Brief History of the Dr. Erik Jackman Institute of Child Study, University of Toronto

establishment of an optimal relationship with the physical and social environment, became the organizing concept for research at the School, and evolved into BI

In 1924, the Canadian Mental
Hygiene Committee asked the Toronto
Board of Education to authorize a series of
studies examining the mental health of
school children. The first Toronto project
was a
adjustment in Regal Road Elementary
School. The proposed project coincided with

longitudinal projects undertaken at Berkeley, Yale, Minnesota, and Iowa. The Toronto study looked at the ways children adjust to school life and the effectiveness of preventive interventions.

The nursery division, doubled in size from four to eight children between September and January. The parent education division grew rapidly from twenty to thirty mothers and eventually from two to six courses. Parents of children in the nursery school were expected to enroll in these courses. Although nursery schools had been in existence for a decade, the idea of someone other than a mother taking



The 1930s saw the School come into national and international prominence for its role in the early education of the Dionne Quintuplets and the School

helping to establish the war nurseries in England. By

throughout the world. Wartime nurseries were also needed in Canada, and Blatz and his team were called upon as experts.

legislation enabling nursery schools to be set up in Ontario. The parent education program had achieved such a reputation that professionals in education and social work began to look to the School for in-service opportunities.



In 1938, the Ontario Department of Education recommended the School be granted autonomy from the Department of Psychology. The School name was changed to the Institute of Child Study, a separate governing committee of the Academic Senate was established, and the budget was assumed by the University of

Just as the Institute appeared on the brink of closure, two of its strengths came to the fore: care and community. In the fall of 1968 a student protest led to a private meeting with President Claude Bissell. The persuasive brief by a student, along with the support of accompanying students and staff, resulted in President Bissell leaving the question of the future of the Institute open to further study.

In 1970, he concluded that continued support was merited. Dr. Michael Grapko, the new Director of the Institute, added staff, acquired video equipment, and expanded the research library. Under his leadership, the Institute became part of the College of Education in 1971. By 1977, holders of the now two-year postgraduate

Certificate.

For almost a decade the Institute offered the only two-year advanced elementary teacher preparation program in Canada. During this period, the separate mental health diploma also brought the Institute closer to the field of education by evolving into an MA-equivalent assessment-counseling program that -educational consultants.

In spite of these achievements, the Institute of Child Study found itself once

-strapped central administration recommended eliminating

was rallied into effective action, this time by parents, and the plan was withdrawn.

Wounded by a persistent lack of administrative understanding and academic appreciation, the Institute grew more isolated from the university. Internal factors mirrored this withdrawal and began to operate in less well-integrated ways. For almost a decade, the internal parts of the Institute separated into little islands, the physical plant was neglected and scholarship declined.

In 1989 new appointments began a renewal process to reverse these trends that created conditions that retained existing faculty and attracted new blood. A bequest administered by the Laidlaw Foundation intended to ensure the continued research presence of the Institute became The Dr. R.G.N. Laidlaw Research Centre. Following this the Diploma programs were converted into an MA in Child Study and Education that after two years of study leads to an Ontario Teaching Certificate.

As part of the amalgamation of the 1996 Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and the Faculty of Education the Institute joined the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology.