual stimuli they needed, the programs may have contributed to the definition of the children as in need of long-term "special nurturing."

Studies conducted by the Research Institute for Innovation in Education at the Hebrew University – the designer of Hippy and Hataf – point to an advantage conferred on children: the proportion of Hippy children who fail a grade or are referred to special education is lower than that of those in the control groups. Apparently, the advantage holds for several years.<sup>67</sup> Another achievement of the Hippy program is increased involvement of mothers in the education of their children.<sup>68</sup>

At the same time, it should be pointed out that at least in the initial period of its operation, the influence of Hippy on the total referrals to special education does not appear to have been significant. In 1975, when the program started, the number of Israeli children in special education was 36,500; five years later, it had risen to 60,000. Those were the years of expanding special education in Israel, following new selection processes instituted in elementary and junior high schools. The number of children in special education did not stabilize until the 1980s.<sup>69</sup> There are no studies that show the effect of the Hippy program on referrals to special education in specific communities.

It should be noted that the programs for "children in need of special nurturing" have not been applied in Arab communities; the term "in need of special nurturing" referred exclusively to Jewish children whose fathers came from Asia or Africa. As the report goes to press, the Ministry of Education announced a change in the definition of "teunei tipuah" – no longer will it be determined by ethnic origin but rather by socio-economic status. Despite this change, Arab schoolchildren are still not included.



## Selected "Special Nurturing" Programs

### The Ha-etgar Program

Ha-etgar<sup>96</sup> – Hebrew acronym for Programmed Guidance for Mothers of Young Children – is designed for mothers of children aged 3-5. Guidance is given at home, as a supplement to the kindergarten program. The program has two major goals: (1) increasing the involvement of mothers in the intellectual development of their children, and (2) increasing children's readiness for school. Guidance is provided by paraprofessional instructors living in the neighborhood, over a period of 3 years. The goal of the activities is to teach children the basic skills needed in school: the ability to listen and to communicate verbally, good study habits, language enrichment, sensory development, logical thinking and problem solving.

The Ha-etgar program was developed at the end of the 1960s by Professor Avima Lombard from the NCJW Research Institute. Since 1975 it has been applied on a national scale, financed by the Department of Educational and Social Welfare Services of the Ministry of Education.

In the 1980s, the program was instituted in Mizrahi neighborhoods and towns connected with Project Renewal and in those participating in the Educational Welfare Program of the Ministry of Education.

The target population is defined as families with 5 or more children, high housing density, and mothers who have fewer than 10 years of schooling – including the illiterate.

In 1991-2, the program was operating in 50 Mizrahi neighborhoods and towns and encompassed 5,765 families. At its peak, the program involved 15,000 families in 100 communities. In the course of the 1980s, nearly 110,000 mothers participated in it.

### The Ha-taf Program

Ha-taf<sup>97</sup> is a Hebrew acronym for Guidance in the Nurturing of Toddlers. It was developed in the early seventies by Avima Lombard and Hannah Nissel from the NCJW Research Institute, and



has been operating on a national scale since 1980. In 1989 it was active in 29 communities. Financed by the Department for Educational and Social Services of the Ministry of Education, it is intended for "young families with children aged 1-3 whose parents have up to 12 years of schooling."

The program involves the weekly home visit of a paraprofessional instructor, whose job is to show the parent and the child how to engage in educational play which includes opportunities for language enrichment, reading children's literature, motor development activities, eye-hand coordination, and stimulating the child's imagination.

The instructors are mothers residing in the neighborhood, who take a one-week training course, followed by on-going guidance. Each instructor works with 10-15 families. The instructors themselves receive both group and individual guidance from a professional.

The program was developed on the basis of experience with the Ha-etgar program and involves the same principle – helping mothers to play with their children in the home using programmed materials.



## The Adva Kindergarten Survey

- As part of the preparatory work for this report, visits were paid to 80 kindergartens in order to examine the educational services provided and the feelings of the teachers about their work. The visits took place during the months of March and April, 1992, and encompassed 46 Jewish kindergartens and 34 Arab kindergartens for 4 and 5 year olds. The Arab kindergartens visited included preschools in villages and cities in the Galilee, the Triangle, and the Negev, run by a variety of organizations – state and local government and voluntary associations. The Jewish kindergartens included those run by most of the organizations offering early childhood education services; these were concentrated in the southern neighborhoods of Tel Aviv, Pardes Katz, and the development towns of Or Yehuda and Ofakim. Following are the major findings of the survey.

- 1) All of the teachers in the Jewish kindergartens were certified. In the Arab kindergartens, all of the teachers in the kindergartens for 5 year olds and some of those in the kindergartens for 4 year olds were either graduates of teachers' colleges or had passed certification exams. However, in the kindergartens operated by voluntary associations like Dar al Tifl al Arabe, al Tufula, and the Arara and Ara women's associations, only 2 out of 15 teachers were graduates of teachers' colleges; the rest had taken courses at Dar al Tifl al Arabe (4), al Tufula (3), the schools for teachers and child care workers at the Jezrael Valley Regional College (2) or the Menashe Regional College (2); or had completed 11 or 12 years of schooling, followed by a 3-month training course (2). Amongst Arab kindergarten teachers operating private services, 2 had completed 11th or 12th grade, one had completed a course for teachers and day care workers at the Jezrael Valley College and one had attended a similar course at al Tufula.

