



EMPATHIC PARENTING

Journal of the Canadian Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Volume 10

Issue 1

Winter 1987

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***‘‘Baby in the
classroom teaches
some lessons
about parenthood.’’***

see page 16

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Parenting Education

...Twenty years of watching and working with children and their parents in elementary schools have taught me the immense significance to the child of the earliest years of life. I have learned that both the teacher and the schoolroom play their parts but that their overall efforts and degrees of success nearly always depend finally upon the start made by the child during those critical years in the primary environment with the prime teachers - the home and the parents. These findings are not, of course, original or unique; good, observant teachers have always recognized the significant differences in readiness and development which exist between children at the moment of entry into the formal system of education...

Being a parent is widely acknowledged to be both difficult and challenging, and it is safe to say that most new parents do not feel at all confident, especially during the first years of handling their first child. The great majority of parents begin their roles with extremely limited knowledge of child development and no real understanding of the critical ways in which they can enhance the quality of their child's first years; they do not understand that what they do (or do not do) with the young child will assuredly affect the child's progress in the formal school system five to six years later on.

The term **Parenting education** designates the single, most important area of knowledge and expertise which is virtually absent from our current curriculum but which most of us will require during the first half of our lives...

Eric Balkind

EMPATHIC PARENTING:

Being willing and able to 'put yourself in your child's shoes' in order to correctly identify his/her feelings, and

Being willing and able to behave toward your child in ways which take those feelings into account.

Empathic parenting takes an enormous amount of time and energy and fully involves both parents in a co-operative, sharing way.

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EMPATHIC PARENTING

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Letters

Dear Dr. Barker:

Enclosed is a cheque for \$25.00, that being the amount covering our membership for the next year. Once again I'll state what a relief it is for us to see that other people feel like we do!

There is a nagging feeling in the back of my mind though, that I feel I must express to you. That is the impression, perhaps incorrect, that the C.S.P.C.C. is against daycare. I've read the submission to the Special Committee on Child Care in the summer, 1986 issue several times and can see nothing with which I substantively disagree. Yet, as a member, I feel compelled to speak out on behalf of all Canadians who, despite being very concerned about the emotional well-being of their toddlers and infants, must, as a matter of survival, resort to daycare for the maintenance of their children. It is simply inadequate to state that the present state of daycare for infants and toddlers "...prejudices the development of capacities for trust, empathy and affection..." without offering a constructive alternative. For many parents, single and otherwise, there is simply no acceptable alternative for daycare.

All of us have heard the expression, 'an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure'. I believe what the Society is trying to do is promulgate a message of prevention. That is, by following the ideas expressed in the Credo we can all end up with a much more stable, caring society in which to live. I suppose that is why I believe so strongly in what the C.S.P.C.C. is trying to do. It is really the only alternative to spending a fortune trying to mend the damage done to our civilization by those individuals who really do not care about anyone but themselves because their needs were not met as infants and youngsters. In order to achieve this goal, however, we must get our message across to as many people as we can get to listen. Elitist submissions, even if true, will not do. We must present suitable alternatives without pushing many people away. We cannot allow a single issue - daycare - to prevent that message from being heard. Without suffering very real hardships, traditional, nuclear families are beyond the

reach of many ordinary Canadians. Let us not exacerbate guilt already present in parents minds when they hand their children over to the local daycare each working day. They'll only turn away in anger and frustration.

I don't know what the solution is. I wish I did. But I do know that for many infants and toddlers daycare or some facsimile is here to stay. We can amend it but we cannot get rid of it. Let's not turn off a lot of ordinary people who desperately need our message.

You may, if you wish, publish this letter.

Yours appreciatively,

Tim D. Tyler

Calgary, Alberta

Dear CSPCC:

My name is Lisa Oliva and I am a grade eleven student of Catholic Central High School. As a reading assignment in my Family and Child Parenting class, we received the booklets distributed by CSPCC.

I was very much impressed with all the knowledge and factual information I received in the Student Reprint booklets. I found it gave me a sense of information you are bringing forth with an added amount of emotion. I absolutely loved the article entitled, "Don't Spoil Your Baby!". Everything I thought and believed, even though was said to be wrong in class, was reinforced by this article. "It is not too much attention which produces the whiney babies people label 'spoiled'; it is too little attention too reluctantly given." The whole booklet, in general, was very good, stimulating both emotionally as well as intellectually.

