

Joint daycare program a success

by Marcie Johnston
F.W.I.O. Secretary

The Executive of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, in early February, 1984, decided since there is a need for child care in the rural areas, that they pilot a project taking advantage of the Summer Canada Works '84 Program.

First I had to find out if there was a need in my County of Perth. By word of mouth, I came up with 30 names of families in Perth and through Beth Slumskie of Concerned Farm Women, 30 families in Grey-Bruce. To qualify, the farm wife had to have no off-farm job, at least one pre-schooler, and she assisted in the barn and/or fields.

A Child Care Worker would rotate to each of five homes, one day a week at the cost of \$1 per child per day for all of her children for the period including May 14 to Aug. 24, 1984. This service would provide continuous supervision of the child (children) while the mother was occupied with farm tasks and may include other duties like meal preparation and clean-up as time would permit. Farm safety was to be greatly stressed for the safety of all children. There would be a worker to meet the older children coming home on the bus from school.

We hoped to employ students who studied early childhood education and would be knowledgeable about the stages of child development. He or she should enjoy working with children, have baby-sitting experience, and/or camp experience, or other related experiences. The student should be mature, trustworthy, able to effectively manage time, able to communicate and carry out instructions. He or she should be in good health and preferably a non-smoker. A car would be an asset, but other transportation may be used depending on distances.

Under the Student Employment Qualification for Summer Canada Works '84, a student must have a secondary education, presently enrolled in school and planning to continue the following year.

ADVANTAGES FOR THE WORKER

The Child Care Worker would gain experience to help obtain a job

in the future, get five character references and learn about five family living experiences, thus preparing the student for future life experiences.

ORIENTATION FOR CHILD CARE WORKER

Instruction was given in the importance of honesty, compatibility, child care and safety.

Program participants taught Canada's Food Guide and encouraged children to eat properly. Basic personal hygiene such as when to wash hands, was stressed along with the importance of sleep and exercise both indoor and out.

Participants were provided with support material such as: farm safety colouring books, Farm Safety Fact Sheets, Story Books, Box of 48 crayons, and pamphlets on baby-sitting, poisonous plants, and emergency procedures.

The pilot project did not pass in Perth County, but M.P. Gary Gurbini approved it in Bruce for four students servicing 20 families to the cost of \$10,000. Although this project was instigated by Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, Dr. Gurbini asked for a co-sponsor which

was the Concerned Farm Women with Helen Cumming as the contact person. I did the bookkeeping and pay roll and Mrs. Cumming of Dobbington, took all the local calls, questions from parents and/or students. Several parents disqualified during the project, some went on holidays, or maternity leave, so other parents came into the program.

EVALUATION

At an evaluation evening it became evident both students and parents felt the project was great! They wish it would continue next year and they would be willing to pay more. The parents wished they had known the Child Care Workers were so well qualified and suggested a parents' get-together to discuss all responsibilities of both students and parents. They could have used the students on two consecutive days.

IDEAS FOR THE FUTURE

A Farm Labour Pool concept like Agri-Crew, when parents could phone in to ask for workers at busy times for either 2 to 3 days. This could be subsidized with the parent to pay perhaps \$15 per day.



Pictured are the five participants of the summer project. From left to right, they are (front) Carol Davey, Donna Davey, Marianne Lamont and Cheryl Hopkins and Leslie Bartlett in the back.