- 2) Nearly all of the Jewish kindergarten teachers were familiar with the special programs developed by the Pre-elementary Education Department of the Ministry of Education, like Matal (natural sciences), Tal (instructional program), The Magic Circle (social interaction), Zaharur (road safety), Melel (language skills) or Agam (art). The majority of the Arab teachers were unfamiliar with most of the above programs. The best known programs were Matal and The Magic Circle; 29% of the Arab teachers, most of them employees of state kindergartens for 5 year olds, were acquainted with them. One teacher – from a state kindergarten for 5 year olds in Nazareth – reported

having visited an enrichment center for literature and art.

- 3) Most of the Jewish kindergartens had the benefit of auxiliary services, like a specialist for handicapped children, a nurse, psychologist, rhythmic and creative drama teacher. In Arab kindergartens these services were less common. Ten of the teachers, 7 of whom worked in state or Naamat kindergartens and 3 of whom worked in preschools run by Dar al Tifl al Arabe or al Tufula, reported having the benefit of the services of a psychologist. Five teachers in state kindergartens reported visits from nurses, and 4 mentioned services for handicapped children. Only six of the preschools had rhythmic teachers, all of them connected with voluntary associations: Dar al Tifl, al Tufula, the Ara Women's Association and the Arara Women's Association.

- 4) There was considerable discrepancy between Arab teachers' perceptions of the social value of their work and their perceptions of the way others viewed it. In answer to the question how they would rank the social contribution of kindergarten teachers, elementary school teachers, high school teachers and university lecturers, 30 out of the 34 Arab teachers interviewed (88%) replied that in their opinion kindergarten teachers were the most important. At the same time, 91% replied that their society ranked them at the bottom. Similar findings emerge with regard to the perceived importance of the profession of kindergarten teacher. Only one of the teachers replied that the work of the preschool teacher was considered "very important" by her society, while 18 (53%) reported that their work was perceived as "important," and 13 (38%) reported that it was viewed as "unimportant." One teacher replied that society viewed her work as "of no importance whatsoever." In contrast, 85% of the Jewish teachers reported that society considered their work either "very important" or "important."

This probably reflects the status of early education in Arab communities, especially the services for children under 5, which employ uncertified kindergarten teachers at low salaries, creating the impression that "anyone can do this kind of work."

- 5) When asked whether they took pride in their work or found satisfaction and self-realization in it, the Arab teachers surveyed were almost evenly divided between those who reported being "very satisfied" and those who





reported being "satisfied." Only a few reported feeling "not so satisfied." In contrast,

80% of Jewish teachers reported that they were "very satisfied."

## A Case of Successful Integration

### Ethiopian Immigrant Children Attend Kindergartens in the Eshkol Region

The children of new immigrants from Ethiopia are not usually integrated into existing kindergartens. Segregation is also common in elementary schools and boarding high schools.

In 1991, the moshavim in the Eshkol Regional Council decided to do things differently: they placed new immigrants from Ethiopia residing in their area in kindergartens together with their own children, 6-7 in each institution. Nine moshavim participated in the project – Ein Habesor, Mivtahim, Ohad, Talmei Eliahu, Sde Nitzan, Tzohar, Sde Abraham, Yated and Talmi Yosef – which involved 73 Ethiopian children between the ages of 4 and 6. The regional council subsidized the tuition fees of the 4 year olds.

After an acclimation period of a few months, during which the children learned Hebrew, they joined in all the activities of the kindergarten and were no different from the other children. The teachers spoke enthusiastically about the learning abilities of the children, their quick grasp, and their great potential.

The idea was conceived by Pini Agranati, director of the Education Department of the local council, and Mazal Avisar, coordinator of the moshavim kindergartens. The latter explained her rationale: "As I came here from Morocco, I lived through the absorption trauma of the 1950s, and I didn't want us to repeat the same mistakes."<sup>54</sup>

The scheme was adopted despite the objections of a number of teachers and parents. In Tzohar, the administrative center of the region, and the home of employees of the regional council, opposition was especially strong, some of the parents threatening to keep their children at home. Their fears were related to skin color as well as the infectious diseases the new immigrants were said to suffer from.

By the end of the school year the gen-



eral consensus was that the plan had succeeded. Most of the teachers were of the opinion that the Ethiopian children in their kindergartens had a good chance of making the grade in elementary school, if they received additional help in Hebrew language skills. All of them expressed confidence in the intellectual capabilities of the children.