I also read the booklet entitled, "No Job Is More Important Than Raising A Child In The First Three Years Of Life". Many of the articles and quizzes were received by our class as study notes and assignments. This booklet however, was more emotional to me, the poetry and pictures took a hold of my heart.

Letters

I would just like to thank you for a wonderful job. These booklets are an excellent addition to our readings. Keep up this great work.

Sincerely
Lisa Oliva
London, Ontario

Dear Board Members:

As a teacher of Child Studies and Human Ecology in Junior and Senior High School in New Brunswick I am most excited about the materials I have received from you and am using in my classes.

The graphics have been enlarged for posters accompanied by the "famous sayings". The articles in "My Friend" and "No Job" are great to get my grade 8 students thinking about what it is to be a parent. The Student Reprints #1, #2 are excellent material for Senior High Classes and parents of preschoolers who attend our daycare.

I am training students as parents, as childcare workers and as citizens. Thank you for your wonderful help in guiding

these Canadian youngsters.

Sincerely,
Caroline Grierson, BSc (HEc) B. Ed.
Home Economics Teacher
Moncton, N.B.

Dear Dr. Barker

Here is one cheque enclosed with some photos with names of managers and businesses who readily endorse CSPCC. I have a huge amount of change to deposit tomorrow with another collection due next week. So we're busy. These are my latest merchants who are supporting the CSPCC:

1. Markville Fish & Chips
2. Chicken King - Markville
3. Markville A & W
4. Smokers Corner - Markville
5. Baskin Robbins - Markham
6. Cheese & Nuts Place
7. Honey Bee Donuts - Markham
8. Country Style Donuts - Markham
9. Famous Gyros - Markville

Sincerely
J. Mulholland
Markham, Ontario



Markville Chicken King

PUNISHMENT

“Unfortunately, punishment teaches a child that those who have power can force others to do their will.”

MANY PARENTS WONDER WHAT IS the best way to teach their children discipline. But the majority of those who have asked my opinions on discipline have spoken of it as something that parents impose on children, rather than something that parents instill in them. What they really seem to have in mind is punishment - in particular, physical punishment.

Unfortunately, punishment teaches a child that those who have power can force others to do their will. And when the child is old enough and able, he will try to use such force himself - for instance, punishing his parents by acting in ways most distressing to them. Thus parents would be well advised to keep in mind Shakespeare's words: "They that have power to hurt and will do none...They rightly do inherit heaven's graces." Among those graces is being loved and emulated by one's children.

Any punishment sets us against the person who inflicts it on us. We must remember that injured feelings can be much more lastingly hurtful than physical pain.

A once common example of both physical and emotional punishment is washing out a child's mouth with soap because the child has used bad language. While the procedure is only uncomfortable,

rather than painful, the degradation the child experiences is great. Without consciously knowing it the child responds not only to the obvious message that he said something bad but also to the implicit message that the parent views his insides as dirty and bad - that the child himself is vile. In the end the parent's goal - to eliminate bad language from the child's vocabulary - is rarely achieved. Instead, the punishment serves to convince the child that although the parent is very much concerned with overt behavior, he is completely uninterested in whatever annoyance compelled the child to use bad language. It convinces him that the parent is interested only in what he wants, and not in what the child wants. If this is so, the child in his inner being reasons, then why shouldn't he too be interested only in what he wants, and ignore the wishes of his parent?

I have known children who, upon having their mouths washed out with soap, stopped saying bad words out loud but continually repeated the words to themselves, responding to even the slightest frustration with streams of silent vituperation. Their anger made them unable to form any good relationships, which made them angrier still, which made them think up worse swear words.

Reprinted with permission. Copyright © 1985 by Bruno Bettelheim. This material, in somewhat different form, will be published in the book "A Good Enough Parent" Spring 1987. A.A. Knopf N.Y.

Special thanks to Dr. P.D. Carter for drawing this article to the attention of the editor.

“They that have power to hurt and will do none...They rightly do inherit heaven’s graces.”

