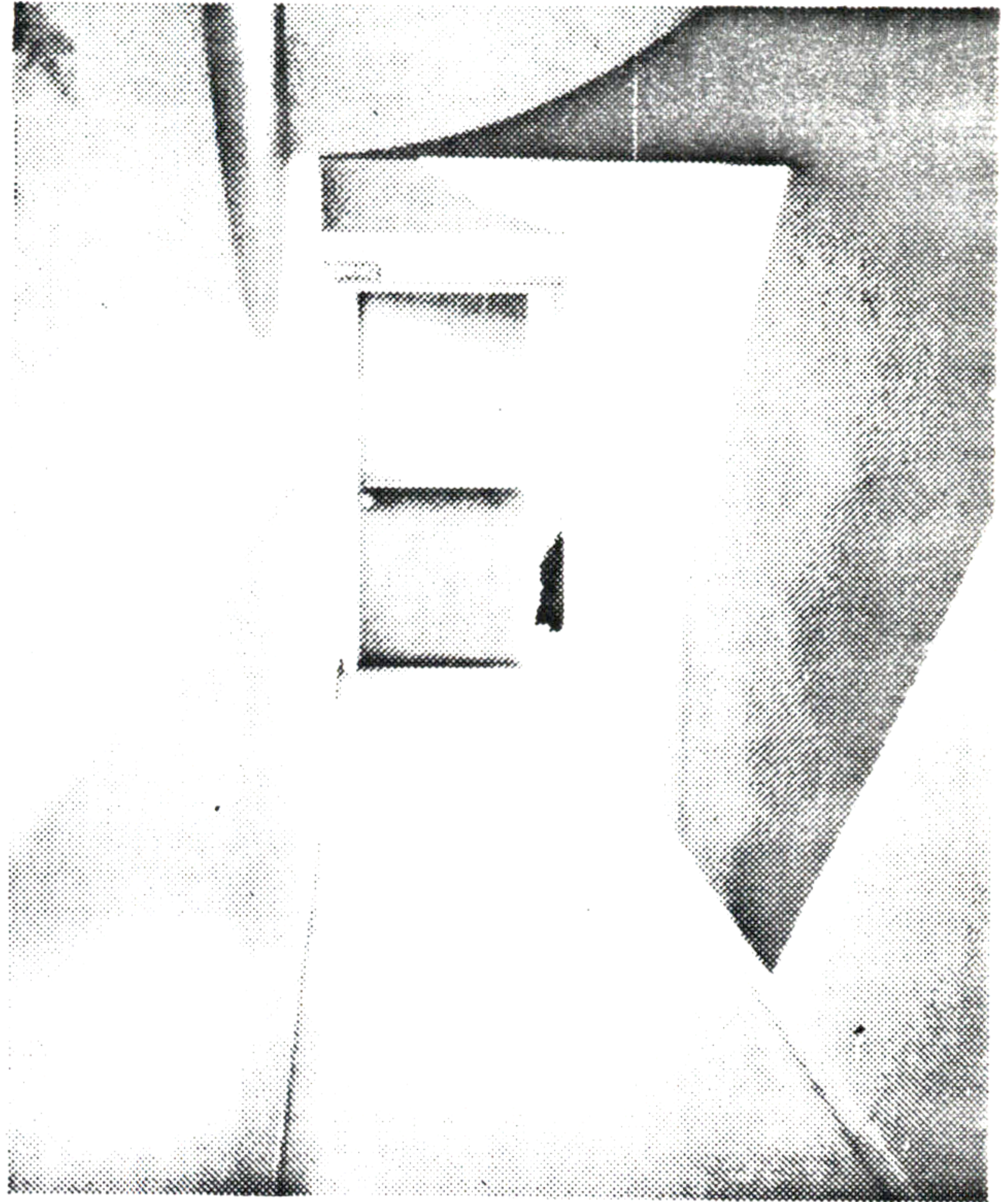


Child-Care Position

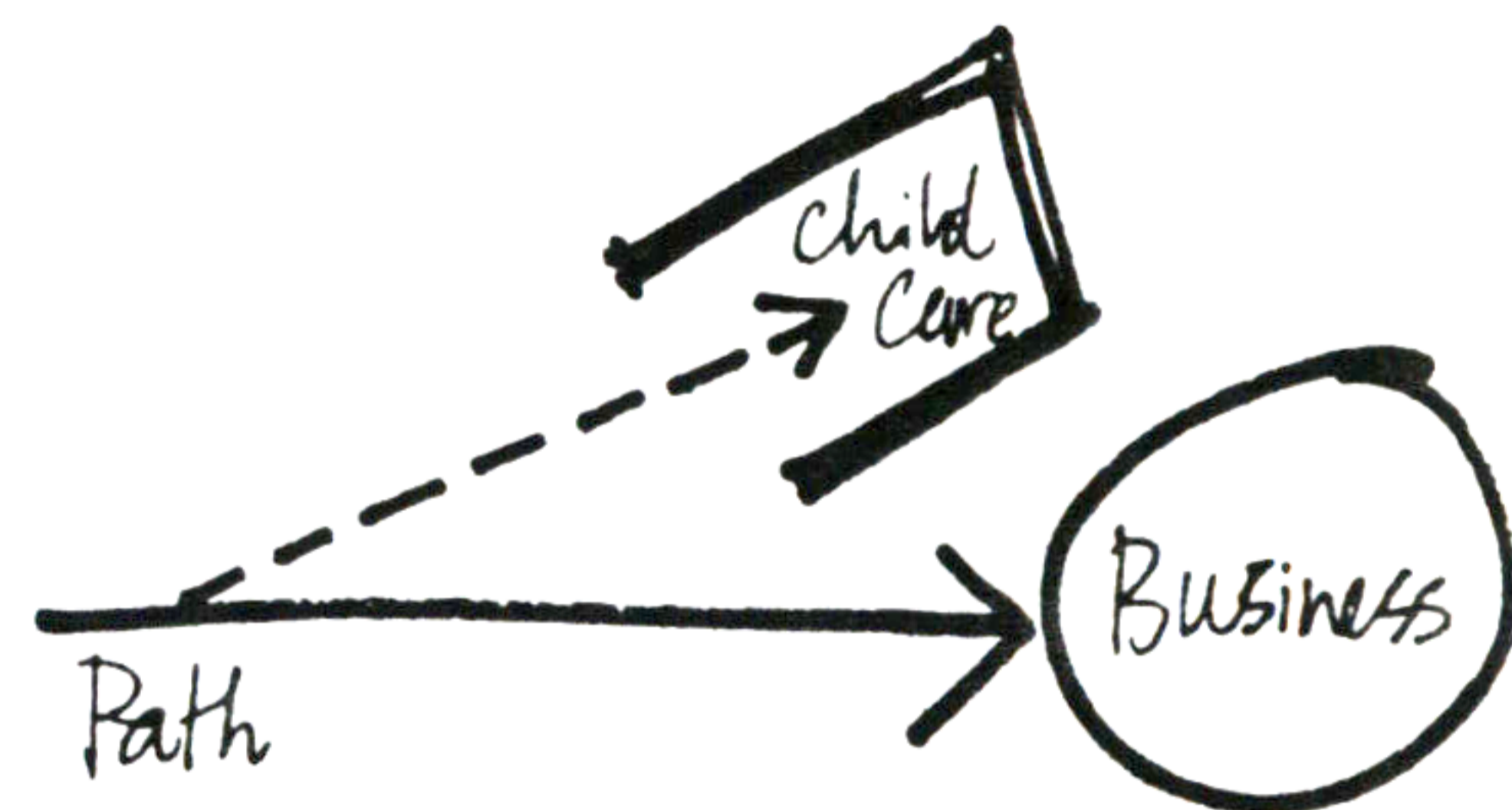
Children get anxious when they are suddenly left in child-care rooms that they've never seen before.

They feel deserted, and the ensuing scene causes tension between mother and child. (See Lym, Shapiro and Silverstein, "Kiddie Korral Observations", unpub. ms. Department of Architecture, December 1966.) The only certain way to solve this problem, is to create circumstances under which the child decides, of his own accord, that he wants to play in the child care room. Of course the physical design cannot guarantee this circumstance — since it depends on many personal and idiosyncratic factors. However, the physical environment can help to increase the likelihood of the circumstance, by exposing the inside of the child care room to the child, for as long as possible, during the time that the mother and child approach it. The longer the child has a chance to see what is going on in the care center, the greater the probability that he will, of his own accord, decide that he wants to be there. The child's experience during the 20 or 30 seconds it takes to approach the space plays a crucial role in establishing this possibility.