Ethiopian schoolchildren from the Eshkol region are generally sent automatically to state religious schools in the regional center of Mchavim, where they study in separate classrooms. This

arrangement is the result of an agreement made at the upper echelons of government, which is still in force despite repeated Ministry of Education declarations that "Ethiopian parents have the right to register their children in the school of their choice." However, the children who participated in the above program were given the option of attending local elementary schools, which are secular, so as to continue their schooling in the neighborhood, alongside the friends they made in kindergarten; their parents chose this option.<sup>55</sup>



## Day Care Facilities

### NGOs Providing Day Care and Kindergarten Services

In 1992 **Naamat** had 328 day care centers serving 23,600 children. The figures include 3 centers in the Arab sector, serving 183 children aged 1-3, and one mixed center. Naamat also runs 18 Arab kindergartens, serving 468 children in 14 communities. Naamat employs 3,800 persons. Its day care workers are graduates of Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare schools or graduates of vocational high schools who majored in child care. Every day care class for age 3 or above has a certified kindergarten teacher. Naamat also offers in-service training at its own pedagogical centers and employs 20 pedagogical supervisors. Each day care center has at least one certified caregiver.<sup>70</sup> In the Arab sector, the situation is even better: all 23 Arab women employed by Naamat are graduates of teachers' colleges.<sup>71</sup>

**WIZO** has a total of 170 day care centers, some of them in immigrant absorption centers. It serves a total of 14,000 children, including kindergartens. It does not offer day care services in the Arab sector, although one of its centers – located in Jaffa – has an Arab majority. WIZO employs 1,900 kindergarten and day care teachers. The latter are graduates of Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare schools and of in-service training courses offered by WIZO at its pedagogical centers. Since the early 1980s, WIZO day care has been based on small groups of 3-6 children.<sup>72</sup>

The **Emunah** (women's branch of the National Religious Party) day care network has 103 day care centers, 11 kindergartens for 1-2 year olds and 10 kindergartens for 3-4 year olds, serving 8,500 children aged 6 months to 4 years. Operating in

*Cont. on p. 17*

The present day care network was initiated by the major Jewish women's organizations – Naamat, WIZO, and Emunah – during the prestate period, when centers were set up to serve the needs of working women. With the expansion of the Israeli economy in the 1960s and the increasing participation of women in the work force, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare began allocating budgets for new centers and subsidizing existing ones. In the 1980s, smaller organizations allied with political parties in the government coalition, like Herut Women, Margalit (Shas), Liberal Women and "Beit Yaakov" (Agudat Israel), set up day care centers for their own constituents, as did local governments and the Community Centers Company (Matnas). The Orthodox Habad Movement also set up day care centers, though these were not accredited by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.<sup>71</sup> The network operates primarily in the Jewish sector. Naamat has 3 day care centers for Arab children and one for both Arab and Jewish toddlers. Notably, many of the buildings that house day care centers in Jewish communities were built with the aid of contributions from The Education Fund of the Jewish Agency, which does not contribute to the Arab sector. In the 1980s, a number of NGOs set up day care centers in Arab communities: the Nazareth Day Care Center Association; Dar al Tifl al Arabe (the Arab Children's House) in Acre, Arara, and Jaffa; the Democratic Women's Movement, allied with the Communist Party; the Islamic Association; and a number of other local associations.



