

THE USE OF SESAME STREET PROGRAM AND
MATERIALS BY DAY CARE CENTERS

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

This research was concerned with the use of the "Sesame Street" program and materials by day care centers. Joan Ganz Cooney and her brainchild television show "Sesame Street," a new concept in educational programming for the young, opened up a whole new avenue for educational material, both popular and scholarly, on educational television for young children in general and on "Sesame Street" in particular.

Need for Study

Since television's inception, there has been a vast amount of research concerning the viewing practices of children. Much of this literature has dealt with the effects of violence on young audiences, the amount of time spent viewing, and with program selection habits.

Although much has been written concerning the role of television in education, prior to the late 1960's most of the literature in this area was aimed at explaining or evaluating educational television at levels beyond early childhood or the primary grades. A majority of the material has used the "middle-aged" child or the adolescent as its research target. Material exploring the possibility of expansion and/or evaluation of already existing early childhood "educational" programs was limited.

"Sesame Street" funding comes partially from public monies allocated through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. HEW

justifies this by noting that "Sesame Street" is aimed at the young child whose family falls in the lower income brackets.

Some of the most vocal criticism of "Sesame Street" has come from individuals such as Arnold, quoted by Berson (6) in Childhood Education, who charges that "Sesame Street" is being used as a substitute for good programs in early childhood education. There is need to ascertain if there is enough usage in the preschools (of at least one selected area) to make this suggestion possibly valid.

Schramm (38) has suggested the importance of schools and teachers in guiding children in their viewing and of the value of television in the schools when he stated that

Schools can be of enormous help it seems to us, in two ways. In the first place, they can direct children to the reality experiences of television and can reinforce the children's selection of those programs by talking about them in school. . . . anything to which children devote one sixth of their waking hours has an obvious importance for schools. Furthermore, television is a real resource for examples, assignments, and what the teachers call 'enrichment.' It seems to us all to the good to bring television into the real-life process of learning, to break down the barrier between passive fantasy experiences and active use. (p. 184)

Are our schools and day care centers directing children to viewing certain type programs? Are they using the specially designed "Sesame Street" materials as enrichment in their classrooms? This study will attempt to discover the extent of "Sesame Street" usage in day care centers, where many children of lower income working mothers are being cared for during the day.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to ascertain how personnel in day care centers utilize the "Sesame Street" program and materials.

Specifically, purposes were (1) to ascertain "Sesame Street" viewing practices, (2) to determine the use of "Sesame Street" materials in the classroom and (3) to determine evidences of "Sesame Street" learning carried over into other activities.

Definition

For this study the following definition was used by the investigator:

Day Care Center--As defined by the Oklahoma Department of Institutions, Social and Rehabilitative Services (33), a day care center is:

. . . a facility which provides care for six or more children for six or more hours of the 24 hour day. This does not include nursery schools, kindergartens, or other facilities for which the purpose is primarily educational, recreational or medical treatment. (p. 5)

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

The research and opinions related to understanding the importance of "Sesame Street" can be divided into four major areas: (1) background of "Sesame Street," (2) opinions and research on the effectiveness of "Sesame Street," (3) television programming for children and (4) the influence of television on children.

Background of "Sesame Street"

Early Beginnings

The pre-beginnings of "Sesame Street" occurred in the fall of 1966 at a dinner party hosted by Joan Ganz Cooney, who at that time was working for an educational television station in New York. The discussion around the dinner table touched on the amount of time young children spent watching television and on the wasted educational possibilities, especially in the preschool years. Among the dinner guests was Lloyd Morrisett of the Carnegie Corporation. He became fascinated with Joan Cooney and her ideas, and eventually she was given a three month grant by the Carnegie Corporation to make a "feasibility study," according to Wylie (59).

The result of Cooney's study, wrote Mayer (31), was a

. . . not very imaginative document that suggests 'Sesame Street' only in its recognition that what most children like

most on television is the commercials, and that the commercials seem to teach. (pp. 137-138)

In her report, Joan Cooney (18) concluded that

If we accept the premise that commercials are effective teachers, it is important to be aware of their characteristics, the most obvious being frequent repetition, clever visual presentation, brevity and clarity. (p. 7)

However, neither the feasibility study nor the following proposal to Carnegie Corporation in 1968 suggested the straight forward use of advertising techniques in the show.

The original plan called for three regulars; a woman who would give ten to fifteen minutes to reading a story and conversation, an intelligent child of twelve or so, and a puppet which would provide humor. The rest of the show was to consist of little morality plays with puppet characters. The ideas were not flashy or new, and the show could have been produced for very little money, according to Mayer (31), but Joan Cooney insisted that a show good enough to draw children away from professional productions on other channels would have to be budgeted at professional costs. The commercial networks buy Saturday morning cartoons at a price of \$50,000 for twenty-two minutes. Joan Cooney was planning 130 one-hour shows, and there was not enough money available through Carnegie funds. Morrisett finally budgeted Children's Television Workshop at eight million dollars; this was to cover a year's preparatory work, initial publicity and a year of programs on the air. From the Carnegie Corporation and Ford Foundation, Morrisett got four million dollars. The broadcasting companies looked at Joan Cooney's documents and turned an unimpressed thumbs down, and no rich individuals offered to back the show. Finally, Morrisett called on an old college roommate of his, Harold Howe, from the Office of Education, and from him

got a commitment for the remaining four million dollars. In March of 1968 the proposal was unveiled to the press.

Among those who read the story in the papers was David Connell, who was a veteran of eleven years as producer for "Captain Kangaroo." Mayer (31) quoted Connell's original reaction to the show:

I'd read the announcement in the 'New York Times' with the big list of educational advisers and the sponsors and I thought that like other projects this one was going to be advised to death--I thought they were going to blow eight million dollars. But I met with Joan--hours and hours of conversation--and I was totally charmed by her. (p. 140)

Connell accepted the executive producer roll. He also convinced several other veteran assistants from the "Captain Kangaroo" show to come to work with him on the "Sesame Street" staff.

Joan Cooney's (18) initial proposal to the production staff called for a quick-paced format and the use of commercials to sell children things such as numerals and the alphabet. The consultant stage of "Sesame Street," under the chairmanship of Harvard professor Gerald Lesser, began after the initial staff meetings. Among the dozens of consultants brought in were children's book writers and illustrators, cartoon producers, audience researchers, producers of past children's television shows, advertising experts, professional educators and child development specialists. Mayer (31) reported that "The consultants produced what consultants usually do produce, and the staff undertook to map their own show" (p. 141).

During the eighteen month pre-broadcast season of "Sesame Street," a formative research staff was organized to work with the producers. Reeves (36), one of the research team, wrote that "Prior to the experiment we had never worked with producers, nor had the producers ever

before been assisted by a research department" (p. 1). The research efforts were involved in (1) goal formation, (2) testing for the determinants of appeal, and (3) testing for achievement.