Even if a child feels he has done wrong, he senses that there must be some better way to correct him than by inflicting physical or emotional pain. When we experience painful or degrading punishment, most of us learn to avoid situations that lead to it; in this respect punishment is effective. However, punishment teaches foremost the desirability of not getting caught, so the child who before punishment was open in his actions now learns to hide them and becomes devious. The more hurtful the punishment, the more devious the child will become.

Like the criminal who tries to get a more lenient sentence by asserting that he knows he has done wrong, our children learn to express remorse when we expect them to. Usually they are sorry only that they have been found out and may be punished. Thus we should not be fooled when they tell us that they know they did wrong, and we certainly should not extract such an admission from them, since it is essentially worthless - made to pacify us or to get the reckoning over with.

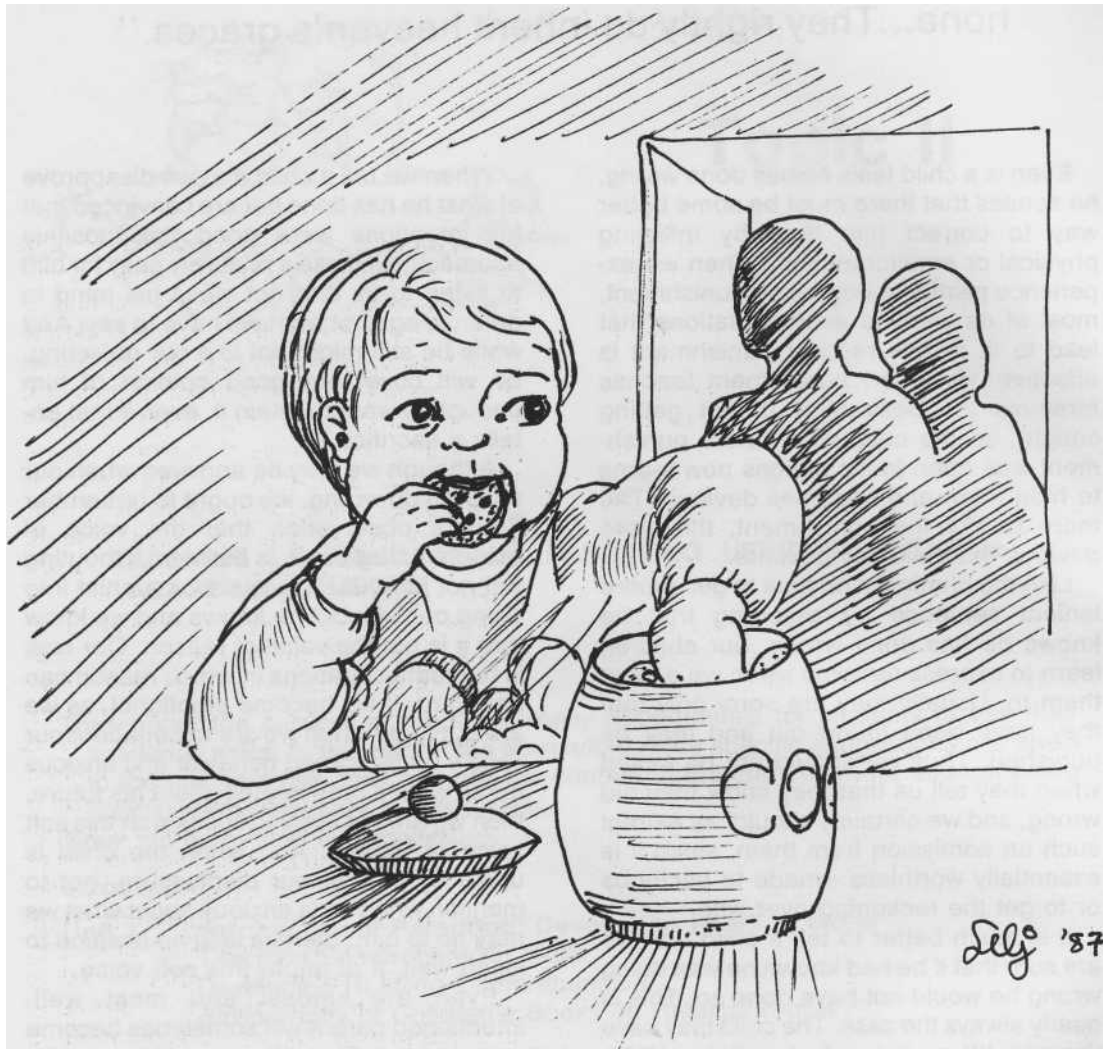
It is much better to tell a child that we are sure that if he had known he was doing wrong he would not have done so. This is nearly always the case. The child may have thought, “If my father finds out, he will be angry,” but this is very different from believing that what one is doing is wrong. At any moment a child believes that whatever he is doing is fully justified. If he takes a forbidden cookie, to his mind the intensity of his desire justifies the act. Later, parental criticism or punishment may convince him that the price he has to pay for his act is too high. But this is a realization after the event.

When we tell a child that we disapprove of what he has done but are convinced that his intentions were good, our positive approach will make it relatively easy for him to listen to us and not close his mind in defense against what we have to say. And while he still might not like our objecting, he will covet our good opinion of him enough to want to retain it, even if that entails a sacrifice.

Although we may be annoyed when our children do wrong, we ought to remember Freud’s observation that the voice of reason, though soft, is insistent. Shouting will not help us. It may shock a child into doing our will, but he knows and we know that it is not the voice of reason. Our task is to create situations in which reason can be heard. If we become emotional, as we are apt to do when we are upset about our child’s undisciplined behavior and anxious about what it may foretell about his future, then we are not likely to speak with this soft voice of reason. And when the child is upset by fear of our displeasure, not to mention when he is anxious about what we may do to him, then he is in no position to listen well, if at all, to this soft voice.

Even the kindest and most well-intentioned parent will sometimes become exasperated. The difference between the good and the not-so-good parent in such situations is that the good parent will realize that his exasperation probably has more to do with himself than with what the child did, and that showing his exasperation will not be to anyone’s advantage. The good parent makes an effort to let his passions cool. The not-so-good parent, in contrast, believes that his exasperation was caused only by his child and that therefore he has

Among those graces is being loved and emulated by one’s children.



**The more hurtful the punishment, the more
devious the child will become.**

...the good parent will realize that his exasperation probably has more to do with himself than with what the child did...

every right to act on it.

The fundamental issue is not punishment at all but the development of morality - that is, the creation of conditions that not only allow but strongly induce a child to wish to be a moral, disciplined person. If we succeed in attaining this goal, then there will be no occasion to think of punishment. But even setting aside the goal of inspiring ethical behavior, punishing one's child is, I believe, undesirable in every respect but one: it allows the discharge of parental anger and aggression.

There is little question that when a child has seriously misbehaved, a reasonable punishment may clear the air. By acting on his annoyance and anxiety, the parent finds relief; freed of these upsetting emotions, he may feel somewhat bad about having punished the child, maybe even a bit guilty about having done so, but much more positive about his child. The child, for his part, no longer feels guilty about what he has done. In the eyes of the parent he has paid the penalty; in his own eyes, usually, he has more than paid it.

In this manner parent and child, freed of emotions that bothered them and stood between them, can feel that peace has been restored to each of them and between them. But is this the best way to attain the long-range goal: to help the child become a person who acts ethically? Does the experience of having a parent who acts

self-righteously or violently produce in the child the wish to act ethically on his own? Does that experience increase the child's respect for and trust in his parent? Would it not have been better, from the standpoint of deterrence and moral growth, if the child had had to struggle longer with his guilt? Isn't guilt - the pangs of conscience - a much better and more lasting deterrent than the fear of punishment? Acting in line with the urgings of one's conscience surely makes for a more responsible and sturdy personality than acting out of fear.

Punishment is a traumatic experience not only in itself but also because it disappoints the child's wish to believe in the benevolence of the parent, on which his sense of security rests. Therefore, as is true for many traumatic experiences, punishment can be subject to repression.

A good case can be made that adults who remember childhood punishments as positive experiences do so because the negative aspects were so severe that they had to be completely repressed or denied. When the punished child reaches adulthood, he remembers only the relief that came with the re-establishment of positive feelings - with the reconciliation that followed the punishment. But this does not mean that at the time the punishment was inflicted it was not detrimental. As far as I know, no child claims right after being punished that it did him a lot of good.

The not-so-good parent, in contrast, believes that his exasperation was caused only by his child and that therefore he has every right to act on it.

