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Demographic Study Highlights Problems Of Venezuelan Youth

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On Oct. 21 Youth Minister Virginia Olivo de Celli announced the results of a recent demographic study focused on recommendations to meet the needs of Venezuela's youthful population. At present, three million Venezuelans are under age five, and 400,000 more will be born in 1987. Of every 100 mothers, 13 are under age 20. The ministry report, said Olivo de Celli, predicts that by year-end 1986, 68% of the national population numbering 17.8 million will be under 30. A spokesperson for the National Office of Women told reporters that most of the nation's young people are not properly cared for, resulting in myriad social problems. Of the 3 million children under age five, only 15% receive adequate physical and psychological care. Inadequate care is the result of working mothers' inability or disinterest in finding substitute child care; "irresponsible parents" (mainly fathers); divorce, separation and marital discord, and the abandonment of children by relatives. Common outcomes of inadequate child care, said the spokesperson, are poor performance in school, rising numbers of school dropouts, drug use, alcoholism, and crime among Venezuelan youth.

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