Format and Content of the Program

The "Sesame Street" target group was to be the preschool child from a disadvantaged urban background. During the initial step toward establishment of its goals, Children's Television Workshop, according to Reeves (36), organized a series of five three-day seminars which were held during the summer of 1968. The following areas were examined:

(1) Social, Moral and Affective Development; (2) Language and Reading; (3) Mathematical and Numerical Skills; (4) Reasoning and Problem Solving and (5) Perception. Out of these seminars came an eight page listing of goals, divided into (1) Symbolic Representation, (2) Problem Solving and Reasoning, and (3) Familiarity With the Physical and Social Environments, that was to guide the staff in its first year of production.

Mainly to meet the demands of minority group parents, wrote Wylie (59), "Sesame Street" stressed cognitive learning--the teaching of numbers and letters of the alphabet. The intensive pretesting had convinced planners that the best device for such skill instruction was a fast-paced, fun-filled novelty and variety show, featuring a small repertory company of black and white adults and a group of puppets. Live skits, animated cartoons, short films of a descriptive or didactic nature and songs were to comprise the regular routine, with a highly repetitive presentation of the alphabet and the numeration table. The show was to be unsponsored, but to have commercials--rhythmic breaks in the action to "sell" the alphabet and numbers.

The hour long format that evolved from the pre-season testing and talking was divided into thirty to fifty separate sections, each of which ran from twelve seconds to three minutes in length. Psychologists listed the specific material they wanted stressed in each show. Much of the "Sesame Street" material was repeated from show to show, and within each show. In the 1970-71 season, reported Mayer (31), only about twenty-five minutes of each hour contained freshly created material for that day's program.

Stage Setting and Selection of Characters

The stage setting which was finally accepted was to look like a typical brownstone block of the inner city. The name came from Ali Baba's "Open Sesame," but from the beginning, noted Mayer (31), the show and its publicity were careful not to link the word "open" to "Sesame Street."

Cooney (16) reported that the puppets were originally to have been made by the inventor of "Kukla, Fran and Ollie," but the staff decided to use the prize winning Muppets which were made by Jim Hensen. The planning staff felt that the "monsters" and other unrealistic muppets would give writers a wider field for imagination. It was understood that the street scenes and the puppet episodes would be kept wholly separate--educational psychologists had expressed disapproval of an indiscriminate mix of reality and fantasy. After the initial segments of the show were produced, this concept of separation was dropped.

Joe Raposo was employed as head musician for the show. Raposo and his staff were, according to Mayer (31), one of the major contributors to the popularity of "Sesame Street." One of their early songs, "Rubber

Ducky," was listed on the chart of most popular records of the country for nine weeks. Raposo and his musicians received seven Gold Records and several Emmy's and Grammy's for songs which originated on "Sesame Street."

The next step in making "Sesame Street" a reality was to select its inhabitants. The four human star characters chosen were: Susan, a young black woman, her husband Gordon, a white neighbor named Bob, and a kindly old candy-store proprietor named Mr. Hooper. The muppet stars were to be many, but those that became best known were Kermit, a green frog, Big Bird, a seven-foot canary who made every child feel smart, Ernie, the muppet who sang to his rubber ducky, Oscar the Grouch, who lived in a garbage can, and the Cookie Monster, a bundle of fuzz with ping-pong ball eyes who would rather eat cookies than have \$10,000. During the first season, Big Bird received more fan mail than any of the other stars, human or puppet.

Real children were to be used for the street scenes. They were recruited mainly from day care centers where the "Sesame Street" psychologists were observing children watching the show. The group of children changed every four weeks. Initially, Little (29) wrote, the staff had felt that only young professional actors and older children should be used because they felt the younger children might create problems, but this was changed after the first series. Celebrities were asked to do guest spots--mostly reciting the alphabet, and such stars as Bill Cosby, James Earl Jones, Carol Burnett, Arte Johnson and Pat Paulsen responded.

"Sesame Street" made its debut in November of 1969, an eight million dollar, twenty-six week, 130 program series. The series was

offered free to local educational television stations, and about ninety-five percent agreed to air it. Many showed it twice daily and on Saturday.

Opinions and Research on the Effectiveness
of "Sesame Street"

Positive Aspects of "Sesame Street"

Popular news sources were quick to jump on the bandwagon of praise for "Sesame Street." Wylie (59), in The PTA Magazine, wrote that "Sesame Street" was ". . . a revolution in television. Stations found that it appealed not only to disadvantaged preschoolers, but to all children, rural and urban, rich and poor" (p. 115). A 1970 Time magazine article (57) reported that

. . . even the most cynical promoters have begun to realize that 'Sesame Street' is no fluke and that it is excellent in its own right, not merely relative to the rest of the junior TV scene The program proves that it is not only one of the best children's shows in TV history, it is one of the best parents' shows as well. (p. 60)

In a special survey conducted by Nation's Schools (26), reporters visited schools in ten major cities to ascertain how teachers felt about "Sesame Street." The results showed that

. . . three out of every four teachers interviewed said that the show made a difference in the amount of demonstrated mastery of rudimentary skills by children who watched it. The show . . . hasn't left teachers unmoved, either. Many acknowledge that 'Sesame's' highly creative and lively approach to learning has taught them a lesson or two and prodded them into polishing their own classroom styles. (pp. 34-35)

Praises came from individuals such as Dr. Benjamin Spock (45) who noted that at its budget of \$28,000 per show, "Sesame Street" was reaching a huge audience at the price of about a penny per child," . . . a

bargain if I ever saw one" (p. 28). Margaret Mead, quoted in Goodman (23), wrote that "'Sesame Street' is the most responsive program that has been developed for children as a way of introducing them to some of the basic tools necessary for the attainment of literacy" (p. 215). "Sesame Street" also received several awards for excellence. Among them was a Peabody Award for Best Children's Show. The statistics that spelled success for the show in the eyes of media experts were the Nielsen Ratings. Mayer (31) reported that "Sesame Street" scored between three and six during its first season, which is heavy for daytime viewing and by far the strongest rating for anything broadcast over non-commercial channels at any hour of the day or night.

The first major research on the impact of "Sesame Street" was done by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) of Princeton, New Jersey. The results of this independent organization's work have become one of the major bulwarks of defense for "Sesame Street" advocates. The ETS was commissioned by the Children's Television Workshop in 1969 to find out if "Sesame Street" was having an impact on its target group. ETS examined a group of 943 children, mostly from poor backgrounds, in five states. Those disadvantaged children who watched infrequently showed a general knowledge gain of nine percent. Young viewers who saw two or three shows a week jumped to fifteen percent. Four or five times a week showed a nineteen percent increase and those who saw it more than five times weekly improved twenty-four percent. The lower the age group, the better the show did, scoring its highest gains with three-year-olds. Ball and Bogatz (2), authors of the ETS report, concluded that "Sesame Street" had indeed demonstrated that television could be an effective medium of mass education for preschool children. Time (57) reported

that the ETS results ". . . demonstrates that 'Sesame Street' is indeed doing what Mrs. Cooney promised it would--it is giving the poor pre-schooler a chance" (p. 72).

