

Willowbrook short on diapers, towels

A diaper and towel shortage at Willowbrook State School, the result of a switchover in laundry servicing, will clear up "in eight to ten days," according to Harry Eliazarian, the institution's deputy director for administration.

The shortage had reportedly resulted in some children being forced to use makeshift diapers, including some made from pillowcases.

Eliazarian said he personally knew of no such instances, although he would not discount the possibility some wards may have adopted that procedure without informing him. He said that Willowbrook was manufacturing additional diapers from whole, bolt cloth,

and that these contain Willowbrook markings.

"As of Saturday, we have put 5,000 additional diapers into service. We will have more this week," he said. "On towels, there's little we can do. There is a universal towel shortage. There are none to be had."

Eliazarian said that the linen shortage was caused by Willowbrook's switchover, two weeks ago, from its own laundry facilities to a commercial firm, Premier Laundry, in North Bergen, N.J.

Under the old system, he said, diapers and other soiled laundry would be recycled every two hours. Premier Laundry works on a 48-hour cycle. Eliazarian explained that the firm allows the laundry to accumulate before cleaning it

and returning it every 48 hours. All the laundry gets done, he said, but there is less of it at Willowbrook at any one time.

"There are diapers in circulation," he said, "but there are not enough. On our own, it was a 24-hour turnaround."

Eliazarian said Willowbrook switched to the private firm for both economy reasons and better service. As for the current diaper lapse, he said, "It will be resolved."

Eliazarian said that Premier is almost caught up. "In fact, they are so caught up, they are looking for additional work for us."

Eliazarian attributed the laundry problem to simple "break-in" troubles. "It's 30 days before everything is ironed out," he added.