The two handbooks "Who Cares?" and "Community Child Care" cannot be fully appreciated without also studying "The Knox Report".

The "Knox Report" is by Yoland Wadsworth and was commissioned by the Victorian Department of Health and published in October 1976.

The research brief for the study was to assess the adequacy of services provided by the Knox Early Childhood Development Complex as to estimate how this centre met the needs of the Knox community.

The report was published at a very important time for the Victorian Department of Health is currently considering developing many more Early Childhood Development Complexes.

It is essential that before any large scale and significant and irreversible process is launched that there is a thorough understanding of the needs of families with young children and an assessment of the existing Early Childhood Development Complexes to evaluate the extent to which such centres meet these needs.

The "Who Cares?" study and the "Community Child Care" resource book are now available to give depth to this assessment.

Yoland Wadsworth's research approach is both soundly based and refreshingly simple. She literally talked to more than 1,000 people and her report depicts in rich, sensitive detail the lives of people living in this outer suburb.

In her report "needs" are defined as "all those physical survival arrangements and facilities required for people to function at the basic level (food, clothing, shelter etc) plus all those social and emotional arrangements and facilities required by people to grow and develop to their full human potential (developmental requirements such as love, respect, self-esteem, and opportunities for ongoing actualization of capacities)."

She defines the word "community" in much the same terms as it is defined by Community Child Care. She states that community is creating in process... "a community consists of a network of inter-relationships which exist in order to facilitate the meeting of all the needs of the community which may be considered as relatively self-sufficient." Yoland Wadsworth uses the term "symbiotic role relationships" and explains that this means that for a collection of people to successfully band together for the purpose of meeting their own needs, there must be opportunity to form relationships of mutual benefit.

The major recommendations of the Knox Report is that Early Childhood Development Complexes should enable the participation of the service consumers, other parents and interested community in the planning and management of the E.C.D.C.'s program in order that the centres are continually assured of validity and adequacy.

The Knox Report sees both the people's needs and the people rich resources that are available to meet these needs, and emphasises an individual's self-esteem is enhanced through a developmental community based service.
As Yolanda Wadsworth points out in her introductory remarks: "Experience has shown me that, while neatly codifying codified and quantified facts allow statements such as "86% needed X" they do not provide an understanding of whether 86% would really have preferred X or whether they were only asked about X, or whether they needed X given Y, Z and Q, and would not want X given L, P, or even whether they would actually use X if given it at all. Furthermore even accepting the validity of the statement, it does not enable an understanding of why, how, when and where the 86% needed X nor does it relate anything of the complexity of circumstances and history lying behind its expression.

Similarly the "Who Cares?" study team states "It was not our purpose to set up objective standards by which to measure the performance of particular services but rather to find out whether families receive assistance when they needed it and what they thought of the assistance they received." They state that their research is "frankly exploratory". The research team collected qualitative material on a wide range of family experiences and then examined the pattern of relationships between family characteristics, problem-solving methods and ways of using services, which emerged from this material.

In the Knox Report a massive amount of material on different themes are reduced to three main categories... relationships, information and resources. Over one thousand Knix residents were interviewed.

In "Who Cares?" 150 families in three different types of municipal areas are examined and eventually the researchers discovered that three groups of families could be identified through the way they assessed their related to the community services. These groups are called "The coopers," "the vulnerable" and "the passive".

Since both "Who Cares?" and "The Knox Report" are based on assessing human needs, both reports allow subjective impressions to be part of the evaluation. However, the reports integrate these subjective impressions into a thorough, systematic program of data collection which can be used by both the lay person and the professionals with equal ease.

One valuable feature of both these documents is the lack of professional jargon. Wherever possible, terms have been avoided where the use of unfamiliar terms has been unavoidable there is usually a simple, worked definition and in many instances a practical example of what is meant by the term in its everyday application.

"Community Child Care" is described as a "resource book". As most of the information in this book is based on the day-to-day experiences of actually establishing children's services in a variety of urban areas the text is mainly descriptive, describing practical matters and the language is very readable. However, particularly in the introductory pages, the authors philosophise about human relationships and the nature of our urban areas. The evocative words chosen in some of these passages lift up the whole text of the handbook giving the person who is seeking practical advice a vision of how they are doing in part of a movement for better human relationships.