Criticisms of "Sesame Street"

"Sesame Street" also faced some vocal criticism. Goodman (23) suggested that the criticisms could be broken roughly into three groups: (1) objections to the substance of the show, (2) objections to the methods of presentation and (3) doubts about the results.

Some comment was made that everything (and everybody) on the show was simply too good--eliminating the realness of the world that the children viewing the show would someday need to face. Bronfenbrenner, quoted by Berson (6), wrote:

The children are charming. Among the adults there are no cross words, no conflicts, no difficulties, nor, for that matter, any obligations or visible attachments. The old, the ugly or the unwanted is simply made to disappear through a manhole. (p. 66)

"Sesame Street" was banned in England for showing by the British Broadcasting Corporation, wrote Mayer (31), by an executive producer who said ". . . it tries by way of funny sketches to promote such virtues as honesty and cleanliness, in the view of some critics an imposition of middle-class--the majority as differentiated from the ghetto culture--standards" (p. 163).

Ratliff (35) expressed fear that "Sesame Street" was exposing children to unnecessary aggression. She concluded that "'Sesame Street's' magic would be much less an illusion and much more a reality for the child and consequently for society if its aggressive models were eliminated" (p. 203).

Several criticisms of the initial "Sesame Street" shows were considered by the producers and appropriate changes were made. Slapstick comedy routines were used less frequently, and bilingual and bicultural material was added after representatives from the Latin community in San Antonio confronted the "Sesame Street" planners. Susan, a Negro actress who portrayed a housewife in the initial season, became a nurse in response to objections from the National Organization for Women.

Intensive pretesting for the "Sesame Street" series convinced the planners that a fast-paced, fun-filled novelty and variety show with a small repertory company of adults and a group of puppets was the best device for reaching their target group. They borrowed from the high-pressure, show business techniques of commercial television to teach cognitive skills. Reeves (37), in a study to determine the success of "Sesame Street" in holding the attention of young children, found that the "power-packed" segments of the show were the most successful. However, Shayon (44) reported that "'Sesame Street' suffers from a compulsive thrust. It borrows too much from high-pressure patterns of adult television. Fantasy and reality are often threateningly mixed up to a preschooler" (p. 50).

One of the most frequent criticisms of "Sesame Street" focuses on the passive role given to children, both at home and on the screen. Holt (25) noted that "Most of the time when we see children on the program, they are standing around, often looking uneasy, while an adult shows or tells them things or asks school-type questions to which he obviously has the answers" (p. 22). The "Sesame Street" producers attempted to be responsive to this criticism, but, as Goodman (23) wrote, "Even with the best will in the world on the part of the whole

production staff, the format of the show has built-in limitations when it comes to dealing with young nonactors" (p. 208).

Berson (5) attacked the "Sesame Street" method of presentation. She wrote:

If the aim is to instruct, let us tap some of the marvelous artist teachers in nursery schools and kindergartens and make them visible to multitudes of children. Why debase the art form of teaching with phony pedagogy, vulgar side shows, bad acting and layers of smoke and fog to clog the eager minds of children? (p. 342)

Holt (25) criticized "Sesame Street" for its choice of objectives. He also complained that many valuable objectives had been overlooked and that, despite its virtues, the program was aiming too low. He declared that "I feel very strongly that 'Sesame Street' has misunderstood the problem it is trying to cure and will be a disappointment in the long run" (p. 22).

Another critic of the results of "Sesame Street" is Garfunkel. Quoted in Goodman (23), he wrote:

If what people want is for children to memorize numbers and letters without regard to their meaning or use, and certainly without regard to the differences between children, then 'Sesame Street' is truly responsive. If what is wanted is for children to stop thinking and begin parroting, then again, 'Sesame Street' is responsive. (p. 429)

One of the strongest criticisms leveled at "Sesame Street" has been that it is too often used as a crutch, or as a substitute, for a good early childhood education program. Quoted by Berson (6) in Childhood Education, Arnold wrote:

A deplorable side effect of the billing of 'Sesame Street' as being educational is that it is widely used in day-care and Head Start centers, nursery schools and kindergartens. This TV show provides a rationale for the custodial care many of these children have been getting all along. Some of those who are supposedly entrusted with the task of giving pre-school children experience now abandon them to school TV

sets, pretending that this is where the kids can mainline education. (p. 429)

Teachers in the Nation's Schools survey (26) were asked for their complaints concerning "Sesame Street." The most adverse remarks were related to the supplementary materials--books and records--which many teachers felt were too expensive at \$19.95 a kit. A more serious problem, many teachers pointed out, was the fact that not enough inner-city children were watching the show because their families did not own television sets equipped to receive UHF channels, on which "Sesame Street" was usually broadcast.

The most direct and vocal attack on the accomplishments claimed for "Sesame Street" came from Sprigle (48). He wrote:

As an educational program, there is risk of its doing more harm to the poverty child than benefit. . . . 'Sesame Street's' contribution to educational innovation and reform can be summed up by a modification of a famous eulogy to Churchill: 'Seldom have so few done so little for so many.'
(p. 92)

To support his views, Sprigle tested the premise that "Sesame Street" would reduce the gap between disadvantaged and advantaged preschool children, putting them on an equal footing as they entered school. After matching twenty-four pairs of children on a variety of measures, Sprigle assigned one member of each pair to an experimental group which viewed all the "Sesame Street" episodes and were provided with all the curricular activities suggested by the producers. The other member of the pairs was assigned to a control group which did not watch the show but spent an equal amount of time in activities using similar content but emphasizing emotional and social development. The results, on the basis of performance on the Metropolitan Readiness Test and the Draw-a-Man test, showed the control group scoring significantly higher than the

"Sesame Street" group. Further, when compared with classmates in the first grade, the experimental group failed to show any substantive advantage over an unprepared control group. Sprigle concluded that "By sixth grade, the 'Sesame Street' graduates will be about three years behind in academic achievement" (p. 97).

