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Kaiser Shipyards Sponsor

Child Care Centers

Jeanne O'Connor reports on the development of the Child Service Department at the Kaiser Shipyards

DR. MIRIAM E. LOWENBERG, chief nutritionist in the Child Service Department at the Kaiser Shipyards in Portland, is playing a vital part in a project which has attracted nation-wide attention. Formerly child nutrition professor at Iowa State, Dr. Lowenberg is pioneering in the new field of child service centers in war industries.

The Kaiser nursery schools, planned by Edgar F. Kaiser, are giving an invaluable service by stabilizing the work of the women in the shipyard. The child service centers at the plant are equipped to care for children from 18 months to 6 years old. By paying 75 cents for the first child and 50 cents for each additional child, a mother working on the day or swing shift may leave her children with this capable staff and perform her war duties free of worry in knowing that each child is given the best possible care. The equipment, teaching, health care and food for the children is of high quality. One teacher, an Iowa State graduate, writes, "The set-up is the nursery educator's dream."

There is a pediatrician on duty in the infirmary in both buildings. Every day each child is given a preliminary health inspection and those who are not up to par are segregated from the other children.

Each of the two nursery school buildings contains 15 units built like spokes of a wheel with a circular connecting corridor. Twenty-five children of the same age group can be accommodated in each unit and the only centralized care is in the serving of food. A hot dinner at noon, a mid-morning lunch of fruit juice and crackers and an afternoon lunch are given to the children each day.

The activities of the nutrition department are resulting in far-reaching effects. The primary purpose of this department is to serve food to the children in school but it also helps mothers plan and serve nutritious meals at home. An order placed a few days in advance will entitle the mother to home service food which includes the main dish and dessert for the entire family's evening meal. As chief nutritionist, Dr. Lowenberg plans menus and is in charge of all nutrition and feeding problems. Each mother receives a menu a week in advance telling her what foods will be served at the school and suggesting other meals for completing the adequate diet.

The policy maintained by the school is to assume



Nursery schools, similar to the Kaiser Child Service Center, are rapidly expanding in many present day war production areas

new responsibilities and services only when the school can add them without hindering the work already being done. This has been a gradual process and new ideas are always being considered. A recent addition to the service is the caring for children of workers on the graveyard shift and feeding them before they leave in the morning. Another plan provides for the care of older children after school. A third service is 24 hour care for younger children when mothers are ill or out of town. Children of any age may be left for a few hours while parents see the dentist or attend to necessary business.

In the Oregon Center where children 6 to 12 years old go to school only half days there is a large unit with a program of crafts, music, dramatics, art and outdoor activities.

Of equal importance is the demonstration to fathers and mothers in the industrial organizations of the importance of adequate care in the guidance and development of young children. Innumerable statements proving the success of the school have been received by the staff. The Kaiser Child Service Center has proved that a nursery school can maintain high educational standards and provide pleasant, healthful surroundings even at a busy war plant.