

# Students in Playgroups

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Playgroups have become recently in demand as placements for students. As Area Organiser in Caernarvonshire, I have received both glowing reports and complaints concerning students. Where there is good liaison between Playgroup and School, Technical College and Training College, difficulties can soon be ironed out, eg ensuring twelve students do not arrive at one session **or** finding other employment for a disinterested student who spends the whole session closeted in the kitchen with her transistor.

A playgroup in Llandudno has built a good relationship with the local Comprehensive School who send along two boys to assist. These boys gain as much from play as the children and have made and repaired equipment.

In 1974 Caernarvonshire Branch received a request from St Mary's Training College, Bangor to take thirty first year students. Students were accommodated in various playgroups within travelling distance but students could not be easily guided and supervised by their tutors. This year the Branch received from St Mary's what was at first thought to be a daunting task; a request to provide a playgroup that could physically, and willingly accommodate thirty technicians and video recording equipment.

A playgroup in a large Church Hall in Deganwy was found and the Supervisor was talked into agreeing. She waited with trepidation the first visits in mid January. The student group arrived after the playgroup session had begun, entered through the back door and squashed themselves into an ante-room off the stage. The technicians set up two cameras on stage linked to the television in the ante-room. With little disruption to the playgroup, filming began. One or two children watched and questioned while the cameras were set up but after that first week they were accepted as part of the scenery.

Three students worked in the playgroup session with the children and as the weeks progressed the Tutor was able to point out the various stages of child development. The camera gave the larger group of students an observation of

the whole group and then was able to zoom in on an individual child or group or incident, eg the students were able to see a child starting playgroup for the first time and then the gradual process of the child's first separation from mother.

Different aspects of play were concentrated on each week and the playgroup arranged for the junk table or the Wendy House to be within easy range of the cameras. One week the students brought along clay and a circular clay table which was so popular that the playgroup was allowed to have the loan of it for the whole year.

Supervisors and Assistants were invited to St Mary's College at the end of the term to see the edited tapes and there was a fruitful interchange of discussion and ideas.

Both the playgroup involved and the students and staff of the College considered the project successful. As a result of the good relationship set up between Playgroups and College, the College offered their premises for the Gwynedd Conference in November 1975.



Photo HTC

Students in Playgroup