Ingersoll (27) noted that the results of Sprigle's test should be considered with caution. He wrote:

While Sprigle's results are shocking, they should be noted with some caution, since the 'control' group was not really a control group in an experimental sense. Sprigle gave his 'control' group another but different concentrated instructional sequence which reflected his biases. It is probably safe to conclude that there are other treatments equally effective or perhaps more effective than 'Sesame Street.'
(p. 185)

Television Programming for Children

In its Report to the President, the 1970 White House Conference on Children (56) noted that

. . . real improvement has yet to appear on the television screen. As recently as September 1970, Dean Burch, Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission, characterized children's television as 'chewing gum for the eyes.' Today's television programs for children typically have a high 'fantasy quotient.' Recent research . . . showed no less than two-thirds of current television programs for children consist of chase-adventure cartoons. Such programming not only wastes children's time, but amounts to throwing away a priceless opportunity. (p. 325)

Shayon (45) described children's television as a "Pied Piper."
"From the very beginning," wrote Settel (43), "children were completely, uncritically fascinated, seemingly insatiable in their appetite for almost any sort of entertainment" (p. 66). Children's programs were among the first full-fledged hits on television, beginning with "Howdy Doody" in 1947. "Buffalo" Bob Smith, a former radio announcer turned

ventriloquist and puppeteer, built his successful show around the puppet named Howdy Doody and a clown named Clarabell, whose voice was an auto horn. The content, according to Settel, was

. . . complete, corny nonsense, punctuated by the wild screams of a cheering section composed of small boys and girls. Parents complained about the absence of any 'educational' value . . . but the same parents practically clawed and scratched their way into the studio to get tickets to the live telecast for their children. (p. 66)

Other children's shows of the 1940's included Jack Barry's "Juvenile Jury" and "Winky Dink and You." Paul Tripp hosted "Mr. I. Magination," and puppeteer Burr Tilstrom and actress Fran Allison were the core of "Kukla, Fran and Ollie."

The 1950's, television's "Golden Age," according to Settel (43), brought the introduction of "Captain Kangaroo" to the nation's children in 1955. Bob Keeshan, who had previously played Clarabell the Clown on "Howdy Doody," aimed his show at the preschool audience, using gentle fantasy, quiet talk and educational materials. Settel wrote that "Captain Kangaroo" pleased both parents and educators and topped the field of educational children's shows from 1955 until "Sesame Street." Other shows of the 1950's that were geared to the young audience included "Walt Disney," "Lassie," "Mr. Wizard," "The Mickey Mouse Club," "Romper Room," "Ding-Dong School," and a whole host of cartoons and shoot-em-up cowboy shows.

The 1960's saw a continuation of many of the shows that began in the 1950's. Keely's research (28) showed that by 1961 the top six children's programs, in terms of time spent viewing by a group of four- and five-year-olds in Oklahoma, were cartoons. "Captain Kangaroo" came in seventh while "Miss Fran" was twenty-sixth. Violence was rampant in

shows such as "Birdman," "Spiderman," and "The Fantastic Four." A Time magazine article (57) reported that

Such on-the-air pollution continued until the Kennedy and King assassinations caused a tide of parental and congressional revulsion from violence. By that time, broadcasters had evolved a highly sensible plan. If 'adult' evening programming was immature, why not allow it to rerun during the children's hours, where it might meet its intellectual level? Thus . . . 'Bewitched' is a daily staple; so are 'The Beverly Hillbillies,' and 'F Troop.' (p. 68)

By 1970, "Mister Roger's Neighborhood" had become a staple on the National Educational Television Network. This weekday series fostered some positive notice from critics of traditional children's television fare. Fred Rogers, an ordained Presbyterian minister, starred in the show. Mayer (31) called the effort ". . . an easygoing, pleasant one-man show, light on production values, better than going out to play but only marginally compelling for most children" (p. 159). A Time magazine article (57) called "Mister Roger's Neighborhood" "low-keyed," and said that it ". . . is, in the deepest sense, a Christian show aimed at a reassurance and realization . . . the child is treated as a person of intelligence and sensitivity" (p. 73).

Perhaps one of the most significant influences of "Sesame Street" was on the national commercial networks. By 1970, according to the Report to the President: White House Conference on Children (56), all three major television networks had vice presidents for children's programming, positions which had not existed a year earlier. Some of the shows which resulted from attempts by these networks to meet the approval of critics included "Hot Dog," "Take a Giant Step," and "Curiosity Shop." The 1972 premiere of "The Electric Company" was an attempt by the educational network to use "Sesame Street" techniques on

materials designed to teach children in the early primary grades.

Influence of Television on Children

Time Spent Viewing Television

Much of the research dealing with children and television is concerned with the amount of time spent viewing all types of television programming. Horwich (10) stated

Too much television is just as bad for a child as too much candy or too much loneliness or too much freedom. Each of these leaves the child without enough of the other important things he needs in his life. (p. 4)

Arlen (1) wrote that children ". . . will, by the age of eighteen, have devoted more of their lives to watching television than to any other single activity except sleeping. . ." (p. 33). An article in Nation's Schools (26) indicated that ". . . by the time the average child enters school he will have chalked up some 4,000 hours of TV viewing--a much greater amount of time than he will spend attending six grades of elementary school" (p. 34).

Collins (15) reported that ninety-seven percent of American homes have at least one television set, and that even among those families with annual incomes of \$5,000 or less, ninety percent have television sets. Some twelve million preschoolers between the ages of three and five, wrote Collins, ". . . spend 50-plus hours weekly viewing television, accumulating a total of 9,000 hours prior to entrance into a classroom" (p. 143). Schramm (38) reported that

A child who has begun to use television by age three typically uses it about 45 minutes a weekday. By age five his viewing has increased . . . to over two hours a day. From age six until about the sixth grade, viewing time is on a slowly rising plane (p. 30)

Schramm cautioned that his figures are conservative and that Saturday and Sunday viewing averages are longer. Witty (58) concluded, after a series of yearly studies on the television viewing of school children, that ". . . televiewing is a favorite leisure activity of elementary school pupils who persist in spending upwards of 20 hours per week in this activity" (p. 470).

Schramm (38) noted two specific considerations to be remembered when reading research dealing with time spent watching television. First, the researchers differ in the time they cover when estimating a child's listening time; some average only weekdays, others include weekends. The kind of day being measured alters the amount of time spent viewing. Second, there are few "average" children. The "average" child is nothing more than a middle point.

What Children View

What type of television program draws the young child's interest? Schramm (38) reported that the first television shows that become a child's favorites are especially designed children's programs. These shows usually have animals, puppets, or animated characters as their chief characters. They are, Schramm noted, generally in story form and are full of humor that is often slapstick.

Children, according to Maccoby (30), also watch a considerable amount of adult entertainment on television. Himmelweit (24) found that children of elementary age and up seem to prefer adult programs:

Three-quarters of the votes for the most favoured programme went to adult programmes, particularly to crime thrillers and, to a lesser extent, to comedies, variety programmes, and family serials. Westerns were much favoured by the younger children. (p. 13)

Results of early research on children's television viewing preferences done in preparation for the "Sesame Street" series by Reeves (36) indicated that attention was higher for animated segments, commercials, shows with animals and those programs that showed children. A definite lack of interest was shown during segments in which adults were talking directly to the audience. There was a marked sex difference, with girls paying more attention to slower paced material. For both boys and girls, however, the rapidly paced programming was generally the most appealing form.

