



**A MOTHER'S AIDE, Mrs. Rita Duarte, sings and makes gestures with a group of children as they use Listening Post, Carrillo Preschool, Tucson District 1.**

## HEAD START IN ARIZONA

*The summer Head Start program in Arizona had, through July, 1966 enrolled 7,424 children in 12 of the 14 Arizona Counties. There were 622 professional teachers and 1,398 parent-aides, assistant and volunteers who worked in the 397 classes. Grants for summer Head Start as of July, 1966 totaled \$1,674,023 with another \$279,505 contributed by local groups. Applications are now being received for summer Head Start in 1967.*

fathers. They are retarded children who were kept out of school.

They are children of large families or small families, where mothers grew up in poverty and themselves left school for various reasons. These children often come to the first grade with enough problems to prevent them from learning. They often become characterized in the teacher reports as one more child who will be retained, who has failed, or isn't learning; who has too many problems, or who can't learn anyway.

### Adults Learned, Too

Mothers who have worked as teacher helpers, and mothers who visited in a school for the first time, have gained new ideas and new respect for a child. A typical response from one of the mother-aides enrolled in a training program was the enthusiastic statement of a young Mexican-American mother of six children who said, "Head Start was great for my child. But for me, it was greater. I'm going back to school. I'm going to become a teacher."

This mother was one of many who completed her high school work and was ready for the next step. Some parents said, "I'm so glad somebody

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By Joyce M. Huggins

**CHILDREN LEARN** adult activities in this housekeeping corner. Government Heights School, Tucson District 1.

Four year-round Head Start programs are in operation, besides those which operate in Indian reservation areas. Amphitheater School District in Tucson and Safford Schools in Graham County began programs in January.

### Children and Families

There are hundreds of individual stories that would only begin to describe the children who attend Head Start. They are children of families with incomes under \$3,000 and with incomes as low as \$400 a year. They are the children of families whose fathers they have never known, of handicapped fathers, of unemployed



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**MRS. ROSA M. FORD, the teacher, is enjoying picture books with a group of interested children. Carrillo Preschool, Tucson District 1.**

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cares.” The interest and concern of staff who work with Head Start is expressed in hundreds of ways which parents appreciate.

#### **Many Resources Joined**

Head Start is a Child Development Center, and as such it is both a concept and a community facility. In concept it represents the drawing together of all those resources — family, community and professional — which can contribute to the child’s total development. It draws heavily on the professional skills of persons in nutrition, health, education, psychology, social work and recreation. It recognizes that both paid and volunteer non-professionals can make important contributions.

Finally the concept emphasizes that the family is fundamental to a child’s development. Parents should play an important role in developing policies, work in the centers, and participate in the programs.

#### **For Individual Attention**

As a community facility the Child

Development Center is organized around its classroom and outdoor play areas. It should provide a program for health services, parent interviews and counseling, feeding of the children, meetings of parents and other community residents. The space is arranged so as to permit small group or individual work with the children. When some activities are performed at other locations, the staff should function as an integral part of the center.

Head Start developed as a result of national concern about the problems of young children and their families. Leadership in the federal Office of Economic Opportunity was able to give direction to a concern of many professional people involved with young children, who have said for many years that the child’s formative years are important.

Head Start programs are sponsored jointly by federal and state governments through the Community Action Agencies of the county. Some are located in public schools, some in churches, some in community buildings. Some are in rural areas and some in urban areas.

#### **Results Are Dramatic**

Most dramatic of the benefits are those related to the health services. It is easy to acknowledge that one can’t expect a child to learn when he has a toothache, but it is far more difficult to do something about it. It is hard for a child when he is suspected of being mentally retarded but really can’t hear, or if he needs some other kind of medical help.

In some Arizona communities, figures are not very different from those given in a 1965 sample of 55,522 children taken from a nation-wide evaluation of health findings. There was a total of 70 percent of children who received their first medical and dental examinations. Over 44 percent had cavities, and over 20 percent had more than three cavities. A total of 60 percent received measles vaccine for the first time.

The impact of the many ways in which children, families, staff, and communities have benefited are not, as yet, calculated. However, we know that while much remains to be done, we have achieved a head start.