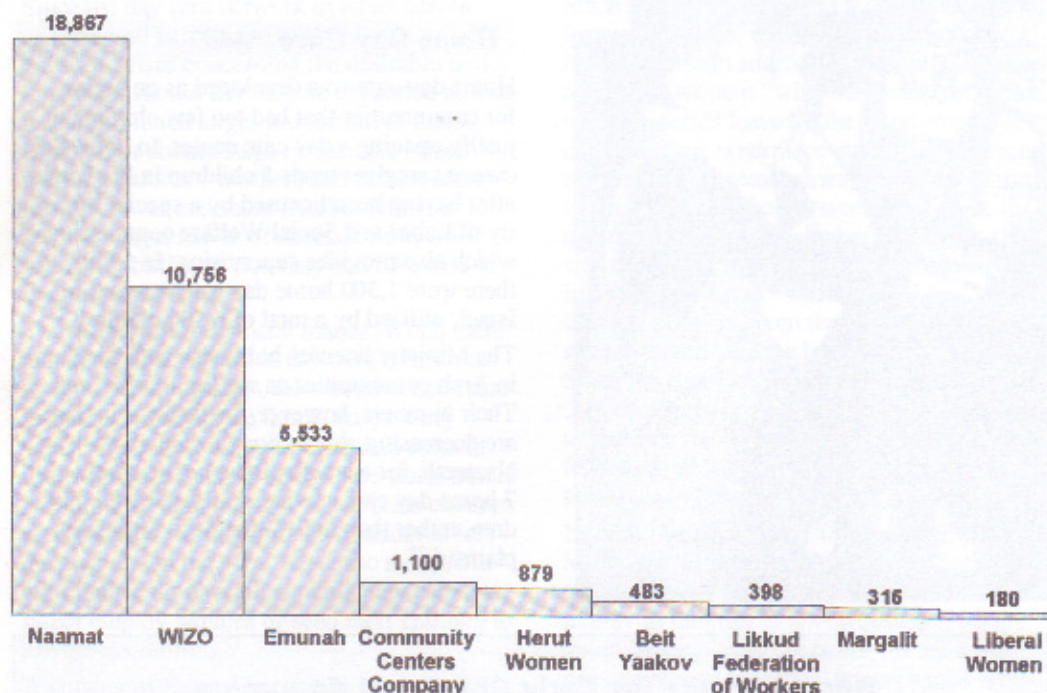
Expansion of Jewish Day Care, 1969-1989

Year	Centers	Children	Children of Working Mothers	% Children Working Mothers
1969	200	10,000	7,000	70%
1975	520	27,500	18,000	65%
1981	750	43,000	29,000	67%
1985	850	45,000	31,000	69%
1989	1,100	60,000	48,000	80%
1990	1,300	60,000	50,000	83%

Source: Shefer, N. *The Network of Day Care Centers in Israel*. Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. November 9, 1989. (Hebrew).



## Children of Jewish Working Mothers in Day Care, by Organization Running the Centers, 1992



Source: Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. Breakdown of Children of Working Women in Day Care, by Organization Running the Center. February 16, 1992.

A partial picture of the share of the various organizations can be obtained from figures published by the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare concerning the children of working mothers attending day care. In 1992, these figures covered 80% – or 48,000 out of the 60,000 children enrolled in day care. The table includes only the largest organizations.

In recent years, the day care market has been characterized by competition, especially in Mizrahi neighborhoods and development towns. New day care centers were set up, and the major women's associations found themselves competing with organizations charging lower fees.

At the same time, the demand for day care appears to have leveled off, due, among other things, to rising unemployment and a decrease in real wages. Neither the directors of day care centers belonging to women's organizations nor the director of the Department for the Status and Employment of Women in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare foresees a significant growth in day care facilities in the near future.

Only 15% of potential consumers, mainly the children of middle-class, working mothers, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi alike, utilize public day care. Upper class and upper middle class

families tend to employ the services of nannies or private day care, in order to give their children more personalized care. The common wisdom is that "whoever can afford it" opts for private care.

Lower class women do not usually utilize day care, as the fees are high relative to their income, even with subsidies. The exceptions are women whose fees are paid by social welfare agencies.

Most centers are open between 7:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.; those adjacent to factories open earlier (6:30 a.m.) and close later (5:00 p.m.). In the Arab sector, day care centers are few and far between, and they usually operate only during the morning hours, or until 2:00 p.m., and thus do not enable mothers to take full time jobs.

The majority of day care centers work according to a set timetable for each age group. In the past, the emphasis was on creating a "family substitute" by providing the children warmth, security and proper nutrition. However, the increasing academic debate over the importance of the early years in emotional and intellectual development has led to a shift of focus to the educational and developmental aspects of caregiving. Thus most day care centers offer a program that includes play, creativity, educational games, and activities designed to pro-

- cont. from p. 16
- the Jewish sector only, it employs 1,600 workers, most of whom are certified. It has a school in Jerusalem that certifies day care workers, and it offers periodical in-service training courses. Emunah institutions offer "a religious-Zionist-national education that inculcates traditional Jewish values." As in the centers run by WIZO and Naamat, the emphasis is on small group work.<sup>79</sup>
- The **Margalit** day care network, which belongs to the Shas Party, includes 26 day care centers, most of them in Mizrahi neighborhoods and development towns in the central area of the country. In 1992, they served about 800 children, all of them Jewish. The network employs 2 pedagogical and one administrative supervisor. Most of the day care workers are graduates of Beit Yaakov religious teachers' colleges. Each year the network sends 10-15 caregivers to Ministry of Labor schools for further training.
- Most of the Margalit day care centers are located in rented buildings. Although the centers comply with official standards, not all are on a par with those run by the major women's organizations.
- They educate children "to follow the teachings and commandments of the Torah and to live a religious life."<sup>80</sup>
- The Orthodox **Agudat Israel** has only 5 day care centers serving about 150 children. On the other hand, it has 330 kindergartens, serving a total of 9,300 children, including 3,260 5 year olds and 6,020 4 year olds. It operates in the Jewish sector only. Agudat Israel employs 400 kindergarten teachers and 60 teachers' assistants; all of the former are either certified or senior teachers with degrees from Beit Yaakov teachers' colleges. The network has its own Mink kindergartens. Agudat Israel teaches its children "to love the people of Israel, the land of Israel, and the

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Torah of Israel." The curriculum includes weekly Torah readings and prayers. The network has a special program for the teaching of reading which, according to the directors, makes for greater readiness for school.<sup>91</sup>

