

Will you just give us the various age groups which your program covers?

Sister BAPTISTA. We made a sort of regulation that we would not take children from the first and second grade. I felt if these youngsters were immature and they were not learning well they should probably repeat the grade. We do not have an ungraded system in our part of the country.

However we found that this was happening. A little second or third grader would come in and say, "I flunked last year and I flunked the year before." This is almost getting to be a pattern of talk for these youngsters. So that now we have gone to take the second grade children if they have repeated a grade.

This year we had about 15 little first graders come to the center. Now these youngsters had had Headstart 2 years ago. But again there was not the followup because they had not been—well, language was poor, all of the rest of it was first grade.

These youngsters came in and we did not have room for them. We turned our library over into a classroom and an office over into a classroom. We said "You have to come back after Christmas." I really hoped they would forget and not come back because we didn't have room. The week following Christmas vacation there were nine Puerto Rican and colored youngsters sitting in the library. "You said after Christmas and us is here." So of course we hired a teacher and got some books and started in. We still have them.

Our grades usually run from about the third grade right through the junior high. In the evenings we do give classes for our high school youngsters. We have had to cut that repeatedly. I don't dare think of the number of high school youngsters who have asked to have help.

This is interesting. Many disadvantaged children go to a high school, and this is true throughout the country, and they are put into business education, we will say, which is all very fine but there are many youngsters who don't want business, they would like to go to college or they would like to continue their education.

They are completely stymied because they do not have the required subjects to get into the colleges. These youngsters are coming now and asking, "Will you help me with biology," "Will you help me with chemistry so that I can go into that program in my senior or junior year." They are readers and they would like to be helped guidance-wise and every other way.

I really feel strong about the guidance program that should parallel a reading program, particularly for our junior high and our high school youngsters.

Mr. GOODELL. Basically your program is aimed primarily at the fourth grade up through the secondary level?

Sister BAPTISTA. That is correct.

Mr. GOODELL. Would you tell us just briefly how the program was started at the Boorady reading center?

Sister BAPTISTA. Yes. I started a private reading center on wheels. I went around in a broken down car from school to school to help these children. I was of course just going to the parochial schools at that time because I had been asked to come into the area.

In a very short while many of the teachers from the public schools were asking me if I would take some of the youngsters from their grades.