(continued over)



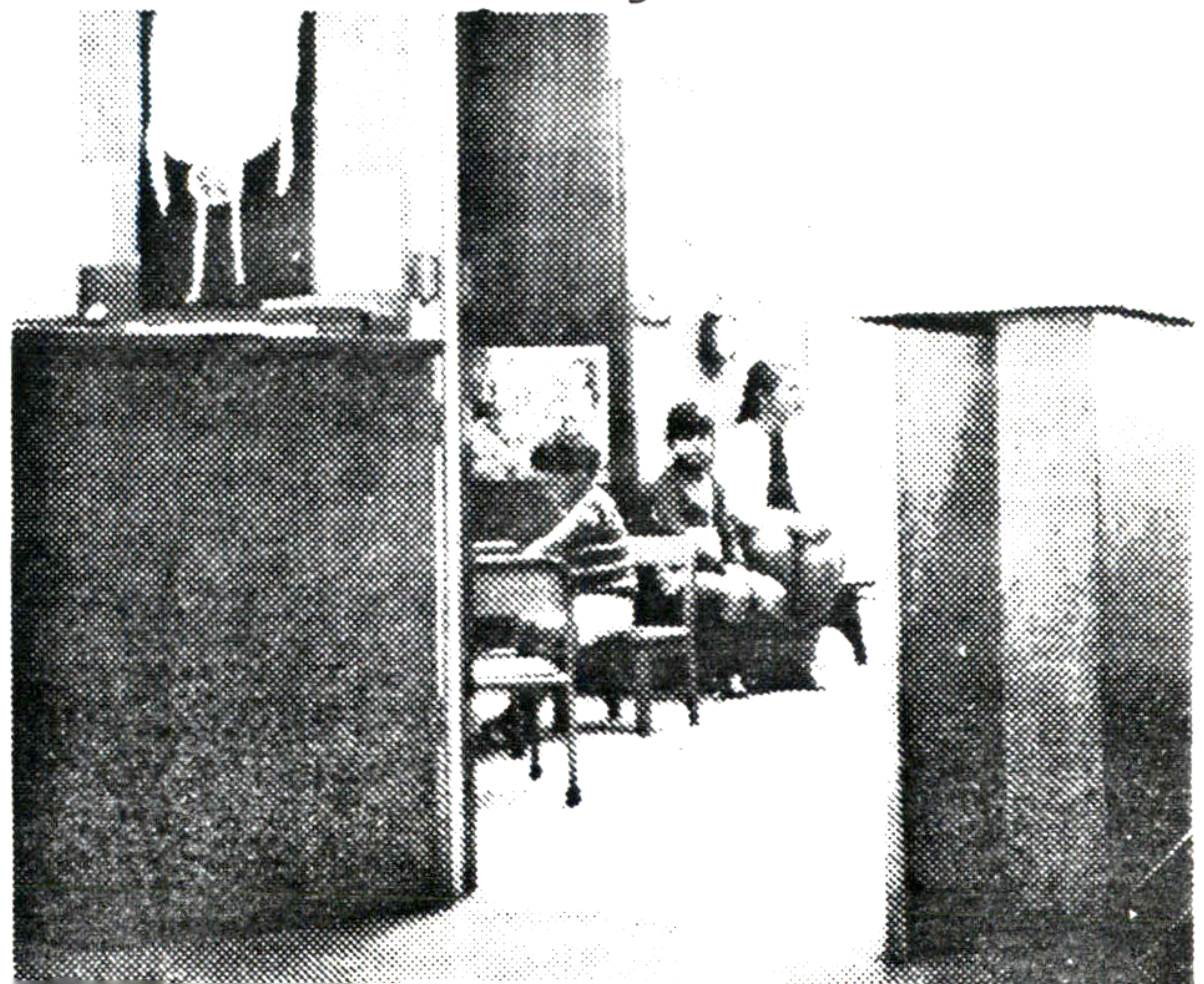
Therefore: Place the child-care space on the path from the building's entrance to the actual place of business, and make it visible from this path; lay out the path so that it looks into the depths of the child care station for at least 20' along its length. Make sure the visibility is established from a child's eye view.



Looking Out



Looking In



Child-Care Position

Context

This pattern applies to child care space that is not used every day—in facilities where a parent has some prolonged business (e.g. supermarket, community center); see, for example, Kiddie Korral in the Coop Markets, Berkeley, California.

By: Christopher Alexander, Sara Ishikawa, Murray Silverstein.

July 1968 revised June 1970

This pattern is tentative. If you have any evidence to support or refute its current formulation, please send it to the Center for Environmental Structure, P.O. Box 5156, Berkeley, California 94705; we will add your comments to the next edition.