



## HOW THERAPEUTIC CHILD CARE CAME TO BE

In 1973 Patrick L Gogerty was hired as Executive Director for Seattle Day Nursery (now Childhaven). SDN cared for young children of low-income families.

Mr. Gogerty had an extensive background working with juvenile delinquents who had been abused earlier in their childhood and realized the link between early abuse and later criminal behavior.

He and his staff frequently saw many children come to Seattle Day Nursery who exhibited signs of physical abuse and neglect. Awareness about this issue was spreading throughout the country. In 1974, the United States Congress passed the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, which created the National Center for Child Abuse and Neglect and provided federal funds to states to help develop programs to identify, prevent and reduce child abuse and neglect.

Mr. Gogerty wanted to secure some of these state funds for a prevention program that would target very young children who were victims of abuse. His idea was to focus on the child first, regardless of whether the parents participated or not. He saw the safety of the child as more important than family unity. This was a revolutionary idea at the time, because all social service programs focused on the family. If the parent did not participate in the program, then the child was not served. The child went where the parent went, leaving the child vulnerable to further maltreatment. So, Mr. Gogerty approached the SDN Board with his idea. They sent him to five cities around the country to see how other programs worked. What he found was that those programs looked at only the family as well.

Mr. Gogerty came back to Seattle and continued his research on child abuse and neglect. With the help of friends and case workers at Child Protective Services, he determined that the most vulnerable children were those from 0 to 2 years old who could not speak for themselves, were home alone with parents, and not seen by the public (unlike older children who attended school).

In 1977 he started a model Therapeutic Child Care Program to determine whether a child care center was the appropriate place to provide care and treatment for abused/neglected children. Child Protective Services and Harborview Medical Center were collaborators and United Way provided revenue. The components would include:

- Child assessment on the Batelle Development Inventory at entry and every six months thereafter. Children might receive speech, occupational, or physical therapy to address developmental delays;
- Three to six hours of child care per day
- Parent skills training
- Parent counseling
- Child transportation to and from the service center. By having child care workers drive the vans, they could monitor the family, thereby reducing the incidence of further abuse.
- And daily monitoring of the child's welfare.

By 1979, the State legislation was more committed to reducing the rate of child abuse and passed the mandatory reporting requirement for all incidents of child abuse. They also supported a four-year re-

search project to assess the needs of children served by programs at the Department of Social and Health Services. Mr. Gogerty seized the opportunity to convince DSHS to set up a system for Seattle Day Nursery to get referrals and reimbursement from Child Protective Services.

The legislature soon passed HR 1207 which provided State funds to conduct research on the effectiveness of using the TCC program model to provide early intervention and treatment to abused/neglected children under the age of 24 months. 32 infants and toddlers were referred at random to Seattle Day Nursery from CPS. 29 additional children received regular services in the community.

The study revealed that children who received TCC services were better behaved, their parents had a more positive outlook on their child. Having the child in the program also gave the parents time alone to relieve the stress of parenting.

The legislature saw the benefit of the program and created the DSHS service known today as Therapeutic Child Care. By 1984, all of the Seattle Day Nursery Branches were transitioned to TCC and all children were referred by Child Protective Services.

In 1985, Seattle Day Nursery changed its name to Childhaven to adequately reflect the mission of the agency.

Today Childhaven serves up to 301 children daily at four centers in King County.

In 1990, Childhaven received a grant from the legislature to conduct a 10-year follow-up study of the HB 1207 research project, and in 1992 a 12-year follow-up study was done (completed in 1994).

The results of the study were published in the February 1998 issue of the *Child Maltreatment – Journal of the American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children*. The study revealed (take from 12-Year Follow-Up Study Summary):

1. Perhaps the most important finding was that, according to court records as well as parents, former Childhaven children demonstrated significantly less serious delinquency or violence.

**Children arrested for serious or violent crimes:**

**Childhaven group = 3.7%**

**Control group = 23.8%**

**Children arrested and/or identified as violent on caregiver's report:**

**Childhaven group = 3.7%**

**Control group = 47.6%**

2. Parents of the Childhaven group viewed their children in a far more positive light than did parents of control group children. According to parents, control group children were 5 times more likely to have severe problems related to aggression, unlawful and unruly behavior, social problems, or frequent physical complaints. Control group adolescents were also 3 times more likely to experience severe depression or anxiety.
3. Overall, families of the Childhaven group were more likely to provide homes that supported healthy child development. Specifically, these parents were observed to be more responsive to their children's needs and to provide a more positive emotional environment.

**Childhaven**  
316 Broadway  
Seattle, WA 98122  
206.624.6477  
[www.childhaven.org](http://www.childhaven.org)