**The Democratic Women's Organization**, founded by members of the Israel Communist party and independent women, set up its first kindergarten in Haifa in 1950. In 1975 it opened two more in the Arab city of Shfaram and in the village of Tamra. Additional kindergartens were set up in the 1980s, in various Arab communities. During its years of greatest activity, Democratic Women had 30 kindergartens for 4 year olds and 7 for 3 year olds. Due to budget cuts, it presently has only 25 kindergartens for 5 year olds and 5 for 3-4 year olds, serving 1,000 children in the Galilee, the Triangle and the Negev, most of them from poor families. The fees charged are low. The Democratic Women employ some 90 kindergarten teachers and assistants; the former are graduates of al Tufala in Nazareth or Dar al Tifl al Arabe in Acre and are certified by the Ministry of Social Welfare. Most of the buildings housing the kindergartens are sub-standard, and auxiliary services are largely absent. Kindergartens that manage to raise the necessary funds have the benefit of a psychologist or rhythm music teacher.

The organization stresses humanistic values: love, friendship, and cooperation. Activities center on sensory and emotional development.<sup>92</sup>

**Dar al Tifl al Arabe**, which belongs to the **Acre Women's Association**, is a pedagogical center for the training of certified day care workers. Founded in 1975, the center presently has 50 students. Dar al Tifl publishes early education instructional materials in Arabic. Its present plans include conducting surveys of early

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more sensory and motor development. Most important, efforts have been made to provide caregivers with professional training.

### Home Day Care

Home day care was developed as an option for communities that had too few children to justify opening a day care center. In home day care, a caregiver tends 5 children in her home, after having been licensed by a special Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare commission, which also provides supervision. In 1989, there were 1,300 home day care services in Israel, utilized by a total of 6,500 children.<sup>72</sup>

The Ministry licenses home day care services in Arab communities as well as Jewish ones. Their numbers, however, are small, and they are decreasing, due to budget cuts: in Nazareth, for example, there are presently 7 home day care services, utilized by 35 children, rather than the 12 that were originally planned.<sup>73</sup>

### Responsibility for Early Childhood Education

In Israel, government responsibility for early childhood education is divided between the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The former is responsible for 0-3 year olds enrolled in day care centers and home services; the latter is responsible for 3-5 year olds attending kindergarten.

This division is not unique to Israel, but exists in many other countries, like, for example, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Holland, Portugal, England, India and Japan.<sup>74</sup>

Its origins are in the 19th century, when, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, assistance in caring for the young children of working mothers, especially the poor among them, was viewed as charity, and as such was later integrated into welfare ministries created by the state. Kindergartens that attended to an older age group were viewed as part of the formal educational system, and thus became part of education ministries.

In the Israel Ministry of Education and Culture, early education is viewed as an appendage to elementary education. It was only in 1987 that a separate department was created for kindergartens. The department is still relatively small, employing 9 persons in full or part-time positions.

In contrast, the Department for Women's Status and Employment is an important body in the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare, having the second largest budget in the Ministry. The department finances about 1/4 of the costs of building day care centers, and almost 20% of the operating expenses of the day care centers, the latter through subsidies.

Officials in the Department for Women's Status and Employment are skeptical about attempts being made by the Ministry of Education and Culture to extend its supervision to institutions caring for children aged 0-3. In the opinion of department officials, while the Ministry of Education can assist with the training of day care directors and supervisors, it lacks the proper tools for dealing with the younger age group.

In contrast, the Ministry of Education views supervision as a way of upgrading day care personnel.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, it would like to extend this supervision to private institutions, which at present are, in many cases, beyond its reach.

There is no formal arrangement for coordination and cooperation between the two ministries, aside from the fact that day care directors and supervisors attend courses and in-service training provided by the Ministry of Education.



## Raising Infants at Home v. Day Care

Since the day care network in Israel serves only a small percentage of the population, a question arises concerning the desirable policy to pursue: should day care be expanded so that it serves a much larger proportion of Israeli families, or should steps be taken to allow working parents – mothers and fathers alike – to work fewer and more flexible hours, or to receive longer leaves of absence from work following births, so that they can take care of their own children.

This is not just a financial matter. While there are those who argue that day care contributes to child development, others believe that there is no substitute for the family in the early years. The debate also has class and cultural dimensions: adherents of day care claim that it is especially important for lower class children and ethnic or national groups considered less developed. On the other hand, the most affluent families do not utilize public day care but rather employ nannies or send their children to private institutions.<sup>91</sup>

A number of European countries have developed legislation that allows parents to choose between the two alternatives, like an extended, paid leave of absence following births, the possibility of taking longer leaves of absence without fear of losing one's job, and flexible working hours for young parents.