STEALING

PROBABLY NONE OF THE COMMON transgressions of childhood upsets parents more than stealing. What disturbs them most is usually not the thefts themselves - bad as they are. It is the idea that their children may grow up to be thieves. But a child has no intention of becoming a criminal when he takes some small item, and he can be deeply hurt when his parents react as if he might become one. The child nearly always knows that he has done wrong, and if his parents are dissatisfied with him, he understands, but if they are anxious about him, his self-esteem is shaken. We ought not to view what the child has done as a crime. According to law, a child cannot commit a crime. So why should we be more severe with our child than the law would be?

I am not saying that parents should disregard what their child does. The reactions of a child's parents strongly influence the formation of that child's personality. Any transgression that parents consider serious requires an appropriate response, so that the child can learn. If a child's error remains unrecognized, or is made light of, he is likely to feel encouraged to repeat what he has done, maybe even on a larger scale. (This is why it is important for parents to be aware of what their child is doing - what he's been up to when, say, he acquires a new possession of unknown origin.) But though parents should take seriously what their child does, they should not make more of it than the child can comprehend as justified.

Clearly, a child must not be permitted to enjoy ill-gotten goods. He must immediately restore what he has taken to its rightful owner, with the appropriate apologies. If some damage has been done, the owner must be adequately compensated. Every child can understand the necessity of this, even though he might be afraid to approach the owner.

Having the child see the owner all by

himself is usually not the best idea. When we supervise, we can be sure of the manner in which he returns what he has taken. More important, the child can observe directly how embarrassed we are by what he has done. One of the worst experiences a child can have is to realize that he has embarrassed his parents in front of a stranger. If we punish the child in addition to putting him through such an experience, we may considerably weaken the impression we have made. The child's sense of guilt usually centers more on the pain he has caused us than on the misdeed itself. For this reason punishment is a weak deterrent: it makes the offender so angry at those who inflict it that his sense of guilt is diminished.

It may make little difference to parents who fear for their child's future whether the child has stolen from them or from others. Parents tend to lump those two actions together in their minds. But for the child, taking things from a member of the family and taking things from a stranger are entirely different matters. We do him an injustice if we do not discriminate between these two situations. We also hamper our efforts to set things straight in the present and to prevent repetitions in the future.

Most children are occasionally tempted to take some small change from their parents. The reasons are manifold. The child wishes to buy something he longs for; he wishes to find out how observant his parents are, with respect both to their own possessions and to those the child acquires; he wishes to make his parents aware of how desperately he wants something. He may wish to keep up with his friends, or to buy their friendship. He may wish to punish the person from whom he takes something.

Parents ought to be careful not to be satisfied with the idea that their child took something, such as money, simply to indulge himself. In my experience,



What disturbs them most is usually not the thefts themselves - bad as they are. It is the idea that their children may grow up to be thieves.

...punishment is a weak deterrent:

whenever a child - especially a middle-class child, whose needs are well taken care of - takes something from a relative, the attitude of the child toward that relative is always an important factor. For example, the child may take from a sibling because he thinks that this sibling receives more from his parents than he does. Or perhaps the child thinks that his parents have deprived him unnecessarily, or that they have shortchanged him in some way. In such cases the child thinks that he is merely correcting an unfair situation. Simply asking why the child took from one family member rather than from another may be instructive - revealing, for example, that he was angry at this person, or that the person's negligence tempted him. But parents can elicit such important information only if they remain calm. A child is not likely to be able to discover or reveal his motives when pressed to do so by people who are very angry with him or who think they know what he is going to say.

The deepest concern of most parents is their child and his future development, not their loss, which in most cases is relatively small. But a child has a hard time realizing this unless his parents go out of their way to make it clear, by trying to understand what motivated his action. Only the child's conviction that his parents care a great deal for him - not for his future, but for him right now - will strongly motivate him to preserve their good opinion of him, by striving to do nothing that is wrong in their eyes.

Children tend not to view family posses-

sions the way their parents do. So much that is around the house is free to be used by all family members that children may have a hard time drawing the line. Moreover, if parents play loose with their child's possessions, they ought to expect that the child might be at least tempted to do the same with their possessions.

