

From GAACAA To RurAL CAP

At their September meeting, the RurAL CAP Board of Directors voted to administer Head Start programs in Anchorage and Chugiak, and submit a grant application to the Office of Child Development in Seattle.

The 9-6 vote, with one abstention, came at the end of a long afternoon and evening of discussions over the problems to be encountered in accepting the program which has previously been handled by the Greater Anchorage Area Community Action Agency (GAACAA).

The Head Start program became a subject of controversy when the regional director of the Office of Child Development, J.B. Yutzy, said the program was to be removed from GAACAA, and offered it to RurAL CAP.

Yutzy commented that the program was removed because they felt more children could be served under a centralized state-wide administration; because of the uncertainty about GAACAA's continued operation; and also that the agency had other difficulties including weak financial operations and reporting, late financial and inconsistent administrative direction because of high staff turnover.

A representative of the Office of Child Development at the meeting explained that the regional office was consolidating Head Start programs in each state under one administration where they could, which obviously cuts costs. Logically, it would follow that stronger programs would take over smaller and weaker ones.

The Head Start program in Anchorage serves about 125 children from the ages of three to six.