Carkadon (9) noted that "Fear, curiosity and achievement are motivating forces in children's viewing habits" (p. 12). He also reported that children, to the extent that the danger is controlled, seem to enjoy fearing for the safety of the hero. Program types that capture the preschooler's interest monopolize the viewing of youngsters well into the elementary school years. Once the child is well established in school, Carkadon noted, he will add to his repertoire children's variety and adventure shows, science fiction, situation comedy, and popular variety shows. As the child approaches the age of ten to twelve years, the preferences jump almost directly to adult programs.

Keely (28) surveyed viewing preferences of children and found that no one program or program type was consistently viewed by all the children she studied. The top fifteen programs, in terms of viewing frequency, were specifically designed children's shows and the first six ranking programs were cartoon shows. This despite the fact that seventy-five percent of all programs in the investigation were adult programs. The results of the Keely study agreed with the findings of Schramm (38) and Carkadon (9) who stressed that children do watch and

enjoy programs especially designed for them. Contents of these shows were most appealing if they were humorous and included animated action and animals. The most important ingredient to attract and hold the young child's attention appeared to be fast action.

Garry (21) cautioned that in the homogenizing of audiences by the television industry children tend to disappear. Children were once considered a definite audience, but now tend to be seen as part of a "family" audience. Carkadon (9) wrote:

Knowing that children will watch whatever is on (given nothing else to do), faced with the costs of production in relation to size of audience which makes children's programming expensive on a unit-cost basis, and knowing that the major decisions on purchases are made by parents, the broadcaster tends to eliminate children's programs (p. 10)

Parents' Role in Children's Television Viewing

Steiner (50), in his interviews with 1,170 television viewers who had young children, found that forty-one percent of the families had definite rules concerning what children were allowed to view. One third of the respondents reported total or virtual absence of controls. Steiner, also, found that most of the specific taboos dealt with when and how much children were allowed to watch. Regulations on content were less frequently mentioned, especially by fathers. Only twenty percent of the fathers reported making any effort to regulate content.

Other authors stress the value of the parents' role in their children's television-viewing practices. Himmelweit (24), following her study on viewing practices of English children, wrote:

. . . parents and children should inform themselves about the programmes which are being shown, not only to prevent the child from viewing what is harmful, but--more important--

to encourage him to view some of the worth-while programmes.
(p. 47)

Studies by researchers such as Schramm (38) and Steiner (50) point out that many parents see television as a baby sitter. The respondents to Steiner's survey rated the baby-sitting role of television as the second most important advantage of television, following educational opportunities. Schramm, in stressing the importance of the parents' role in helping their children select appropriate television shows concluded that

. . . parents are inclined to be grateful to television as a babysitter rather than to treat it as something that requires much of their own time if children are to use it healthfully Every time a parent finds himself using television as a babysitter, he could well examine his practice and ask whether it is really necessary. (p. 180)

Summary

The review of literature indicated several important characteristics of children and television: (1) children spend a large amount of time viewing television, (2) children prefer viewing programs that are specifically designed for the young audience, (3) parents regulate the amount of time more than the content of the programs they allow their children to view, and (4) many adults consider the baby-sitting role of television to be of great importance.

From its inception, television has fascinated the young audience. The literature revealed that children's television shows, with the exception of a few such as "Captain Kangaroo" and "Howdy Doody," have not created a great deal of public interest and have not survived long. Traditionally, there have been vocal complaints concerning the television fare available for young viewers. Prior to "Sesame Street," only

"Captain Kangaroo" and, to some extent, "Mr. Roger's Neighborhood," achieved critical acclaim from parents and educators. "Sesame Street" and the controversy over its successes and failures engendered an entire new outlook on television programming for young children.

In reviewing the literature concerning "Sesame Street," it was apparent that a great deal of time, money and professional research went into formulating the concepts and format of the series before it was ever shown to the nation's young audience. Because the show was so heavily funded, there is merit in learning how the show is being used, by whom and in what ways. The research also revealed that a great many children at home view "Sesame Street," but little research has been done on the extent of in-school usage, and on the acceptance and involvement in early childhood education programs of "Sesame Street" related materials. The literature revealed that teachers answering general survey questions responded that "Sesame Street" viewers seemed "brighter," but specific areas of classroom activity where "Sesame Street" learning has carry-over have not been defined.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the use of the "Sesame Street" program and materials by day care centers. Three steps were taken to achieve this purpose: (1) the review of literature (see Chapter II); (2) development of a questionnaire; (3) description and selection of the respondents.

Development of the Questionnaire

The initial step in developing a questionnaire to determine the use of "Sesame Street" in day care centers was to define several general areas in which the program and its materials could be used in classroom experiences. These were identified following the investigator's review of literature, and included: (1) Viewing Practices of "Sesame Street," (2) Use of "Sesame Street" Materials in the Classroom, and (3) Evidence of "Sesame Street" Learning in Other School Activities.

After the major areas were identified, specific questions for each area were formulated. These questions covered the major areas common to early childhood education programs in which "Sesame Street" carry-over could be evidenced, the ways in which "Sesame Street" was viewed in the classroom and the frequency of watching it, and the use of "Sesame Street" educational materials available to teachers.

The questionnaire was reviewed by four specialists in Family

Relations and Child Development and in early childhood education to determine its clarity, content and the feasibility of questions related to use of "Sesame Street" in the classroom. Following the specialists' responses, which were all approvals, the questionnaire was finalized. This questionnaire, along with a letter of explanation and a cover sheet, was sent to the respondents (Appendix A).

Description and Selection of the Respondents

The respondents for this study were personnel from licensed day care centers located in Oklahoma. Names of the centers were obtained from the licensing authority for Oklahoma.

A letter was sent to each center indicating the intent of the survey and asking the staff members' cooperation in either completing the questionnaire or indicating why their center did not use the "Sesame Street" program. Effort was made to assure the anonymity of the respondents by indicating that signing their name was optional. Enclosed in the letter were the questionnaire and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for the convenience of the respondents.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purposes of this study were: (1) to ascertain "Sesame Street" viewing practices; (2) to determine the use of "Sesame Street" materials in the classroom; and (3) to determine evidences of "Sesame Street" learning carried over into other classroom activities. A total of 536 questionnaires were mailed to all the licensed day care centers in Oklahoma. The data were responses from 234 centers. Data are presented by frequencies and percentages to reflect the respondents' use of "Sesame Street."

"Sesame Street" Viewing Practices

Table I presents responses concerning children's viewing practices. The data indicate that over fifty percent of the centers which viewed "Sesame Street" had the program turned on daily or twice daily. Table II, dealing with the staff's personal recommendations, indicated that most did not personally view "Sesame Street" with their children on a daily basis. Since only twenty-five percent of the respondents watched "Sesame Street" as often as they indicated that children in their centers did, this leads one to assume that most of the children viewing "Sesame Street" at school watched it without a teacher present. A majority of the respondents indicated that they recommended that children frequently view the program while at home.