Since 1954, Israel has had a 12-week maternal leave of absence, which was quite advanced for its time.<sup>92</sup> In addition, Israeli law enables a working woman "who was employed prior to her maternal leave by the same employer or in the same workplace at least 24 consecutive months, to remain away from work from the beginning of the 7th week after birth, for a period of 1/4 of the number of months she was employed, not to exceed 12 months."<sup>93</sup> In 1988, "maternal" was replaced by "parental" and couples given the choice of which spouse would take the leave of absence.<sup>94</sup> Since the first Israeli law was enacted, many countries have improved upon it, in an effort to increase the options open to parents. The following tables compare maternal and parental leaves in Israel and other countries.

It should be pointed out that expanding the legal opportunities for leaves of absence from work, whether paid or unpaid, is relevant mainly to families in which both parents are gainfully employed. In Israel, for example, only employed persons who pay social security for at least 3 months prior to birth are entitled to paid maternal leaves of absence. In 1988-89, this included 56.3% of Jewish mothers who gave birth, compared with 6.3% of Arab mothers.<sup>95</sup>

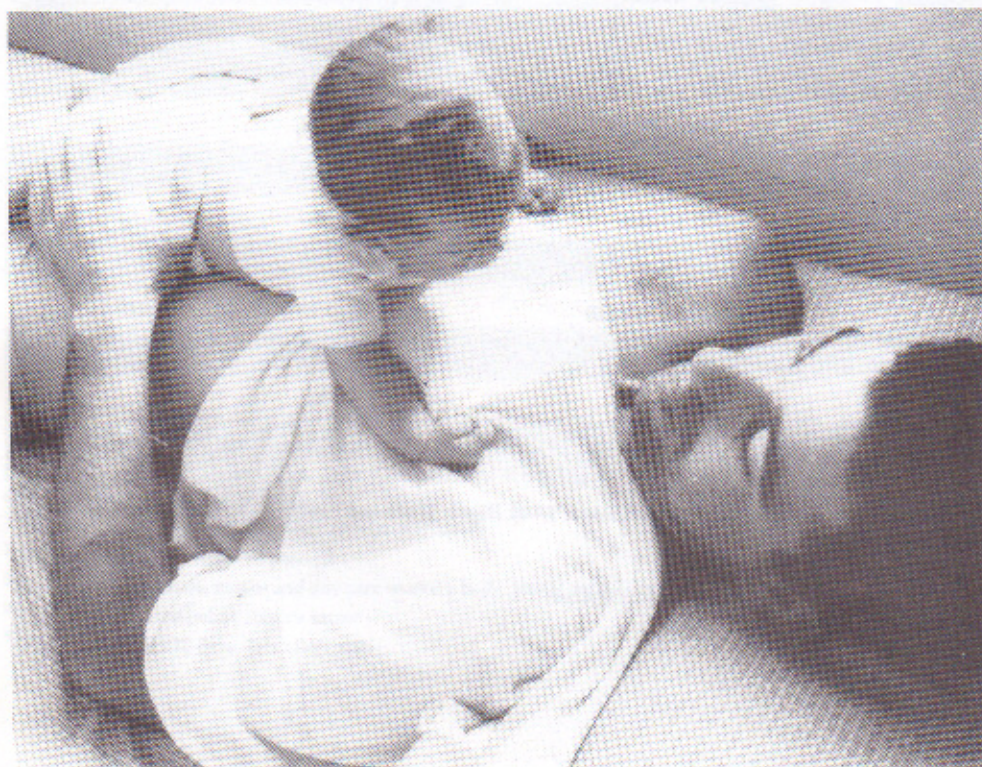


Photo: Shosh Kormush

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- education services in the Arab
- sector, providing guidance for
- kindergarten teachers and day
- care workers, conducting work-
- shops on how to develop
- games and curricula, and orga-
- nizing a resource center.
- In cooperation with the Acre
- Women's Association, Dar al Tifl
- operates a day care center, a
- preschool for toddlers, and a kin-
- dergarten, serving a total of 60
- children. It employs 7 kindergar-
- ten teachers, all graduates of its
- own courses. The facilities are
- spacious and well equipped.
- The educational aim of Dar al
- Tifl al Arabe is to provide a mo-
- dern early childhood curriculum
- that preserves Arab culture.<sup>83</sup>
- The **Triangle branch of**
- **Dar al Tifl al Arabe**, in the
- village of Arara, now operates as
- an autonomous organization. It
- offers a training program for day
- care workers like that in Acre,
- attended by about 30 students,
- all of them from the surrounding
- area. It also has a day care cen-
- ter and a kindergarten, which
- serve 60 children. Three of the
- child care workers are Dar al Tifl
- graduates, 2 are graduates of
- teachers' colleges, and one has
- a B.Ed. The facilities are spa-
- cious and well equipped. The
- center works with parents and
- has the services of a volunteer
- nurse, a rhythmic teacher,
- and a psychologist.<sup>84</sup>
- **The Nazareth Day Care**
- **Association** was founded in
- 1984 by a group of Arab
- women from Nazareth. It runs a
- day care center for 55 children
- aged 0-3. In the past it also had
- two kindergartens, but these
- closed down due to financial dif-
- ficulties, exacerbated by compe-
- tition from the Islamic
- Association, which charges
- lower fees for the same services.
- The kindergarten has 6 teachers
- and a housemother, most of
- whom are graduates of al Tufula.
- In 1990, the Association created
- the **al Tufula Pedagogical**
- **Center for Early Educa-**
- **tion**, which offers a 720 hour
- training program for high school

