

INTRODUCTION

The lack of support dedicated to the well-being of preschool children between the ages of two and six years called the attention of the Department of Nutrition of the Public Health Faculty of the University of S. Paulo to the necessity of studying an alternative mode of attendance to their needs, that is a program of assistance, adapted to the available infra-structure of a developing country. A simple and economical plan of assistance, called CEAPE (Centro de Educação e Alimentação do Pré-Escolar, that is to say, Preschool Education and Feeding Centre) was conceived and made operational. The main aim of this organization is the promotion of the integrated well-being of the preschool child of that age-group.

It remained to be seen if such an unsophisticated programme as that visualised would be practicable, efficient and efficacious.

The studies which have been contributed to this collection, define the basic philosophy of the CEAPE program and propose working norms. They study the preschool child from various points of view, including nutrition, and attempt to assess the program's efficiency and efficacy.

The efficacy of the CEAPE program has been assessed by means of anthropometric and psychometric studies the latter applied by means of an adapted system of previously tested indicators.

The conclusion here demonstrated is that the Program presented is feasible easily applied, efficient, efficacious and highly recomendable whenever one seeks to expand the assistance given to this age group, especially in those circumstances where available resources are limited.

This collection has been made possible by means of an agreement between the Public Health Faculty of USP and the National Institute of Feeding and Nutrition (INAN) which sought to give continuity to the studies which were already being undertaken by the Nutrition Department of that Faculty.

The articles which compose this supplement could, obviously, not avoid some repetition. This was inevitable in view of the fact that the separate articles will be sent to organizations and researchers in different fields, according to the theme and the technique used in each of the separate papers.