TABLE I
 FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF CHILDREN'S VIEWING PRACTICES
 AS REPORTED BY DAY CARE PERSONNEL
 (N = 159)

Viewing Practice	Frequency and Percentage of Responses											
	<u>Twice Daily</u>		<u>Daily</u>		<u>Frequently, but Not Daily</u>		<u>Special Days</u>		<u>Never</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
"Sesame Street" is shown to all children in this center. . .	32	20	54	34	30	19	9	6	13	8	21	13
"Sesame Street" is available for those children who select to view it. . .	38	24	53	33	21	13	11	7	3	2	33	21

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number; in some cases may not equal 100%.

TABLE II
 FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE OF PERSONAL RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING "SESAME STREET"
 (N = 159)

Personal Recommendation	Frequency and Percentage of Responses											
	<u>Twice Daily</u>		<u>Daily</u>		<u>Frequently, but Not Daily</u>		<u>Special Days</u>		<u>Never</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I, personally, watch "Sesame Street". . .	12	8	27	17	48	30	13	8	24	15	35	22
I recommend to parents that children watch "Sesame Street" while at home. . .	9	6	52	33	30	19	7	4	30	19	31	19

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number; in some cases may not equal 100%.

Use of "Sesame Street" Materials in the Classroom

Table III presents data of responses of day care center staff concerning the use of "Sesame Street" materials in their classrooms.

"Sesame Street" records were reported as being owned by fifty percent of the respondents. Hardback "Sesame Street" books, puppets and posters were indicated as being in use by over thirty percent of the centers. The majority of Oklahoma day care centers own very few "Sesame Street" materials.

"Sesame Street" Carry-Over

Table IV presents data of responses from day care staff concerning the evidence of "Sesame Street" learning carried into classroom activities. The data revealed that respondents observed carry-over into a wide variety of classroom experiences. The strongest influences on classroom activities from viewing "Sesame Street" were oral language development, musical development (appreciation and singing of songs learned from viewing "Sesame Street") and math. Math carry-over was noted daily or frequently by fifty-four percent of the respondents. Those areas in which the respondents noted the least frequent carry-over were science and art.

Respondents Not Using "Sesame Street"

Seventy-four respondents indicated they did not view the program, would not assist with the survey, or that their center was defunct. These data are presented in Table V, according to specific reasons for

TABLE III
 FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE REFLECTING USE OF "SESAME STREET" MATERIALS
 AS REPORTED BY DAY CARE CENTER PERSONNEL
 (N = 159)

Use of "Sesame Street" Materials	Frequency and Percentage of Responses											
	<u>Daily</u>		Frequently, but <u>Not Daily</u>		<u>Occasionally</u>		<u>Never</u>		<u>Do Not Own</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
"Sesame Street Learning Kit"	3	2	3	2	6	4	4	3	114	72	29	18
"Children's Television Workshop Guide for Parents and Teachers"	2	1	3	2	6	4	9	6	108	68	31	19
Puppets of "Sesame Street" characters	5	3	12	8	32	20	3	2	81	51	26	16
Hardback "Sesame Street" books	8	5	25	16	38	24	2	1	63	40	23	14
Softbound "Sesame Street" activity books	4	3	16	10	18	11	3	2	90	57	28	18
"Sesame Street" song books	3	2	12	8	9	6	7	4	97	61	31	19
"Sesame Street" puzzles	7	4	12	8	15	9	5	3	93	58	27	17
"Sesame Street" records	10	6	32	20	33	21	4	3	59	37	21	13

TABLE III (Continued)

Use of "Sesame Street" Materials	Frequency and Percentage of Responses											
	<u>Daily</u>		Frequently, but <u>Not Daily</u>		<u>Occasionally</u>		<u>Never</u>		Do <u>Not Own</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
"Sesame Street" games	4	3	7	4	15	9	4	3	100	63	29	18
"Sesame Street" magazine	4	3	6	4	12	8	6	4	100	63	31	19
"Sesame Street" posters	10	6	13	8	27	17	5	3	77	48	27	17

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number; in some cases may not equal 100%.

TABLE IV
 FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE REFLECTING EVIDENCE OF "SESAME STREET" LEARNING CARRIED
 INTO CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AS REPORTED BY DAY CARE CENTER PERSONNEL
 (N = 159)

"Sesame Street" Carry-Over	Frequency and Percentage of Responses											
	<u>Daily</u>		Frequently, but <u>Not Daily</u>		<u>Occasionally</u>		<u>Seldom</u>		<u>Never</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I see evidences of ideas from "Sesame Street" carry-over into children's dramatic play. . .	19	12	30	19	61	38	22	14	6	4	21	13
"Sesame Street" learning is evidenced in oral language development. . .	40	25	34	21	48	30	12	8	7	4	18	11
"Sesame Street" carry-over can be seen in literature experiences. . .	19	12	17	11	40	25	28	18	20	13	35	22
Children carry mathematics learning from viewing "Sesame Street" into regular activi- ties. . .	44	28	42	26	37	23	5	3	9	6	22	14
I see evidence of "Sesame Street" influences in social studies. . .	17	11	22	14	40	25	26	16	20	13	34	21

TABLE IV (Continued)

"Sesame Street" Carry-Over	Frequency and Percentage of Responses											
	<u>Daily</u>		Frequently but <u>Not Daily</u>		<u>Occasionally</u>		<u>Seldom</u>		<u>Never</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I see evidence of "Sesame Street" influences in human relationships. . .	26	16	26	16	40	25	21	13	15	9	31	20
I see growth in music appreciation (listening) that has been encouraged by "Sesame Street" viewing. . .	39	25	34	21	32	20	16	10	16	10	22	14
I note evidences of children singing "Sesame Street" songs at times other than when watching the program. . .	35	22	33	20	40	25	22	14	11	7	18	11
I observe "Sesame Street" learning in science experiences. . .	16	10	12	8	32	20	33	20	31	19	35	22
Evidence of "Sesame Street" carry-over is seen in creativity in dance and movement. . .	28	18	20	13	33	20	29	18	21	13	28	18

TABLE IV (Continued)

"Sesame Street" Carry-Over	Frequency and Percentage of Responses											
	<u>Daily</u>		Frequently, but <u>Not Daily</u>		<u>Occasionally</u>		<u>Seldom</u>		<u>Never</u>		<u>No Response</u>	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Children's art reflects learning from "Sesame Street". . .	16	10	15	9	38	24	32	20	26	16	32	20

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole numbers; in some cases may not equal 100%.