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graduates. It holds workshops in early education, develops professional and children's literature in Arabic, and has a resource center.<sup>85</sup>

**The Trust of Programmes for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education, Ltd.**, was set up in 1984 in East Jerusalem by a group of educators and community workers. The first project was a program in East Jerusalem for 3-4 year olds. The present enrollment is 130 children. The project includes work with families (which number about 100), through home visits and child-raising guidance. The Trust also set up an early education enrichment center in East Jerusalem. Subsequently the projects were extended to other Arab communities in Israel: Beit Nakufa and Abu-Ghosh in the Jerusalem area (150 children aged 3-5 and their parents); Lod and Ramle in the central region (home day care, enrichment centers, and parental guidance programs); Kalanswa, Baka el-Gharbiyya and Talbe in the Triangle (kindergartens for 3-5s, parent programs, and an enrichment center); and Rahat and Laghia in the Negev. The Trust initiates the projects and finances them, in cooperation with local governments, which are to eventually take over. The Trust has guidance programs for teachers, paraprofessionals and administrators.<sup>86</sup>

**The Ara and Arara Women's Association** has 6 kindergartens for 3-5 year olds serving 150 children. It employs 9 kindergarten teachers, all graduates of Dar al Tifl al Arabe. The facilities are adequate, but equipment is lacking.<sup>87</sup>

**The Negev Association for Social Development**, located in the Bedouin town of Laghia, was founded in 1987 and has 4 kindergartens serving 80 children aged 3-4. The teachers are high school graduates without any formal training, who

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## Length of Maternity Leave

Country	Maximum	Leave
Israel	12 weeks	75%
Austria	16 weeks	100%
Australia	52 weeks	Unpaid
Italy	5 months	80%
Ireland	14 weeks	Up to 75%
England	40 weeks	Up to 90%
United States	In some states	Unpaid
Bulgaria	120-180 days	100%
Belgium	14 weeks	100-79.5% <sup>1</sup>
Former Soviet Union	16 weeks	100%
West Germany	14 weeks	100%
Denmark	28 weeks	90%
Holland	12 weeks	100%
Hungary	24 weeks	100%
Former Yugoslavia	105 days	100%
Greece	14 weeks	100%
Japan	14 weeks	60%
Norway	20 weeks	100%
New Zealand	14 weeks	Unpaid
Spain	14 weeks	75%
Poland	16-28 weeks	100%
Portugal	90 days	100%
Finland	268 days	80%
Former Czechoslovakia	28 weeks	90%
France	16-28 weeks	84%
Canada	17-18 weeks	Up to 60% for 15 weeks
Romania	112 days	15-93% <sup>2</sup>
Sweden	12 weeks	90%
Switzerland	8-12 weeks	Same as Sick Pay

Source: International Labour Office. 1988. *Conditions of Work Digest: Work and Family - The Child Care Challenge*. Vol. 7, No. 2. Geneva. p. 20.

<sup>1</sup> Begins at 100% and lessens gradually.

<sup>2</sup> Depends on length of employment and number of children.



## Parental Leaves

Country	Maximum Length	Paid/Unpaid
Israel	Up to Age 1	Unpaid
Austria	Up to Age 1	Unpaid (allowance possible)
Australia	Up to 66 weeks <sup>1</sup>	Unpaid, mostly
Italy	6 months	Paid (reduced benefits)
United States	12 weeks some states	Unpaid
Bulgaria	Up to Age 2	Paid
	Up to Age 3	Unpaid (allowance available)
Belgium	6-12 months	Paid (fixed allowance)
Former Soviet Union	18 months	Unpaid
West Germany	Up to Age 1	Paid (fixed allowance)
Denmark	24 weeks	Paid
Hungary	18 weeks	Paid
	Up to Age 3	Unpaid
Greece	30 months <sup>2</sup>	Unpaid
Japan	Up to Age 1 <sup>3</sup>	Unpaid
Norway	70 days	Paid
	Up to Age 1	Unpaid
New Zealand	Up to Age 1	Unpaid
Spain	Up to Age 3	Unpaid
Poland	Up to Age 3 or 4	Unpaid (allowance possible)
Portugal	Up to Age 2	Unpaid (subsidies possible)
	Up to Age 3	Unpaid
Finland	163-223 days	Paid
Former Czechoslovakia	Up to Age 3	Paid
France	Up to Age 3	Unpaid (allowance possible)
Canada	24 weeks <sup>4</sup>	Unpaid
Romania	Up to Age 6	Unpaid
Sweden	360 days <sup>5</sup>	Paid

Source: International Labour Office. 1988. *Conditions of Work Digest: Work and Family – The Child Care Challenge*. Vol. 7, No. 2. Geneva. p. 20.