Because of his dependence on the family, the child often has a keener sense of family - on an intuitive, subconscious level - than do his parents. Being a more primitive person, he experiences things in much more primitive and direct ways. It is *his* family; it must be *his* for him to feel secure and to be able to grow up well. If so, is not then everything that is the family's property also his? If he belongs to his parents, and they belong to him, then don't silly objects - silly by comparison with the importance of persons - such as money or other valuables that belong to his parents also belong to him? When all family possessions were really that - possessions of the family, not the private property of individual family members - perhaps the sense of family was stronger and gave each family member more security than people now experience.

We can instill in our children a much deeper feeling of family cohesiveness if we make it clear that - within reason - family property is for everyone's use. This includes relatively small amounts of money or minor valuables, the expenditure or loss of which cannot jeopardize the family's future.

...it makes the offender so angry at those who inflict it that his sense of guilt is diminished.

DISCIPLINE

THE ORIGINAL DEFINITION OF THE word *discipline* refers to an instruction to be imparted to disciples. When one thinks about this definition, it becomes clear that one cannot impart anything, whether discipline or knowledge, that one does not possess oneself. Also it is obvious that acquiring discipline and being a disciple are intimately related.

Most of us when hearing or using the word *disciple* are likely to be reminded of the biblical Apostles. Their deepest wish was to emulate Christ. They made him their

guide not just because they believed in his teachings but because of their love for him and his love for them. Without such mutual love the Master's teaching and example, convincing though they were, would never have persuaded the disciples to change their lives and beliefs as radically as they did.

The story of Christ's disciples suggests that love and admiration are powerful motives for adopting a person's values and ideas. By the same token, the combination of teaching, example, and mutual love is



...love and admiration are powerful motives for adopting a person's values and ideas.

most potent in preventing one from going against what this admired individual stands for, even when one is tempted to do so. Thus the most reliable method of instilling desirable values and a discipline based on these values into the minds of our children should be obvious.

Probably the only way for an undisciplined person to acquire discipline is through admiring and emulating someone who is disciplined. This process is greatly helped if the disciple believes that even if he is not *the* favorite of the master, at least he is one of the favorites. Such a belief further motivates the disciple to form himself in the image of the master - to identify with him.

Fortunately, the younger the child, the more he wishes to admire his parents. In fact, he cannot do other than admire them, because he needs to believe in their perfection in order to be able to feel safe himself. And in whose image can the young child form himself but in that of one or both of the parents, or whoever functions in their place? Nobody else is as close and as important to him as they are; nobody else loves him as much or takes good care of him. It is for these reasons, too, that the child wishes to believe that he is his parents' favorite. Sibling rivalry is caused by the fear that he might not be the favorite, and that one of his siblings is. How acutely a child suffers from sibling rivalry is a clear indication of how great his wish is to be the parents' favorite, and how consuming his fear is that he is not.

It is natural and probably unavoidable for parents sometimes to prefer one of their children to others. Parents sometimes fool themselves into believing that they love all their children equally, but this is rarely the case. At best, a parent will like each of his children very much - most parents do - but he will like each child in different ways, and for different reasons. Most parents love one child more at one time and another more at another time, which is only natural, because children behave differently at

various moments in their lives and thus evoke different emotional reactions in their parents. But if a child has reason to feel that he is the favorite some of the time, he is likely to believe that he is the favorite most of the time. In this situation, as in so many others, the wish is father to the thought. All of this works, of course, only if the child is not too often and too severely disappointed by the attitudes of his parents.

As the child grows older, he will cease to admire his parents so single-mindedly. By comparison with the wider circle of people he gets to know as he grows up, his parents will seem deficient in some respects. However, while the child may admire his parents less and question aspects of their behavior, his need to admire them unconditionally is so deeply rooted that it will be powerfully present in his unconscious for a long time - at least until he reaches maturity, if not longer. Thus, fortunately, in most families there is a solid basis for the child's wish to be his parents' disciple - to be able to love and admire them, and to emulate them, if not in all then certainly in some very important respects, and if not in his conscious then certainly in his unconscious mind.

We all know families in which this is not the case - in which the parents do not like their child very much, are disappointed in him, or do not behave so that the child can love and admire them. When a child neither admires his parents nor wishes to emulate them, he will not become disciplined under their influence. How can he, when they are not suitable models?