TABLE V
 REASONS OF DAY CARE PERSONNEL FOR NOT COMPLETING
 THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Reasons for Not Completing Questionnaire	Number in Each Group
We own a television set, but are not able to get the "Sesame Street" program on any of the available channels.	19
This center does not have a television set, but we would view "Sesame Street" if we owned one.	29
We do not own a television set and we would probably not watch "Sesame Street" if we had one.	7
This center uses the "Sesame Street" program, but we will not be able to assist you with your survey.	8
We have a television set, but choose not to view "Sesame Street."	6
Returned letters and centers indicating they were defunct.	6

not viewing. The majority of these responses indicated that "Sesame Street" would have been used if the center had owned a television set or if the program had been available in the area. This would lead one to assume that many day care centers which do not use "Sesame Street" do approve of the show and only because of circumstances do not view it.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

The major purpose of this study was to determine the use of the "Sesame Street" television program in licensed Oklahoma day care centers. The specific purposes were: (1) to ascertain "Sesame Street" viewing practices; (2) to determine the use of "Sesame Street" materials in the classroom; and (3) to determine evidences of "Sesame Street" learning carried over into other classroom activities.

A questionnaire was developed by which a day care center staff member could indicate the center's use of "Sesame Street." The questionnaire was sent to all day care centers licensed by the Oklahoma Department of Institutions, Social and Rehabilitative Services. Of the 536 questionnaires mailed, 234 were returned with either completed questionnaires or with reasons indicated for not completing it. These comprised the data for this study.

Findings

The results of the study are as follows:

1. A majority of the centers responding to the survey used "Sesame Street" as a part of their planned program.
2. When "Sesame Street" was viewed at all, the responses to this survey indicated it was seen at least daily, and often twice daily.
3. Although they recommend that children view the show daily or

twice daily, most of the respondents did not personally view it that often.

4. "Sesame Street" educational materials were not owned by a majority of the centers. Only the records were in use by as many as fifty percent of the centers.

5. Carry-over from the show into classroom activities was most frequently seen in mathematics, oral language development and music appreciation.

6. "Sesame Street" carry-over in science and art learnings was evidenced least frequently.

7. Of those respondents who did not use the program, most indicated they did not own a television set but would use "Sesame Street" if they had one, or that "Sesame Street" was not shown on any of the channels available in their area.

Implications

There are two major implications of this study which seem significant. First, "Sesame Street" is viewed frequently by the children in day care centers, but not by the personnel, who could incorporate certain aspects of the show into their program and who could encourage specific learnings from the show. The "Sesame Street" materials, which might potentially support learnings from the program, are not in wide use. The show appears to be largely an isolated learning experience which is available for a block of time, but whose concepts are not promoted by day care staffs.

Another significant implication is that a large majority of the responding Oklahoma centers own television sets, and day care personnel

report much carry-over into the classroom of "Sesame Street" learning. Television is being viewed by many children in day care centers, and it is influencing their learning and actions in a wide variety of classroom situations. The influence of television in the preschoolers' classroom is too great to be ignored. Dedicated specialists, extensive research and adequate funding are essential if good beginnings in educational television for the young child are to become solid, well thought-out standards.

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APPENDIX A



OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY • STILLWATER

 Department of Family Relations & Child Development
 (405) 372-6211, Ext. 6084

74074

January 30, 1974

Dear Director:

I am a graduate student in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University. For my thesis I am conducting a survey of teachers in all licensed Oklahoma Day Care Centers to determine their use of the "Sesame Street" television program.

You need not sign your name to the questionnaire. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions. The intention of this survey is not to imply that a program should or should not use "Sesame Street"; we are merely attempting to find how extensively "Sesame Street" is used by teachers in day care centers across Oklahoma.

If your center uses "Sesame Street" in its program and you are willing to participate in the study, please complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed, stamped envelope by February 25, 1974.

If your center does not use "Sesame Street" or if you choose not to participate in the survey, would you please check the appropriate response on the lower section of this page and return it by February 25, 1974, in the enclosed envelope?

Thank you for your help; your cooperation is appreciated. Findings from this study will be reported in Children's Day after June, 1974.

Sincerely Yours,

 Barbara Fischer and
 Josephine Hoffer,
 Department of Family
 Relations and Child
 Development

-
- This center uses the "Sesame Street" program, but we will not be able to assist you with your survey.
 We own a television set, but are not able to get the "Sesame Street" program on any of the available channels.
 This center does not have a television set, but we would view "Sesame Street" if we owned one.
 We do not have a television set and we would probably not watch "Sesame Street" if we had one.

GUIDELINE FOR ANSWERS

Specific areas concerning classroom use of the "Sesame Street" program and "Sesame Street" related materials and carry-over are listed on the attached questionnaire. The following definitions may help you in answering the questionnaire:

<u>TWICE DAILY:</u>	Morning and afternoon.
<u>DAILY:</u>	At least once a day.
<u>FREQUENTLY BUT NOT DAILY:</u>	Less than five days a week, but at least once a week.
<u>SPECIAL DAYS:</u>	When the weather is bad; when there is a substitute teacher; when special topics are going to be covered or for other specific reasons.
<u>OCCASIONALLY:</u>	At irregular intervals as the occasion demands.
<u>DO NOT OWN:</u>	Center does not possess the item.
<u>SELDOM:</u>	In few instances.
<u>NEVER:</u>	Not ever.

PART I

SESAME STREET VIEWING PRACTICES

Directions: Mark an X in one of the columns to indicate "Sesame Street" viewing practices.

	Twice Daily	Daily	Frequently, but Not Daily	Special Days	Never
1. "Sesame Street" is shown to all the children in this center. . .					
2. "Sesame Street" is available for those children who select to view it. . .					
3. I, personally, watch "Sesame Street". . .					
4. I recommend to parents that children watch "Sesame Street" while at home. . .					

PART II USE OF SESAME STREET MATERIALS IN THE CLASSROOM

Directions: Mark an X in one of the columns to indicate how often the listed "Sesame Street" materials are used.

	Daily	Frequently, but Not Daily	Occasionally	Never	Do Not Own
1. "Sesame Street Learning Kit"					
2. "Children's Television Workshop Guide for Parents and Teachers"					
3. Puppets of "Sesame Street" characters					
4. Hardback "Sesame Street" books					
5. Softbound "Sesame Street" activity books					
6. "Sesame Street" song books					
7. "Sesame Street" puzzles					
8. "Sesame Street" records					
9. "Sesame Street" games					
10. "Sesame Street" magazine					
11. "Sesame Street" posters					

PART III EVIDENCE OF SESAME STREET LEARNING CARRIED
OVER INTO OTHER ACTIVITIES

Directions: Mark an X in one of the columns to indicate the carry-over from "Sesame Street" that you see evidenced in other classroom activities.

	Daily	Frequently, but Not Daily	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
1. I see evidences of ideas from "Sesame Street" carry-over in children's dramatic play. . .					
2. "Sesame Street" learning is evidenced in oral language development. . .					
3. "Sesame Street" carry-over can be seen in literature experiences. . .					
4. Children carry mathematics learning from viewing "Sesame Street" into regular activities . . .					
5. I see evidence of "Sesame Street" influences in social studies. . .					
6. I see evidence of "Sesame Street" influences in human relationships . . .					
7. I see growth in music appreciation (listening) that has been encouraged by "Sesame Street" viewing. . .					
8. I note evidences of children singing "Sesame Street" songs at times other than when watching the program. . .					
9. I observe "Sesame Street" learning in science experiences. . .					