<sup>1</sup> Relevant for only a portion of public service employees

<sup>2</sup> In plants employing over 100 persons

<sup>3</sup> Includes only teachers, nurses and day care workers in the public service sector

<sup>4</sup> Up to 5 years in the public service sector

<sup>5</sup> 90% for the first 270 days, less afterwards

- cont. from p. 20
- receive guidance from a psychologist. The facilities are sub-standard and equipment lacking. As some of the Bedouin communities are unrecognized, they cannot obtain permits to build kindergartens for under fives. One of the kindergartens visited had received a demolition order, though it was no more than a shack.
- For all the Bedouins residing in the Negev there are only 11 kindergartens for children under 5, serving 250-300 children: 2 of them belong to local governments, 5 to voluntary associations, and 4 are private.<sup>88</sup>
- **The Islamic Association** is a roof organization for some 40 local associations set up in the 1980s.
- In 1991, they had about 100 kindergartens in 38 communities, serving 3,500 children under the age of 5. The fees are the lowest in the market. Most of the teachers are uncertified and most of the facilities are sub-standard.<sup>89</sup>
- **The Association of 40 Unrecognized Arab Communities** represents Arab communities in the Haifa and Northern districts of Israel not recognized by the authorities. Their combined population is about 10,000. The communities lack basic amenities – roads, electricity, water, schools and kindergartens. Not all 5 year-olds attend kindergarten. In 1991-2, the association set up kindergartens for under fives in the communities of Ein Hod, Damida, Hussnyia, and East Kamana. Most of the teachers are uncertified; 2 are graduates of al Tufula or Dar al Tifl al Arabe. Most of the facilities are sub-standard and lack essential services, and equipment is lacking.<sup>90</sup>



## Prospects for the Future

After two decades of development and increasing acknowledgement of the importance of early childhood education, a number of issues have yet to be resolved.

One is the disparity in services between Jewish and Arab communities. While nearly all Jewish 3 and 4 year olds attend kindergarten – and many of their families have the benefit of government tuition subsidies, attendance figures for Arab children are much lower, and relatively few have the benefit of any kind of state aid.

In the early 1980s the possibility of extending free education to 3 and 4 year olds was debated, but no legislation ensued. The alternative instituted – subsidized tuition for selected population groups – was clearly discriminatory. Moreover, the present policy places a good part of the burden of financing early childhood education on households.

One way to implement the principles of equity and social justice in early childhood education for 3 and 4 years olds would be to extend free education to these age groups. This would ensure the establishment of kindergartens in Arab and other communities in which early childhood education is absent, and would ensure the attendance of all children.

An alternative would be to universalize the subsidy system, so that all those in need benefitted from it. This would necessitate developing proper infrastructures – mostly buildings – in those communities without early childhood education services.

When considering the future of early childhood education for infants aged 0-3, 15% of whom attend state-supported day care, it should be noted that educators are divided on the question of whether it is preferable to raise children at home or send them to day care. In general, it appears that adherents of the former dominate, for day care proponents focus primarily on its advantages for lower-class families.

Parents' decisions concerning child care are affected not only by what they consider to be the best interests of the child: other important considerations are economic ones, as well as the importance family and community attach to the employment and self-realization of the mother – for raising children at home usually means that the mother, not the father, forgoes employment and career opportunities.

In this context, a number of European countries have enacted legislation that gives parents greater choice, by allowing them to hold on to their jobs while they are raising their children and/or by providing a monthly allowance during this time; while each state defines the home period differently, in most it is longer than in Israel.

The fact that early childhood education is recognized as important does not mean there is agreement with regard to its content. Proponents of psychological and developmental approaches, which stress the importance of early childhood in emotional growth and the formation of personality, find themselves up against adherents of pedagogical approaches that emphasize the importance of cognitive development. At present, it appears that the latter have the day. The growing tendency towards selection and competitiveness in Israeli elementary and high schools has filtered down, resulting in an increasing emphasis on "school readiness" in kindergartens for 5 year olds and even in preschools for younger children. This is reflected in "school readiness tests" administered in kindergartens, which in many cases determine which children will attend a regular first grade class and which children a class for slow learners. There are indications that placement in slow classes in first grade may mark the beginning of a school career in lower-level classes or in special education.

In contrast, it appears that kindergartens favoring a developmental approach are growing fewer in number. At present they are an option chosen mainly by kibbutzim, academicians in the big cities, or counter-culture groups. In addition, there are kindergarten teachers who try to integrate the two approaches.

Hopefully, the debate over the best approach to early childhood education will continue, and it will not be confined to educators, but will spread to community organizations, including parent groups. While Israeli parents have generally been passive consumers, a number of parent groups, mainly middle-class and primarily in the big cities, have organized to influence the content of the care and education their children receive in kindergarten. It is no less important for Mizrahi and Arab parents to become involved.





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