



Child Care ~ Children's Dental Care ~ Community Health Programs

157 Litchfield Street in Torrington, CT 06790
(p)860-489-1328 (f)860-489-4761 (w)brookermemorial.org

History of Child Care/Day Nursery at Brooker Memorial

The "Day Nursery" at Brooker Memorial was opened on September 16, 1918. It was one of the original intents of the organization as laid out by Charles F. Brooker in memory of his mother Maria Seymour Brooker. The charge for care was ten cents per child per day and five cents per day for each additional child. This rate continued in effect until May of 1942 when it was increased to twenty-five cents per child per day. At that time the program was staffed with a qualified kindergarten teacher and about thirty-five children attended daily. In May 1943, the Center was opened for six days a week instead of five days.

In April of 1945, the State Board of Education inspected the center and recommended safety changes which were to cost \$3,500 for the continued use of the second floor. Later that year, there was a question of building a new day nursery but this was not carried out due to the increase in building costs. Apparently the second floor was not used after this year.

Until April of 1943, there was fairly constant attendance of twenty-five to thirty children. However there was some question as to the financial need of the families enrolled, even then. In 1954, due to work shortages, the attendance fell quite drastically to an average daily attendance of nine children. In 1955, attendance was back up to twenty which was the capacity at the time.

In 1956, the question again arose regarding the need for a day care nursery in view of increased average incomes. In 1957 the Board voted to close the nursery and it finally did close its doors on July 26, 1957. The reasons for this were threefold: 1.) Lack of dire need of low income families; 2.) Need for a new, more modern facility; and 3.) Need for an administration building at the time the new Brooker Memorial was being built.

In 1988, Brooker re-opened the child care program, hiring a director and providing state-licensed child care for 30 children.

Enrollment and licensed capacity continued to grow and in 1995, a new wing was opened to house the child care program. Licensed capacity was 64 and the Center served children aged six weeks through school age. The population served by the Child Care Center included a combination of low income and moderate income families.

In 2005, the Board of Managers voted to establish a scholarship fund to assist families who were applying for state child care funding assistance. The scholarship helped families by reducing their tuition while their applications were pending.

In 2007 and in 2009, interior renovations were completed to increase licensed capacity to 84. Today, the program continues to serve the full spectrum of ages. The center is open to families of all income levels. As of January 2010, 43% of families served are in the low income category, defined as eligible for state subsidies for child care. Brooker intentionally keeps its tuition rates at or below what other area child care centers charge.

Updated Jan. 2010