PART III (Continued)

Directions: Mark an X in one of the columns to indicate the carry-over from "Sesame Street" that you see evidenced in other classroom activities.

	Daily	Frequently, but Not Daily	Occasionally	Seldom	Never
10. Evidence of "Sesame Street" carry-over is seen in creativeness in dance and movement. . .					
11. Children's art reflects learning from "Sesame Street". . .					

APPENDIX B

TEACHERS' COMMENTS

Many of the respondents to this questionnaire added unsolicited comments on various aspects of the "Sesame Street" program. These comments reflect the variety of feelings which the program has generated. Some have been included in this study with the hope that they will add insight. These comments indicate the views of day care staff members who work daily with children and have a unique opportunity to see and observe the effects of "Sesame Street."

Centers Not Viewing "Sesame Street"

Among those not viewing the show, the most frequent explanations given were that the children watched it at home, that the center's teachers planned their own program, that "Sesame Street" was not received in the area, or that the center did not have a television set. "Our parents feel that a child can watch T.V. at home and that's not why they're sending them to school," wrote one teacher. Another indicated that "We have nothing against 'Sesame Street,' but prefer to encourage active participation as opposed to passive."

Four centers indicated that "Sesame Street" was at one time a part of their program but that they were no longer able to receive it. One teacher noted that she had so many children in one room that it was impossible to hear. Several commented that the show was available but the children seldom viewed it". . . because they are much more interested in

their play." One respondent added the note "TV in a Day Care Center? Never! Bah, Humbug--not to mention TSH-TSH."

"Sesame Street" Viewing Practices

Responses to Part I of the questionnaire, "Sesame Street Viewing Practices," included notes from several centers explaining that the program was viewed only by some of their children, usually those in the two- through four-year-old age range. After the age of four, noted two teachers, there was a distinct lack of interest in the program. Some respondents indicated a preference for viewing "The Electric Company," "Mister Rogers," or a combination of the three. One teacher wrote that "The children talk more about the show 'Mister Rogers' than they do anything. . . . 'Sesame Street' is excellent for teaching the children their letters and numbers. What 'Sesame Street' does not cover, 'Mister Rogers' and 'The Electric Company' do. I feel that all three shows should work together instead of relying just on 'Sesame Street.'" Another noted that "I really had hoped to correlate this into our program, but I am inclined to use it as entertainment and a time for us to find a little peace and quiet."

Use of "Sesame Street" Materials

Comments on the "Sesame Street" educational materials section of the questionnaire indicated that many center operators were unaware they were available. "Where can I get the puzzles and magazine?" queried one respondent. "'Sesame Street' is not seen in our area," wrote one individual, "but someone gave us one magazine and poster once, which we used until they were worn out. We and the children enjoyed the concepts

used in them. . . ." "I really like the program," noted a respondent, "but we do not push the material. For one reason, I don't like to push learning at this age, but like to have materials and experiences available so that learning can proceed." Three questionnaires indicated that the materials were not used because the center's children were too young. Another teacher wrote "We do use 'Sesame Street' learning devices. . . and benefit very much from them."

Carry-Over Into Classroom Activities

Classroom carry-over of "Sesame Street" learning prompted several respondents to add notes to the questionnaire. Number and letter recognition, along with enjoyment of the show's music were the points which brought the most comment. An opinion echoed by several teachers was that "There is definitely a learning experience as far as recognizing letters, numbers and sounds are concerned." Referring to the question on creative movement, one respondent wrote "Even those still confined in play pens clap or swing and stomp to the rhythm."

"The carry-over," observed one director, "is greater in older 4's to young 6's. The carry-over in the younger children seems to be dependent on whether there are older children in the family." Two centers wrote that carry-over was difficult to pin-point. "It's hard to distinguish between things learned from 'Sesame Street' and those learned at home and preschool classes," wrote one. The other noted that "Youngsters retain not only from 'Sesame Street,' but from any television. In fact, it takes awhile to realize just how much is retained from any experience they have." One teacher commented on the carry-over she observed in her teaching techniques. "Group games suggested on TV

are something which I especially use," she wrote.

Criticisms of "Sesame Street"

Several respondents voiced negative feelings concerning various aspects of "Sesame Street." The "Cookie Monster" was the most frequently criticized character. Wrote one operator, "The most influential character which almost all of our children imitate is 'Cookie Monster.' Many of the children often imitate his eating habits and manners, which in my opinion could use some improvement." Another mentioned that "The man falling with the pie creates a lot of noise and hasn't any value as far as I can see, but it is repeated a lot."

"I would hate to see 'Sesame Street' removed from the air," noted one teacher, "but so much of it I can't endorse. It is entertaining, but not much value toward learning." "Required viewing brought about constant discipline problems," wrote a respondent. One respondent complained about the hour long show, saying that ". . . 5 to 15 minute programs would be more desirable." Another wrote that ". . . deep down, 'Sesame Street' lacks a lot in so called 'character building.'" One of the strongest notes was added by an operator who commented "I do not like 'Sesame Street.' The concept of teaching the children to read and learn their numbers, etc., is fine, but I feel it is morally downgrading and I see nothing uplifting at all. The 'Cookie Monster' stealing cookies. . .and children calling each other 'dummy' is not uplifting either."

Positive Aspects of "Sesame Street"

Among those indicating positive points of "Sesame Street" was one

respondent who wrote "Thank you for taking this survey! It made me stop and think how really important watching 'Sesame Street' is to my children. We use our knowledge from this program daily." Wrote another, "I recommend the show, especially the characters and music." "I feel 'Sesame Street' is definitely a good learning experience," noted one teacher. Another commented on a specific aspect of "Sesame Street." "The artistry of the puppets fascinates me," she wrote, "and I am glad they can make characters to be liked even though they are made so homely--I guess after all outward appearances shouldn't be too important." One respondent mirrored the sentiments of several others when she wrote "Personally, I am thankful for 'Sesame Street.'"

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VITA

Barbara Ann Fischer

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE USE OF SESAME STREET PROGRAM AND MATERIALS BY DAY CARE CENTERS

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Stillwater, Oklahoma, May 6, 1950, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. LeRoy H. Fischer.

Education: Graduated from C. E. Donart High School, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in 1968; received the Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Sciences from Oklahoma State University in 1972; completed the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University in May, 1974.

Professional Experience: Graduate Assistant in the Department of Family Relations and Child Development, 1972-1974.

Professional and Honorary Organizations: Oklahoma Association on Children Under Six; Southern Association on Children Under Six; Oklahoma Kindergarten Teachers Association; Omicron Nu; Kappa Delta Pi; Phi Alpha Theta; Alpha Lambda Delta; Phi Upsilon Omicron.