

—services meet local needs

structured time, like circle time, nap time, play time, and craft time, but we also want the children to enjoy a free atmosphere," Marg said.

In the future, the board hopes to organize some other types of child care services such as a toy lending library and a care giver registry.

"Our lifestyles have changed so much. Saying that mothers should be home with their children is no longer realistic," said Marg. We hope we are helping families of the 1980's with our child care centre, she added.

Marg is willing to talk to anyone interested in rural child care issues. You can reach her at 519 678-3238.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

The child care scenario in Northumberland offers a different picture. Arlene Dorland, a Codrington WI member, is chairman of the board which offers child care services to the whole county, except Cobourg. The service is just completing its second full year as a pilot project. But, the idea began in 1985.

"Pat Morgan and I ran a program of in-home care only, back in the summer of 1985," Arlene explained. Later that fall, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services decided to launch four rural child care pilot projects across the province. Arlene believes because of their experience earlier that summer, and because of the high number of

farm wives working off the farm in Northumberland, her county was selected as one of the pilot projects. (Temiskaming, Dufferin and Lambton were the other three.)

Once Northumberland had been selected, a board had to be set-up. Pat and Arlene approached the women who used the 1985 child care service. At that time, incorporated also took place and a co-ordinator was hired.

"The Ministry of Community and Social Services staff helped us to meet the requirements for their funding," Arlene said. "Actually, we were running quite quickly. We had a meeting in February (1986) and were operating in April," Arlene added.

Because Northumberland's is a pilot project, the service does not have to obey all the rules set down by MCSS, although Arlene said, "We were strongly encouraged to follow the rules." Each pilot project is different, and it is the flexibility towards the rules that helps to meet the various needs in each location.

During its first year of operation, the project continued to receive funding from the federal government for its in-home care. During its second year, all funding came from MCSS.

The Northumberland project offers a variety of services to its clients. The in-home care begins in May and runs until the end of August. Trained high school students come into a home to care for the children. Large blocks of time cannot be booked by parents

wishing in-home care and the service is on a first-come, first-served basis. Fees are based on the number of children being cared for.

Supervised play days, rotating from four different locations in the county, are also offered. Children aged two to five arrive at 10 a.m. and stay until 4 p.m., bringing their own lunch. Parents pay \$6 per day for this service and there are anywhere from five to 25 children at each play day.

"We have tried to set up private home care, but we can't find enough people to take children into their homes. There isn't enough money in child care," Arlene said. So far, a child care centre has not been offered either. "I think there's a real reluctance for people to put their children in an institution, but we are finally getting more feedback. I think we will probably be determining the need for a full-time day care facility in Brighton soon," Arlene explained.

The project now has an office in Brighton. "It has taken a long time for our credibility to come, but I think we are on the way now," Arlene said.

The pilot project has two more years to go. Arlene, a mother of three and a dairy farmer, feels there are benefits to offering one child care program across the county. "We avoid duplication of effort, and if there is a variety of services, we can meet everyone's needs," she explained.

