2. HEAD START

Extensive Medical Program Is Operating in Parish

By Jim McMahan
Adviser Staff Reporter

The average person usually thinks of Head Start program in terms of its educational role. Education, however, is just one aspect of this multi-faceted program which attempts to deal with the whole personality of the child.

Another facet of Head Start is the Parish Medical Program designed to ensure the good health of children.

At the beginning of each fall and winter session, Jessie Laverne, Head Start nurse, and Elmera Dennis, nurse aide, give preliminary medical tests and compile an extensive medical history of each child.

Parents then bring their children to clinics at the Lafayette Parish Health Unit for examination. There, each of the four or five local physicians participating in the clinic examine eight to 10 children in the course of an afternoon.

The children are also given shots and tuberculosis tests. Some of the health problems encountered at these clinics include intestinal parasites, respiratory infections, nutritional anemia and heart murmurs. Mrs. Gwendolyn Domingue, supervisor of nurses for Lafayette Parish School Board, said, however, that "overall, they are healthy children."

At the beginning of each child's stay, the child is assigned a community health worker to work with the child in the program. The worker is responsible for seeing that the child is examined at the clinic and that he is taken to the doctor if necessary.

Health Problems

One of the most frequent health problems encountered at these clinics is anemia. The children are also given shots and tuberculosis tests.

The medical program is designed to help the children in their growth and development. The program is also designed to help the parents understand the children's needs and how to meet them.

Dr. Joe Ferguson, pediatrician, examines a Lafayette Head Start participant at the parish health unit. Ferguson is medical advisor to the Head Start program. He and other Lafayette physicians examine the children in Head Start at the beginning of the fall and winter sessions.

EXAMINATION — Dr. Joe Ferguson, Lafayette pediatrician, examines a Lafayette Head Start participant at the parish health unit. Ferguson is medical advisor to the Head Start program. He and other Lafayette physicians examine the children in Head Start at the beginning of the fall and winter sessions.