Such a child often finds some other person to admire, whose favorite he wishes to be, and whom he therefore comes to emulate, acquiring discipline in order to find favor in this person's eyes. The trouble is that the child is likely to seek and find an undisciplined master. An example of this syndrome is the member of a delinquent gang who is so impressed by its delin-

Parents sometimes fool themselves into believing that they love all their children equally...

quent or otherwise asocial leader that he admires and emulates him, with disastrous consequences for the youngster and for society. On some level the youngster may know that he has not chosen well, but his need to attach himself to someone whom he can admire, and who seems to offer acceptance and security in return, is so great that it drowns out the voice of reason. It is on their child's need for such an attachment that parents can and must build in order to promote not just disciplined behavior of the child around particular issues - this is not all that difficult to obtain - but a lasting inner commitment to be, or at least to become, a disciplined person.

It is by no means easy for a child to become disciplined. Often part of the reason is that his parents are not very well disciplined themselves and thus do not provide clear models for their child to follow. Another difficulty is that parents try to teach self-discipline to their child in ways that arouse his resistance rather than his interest. And still another difficulty is that a child responds to his parents most readily - both positively and negatively - when he sees that their emotional involvement is strong. When parents act with little self-discipline, they show their emotions. When they get their emotions under control, they are nearly always again able to act in line with their normal standards of discipline. Rare as it may be for a parent to lose control, those are the times that impress a child most. Disciplined behavior, while pleasing and reassuring to the child and likely to make life good for him in the long run, does not make such a strong impression on him.

For these and many other reasons teaching discipline requires great patience on the part of the teacher. The acquisition of true inner discipline, which will be an important characteristic of one's personality and behavior, requires many years of apprenticeship. The process is so slow that in retrospect it seems unremarkable - as if it were natural and easy. And yet if parents could only remember how undisciplined they themselves once were and how hard a time they had as children in disciplining themselves - if they could remember how put upon, if not abused, they felt when their parents forced them to behave well against their will - then they and their children would be much better off. One of the world's greatest teachers, Goethe, wrote an epigram that turns on this very point: "Tell me how bear you so comfortably / The arrogant conduct of maddening youth? / Had I too not once behaved unbearably, / They would be unbearable in truth." Goethe could write these lines and enjoy their humor because he had achieved great inner security, which made it possible for him to understand with amusement the otherwise "unbearable" behavior of the young. The same feeling of security allowed him to remember how difficult - unbearable, even - he himself had been in his younger years, which many of us are tempted to forget, if our self-love does not compel us to repress or deny it.

Despite all the obstacles that parents encounter in trying to impart discipline to their children, they are the logical persons to do so, because the learning has to start so early and continue for so long. But while

Most parents love one child more at one time and another more at another time...

most parents are ready to teach their children discipline and know that they are the ones to do so, they are less ready to accept the idea that they can teach only by example. Unfortunately, the maxim "Do as I say, not as I do" won't work with children. Whether they obey our orders or not, deep down they are influenced less by what we tell them than they are by who we are and what we do. Our children form themselves in reaction to us: the more they love us, the more they emulate us, and the more they respond positively to our consciously held values and to those of which we are not conscious but which also influence our actions. The less they like and admire us, the more negatively they respond to us in forming their personalities.

A study conducted in Sweden demonstrates how persuasive the example set by the parents can be to a child. Some years ago the Swedish government became concerned because undisciplined behavior among Swedish teenagers - as indicated by alcoholism, vandalism, delinquency, drug use, and criminal behavior - had become prevalent. To find out why some children became troublesome and others did not, researchers compared the homes of law-abiding teenagers with those of delinquents. They found that neither material assets nor social class exercised a statistically significant influence on the behavior of these young people. Instead, what was decisive was the emotional atmosphere of the home.

Teenagers who behaved well tended to have parents who were themselves responsible, upright, and self-disciplined - who lived in accord with the values they professed and encouraged their children to follow suit. When the good teenagers were exposed, as part of the investigation, to problem teenagers, their behavior was not permanently affected. They had far too securely internalized their parents' values. While some, out of curiosity, joined the activities of the delinquent or drug-using group, such experimentation was always tentative and short-lived. By the same token, when problem teenagers were forced to associate solely with "square" peers, they showed no significant improve-

If parents could only remember how undisciplined they themselves once were...

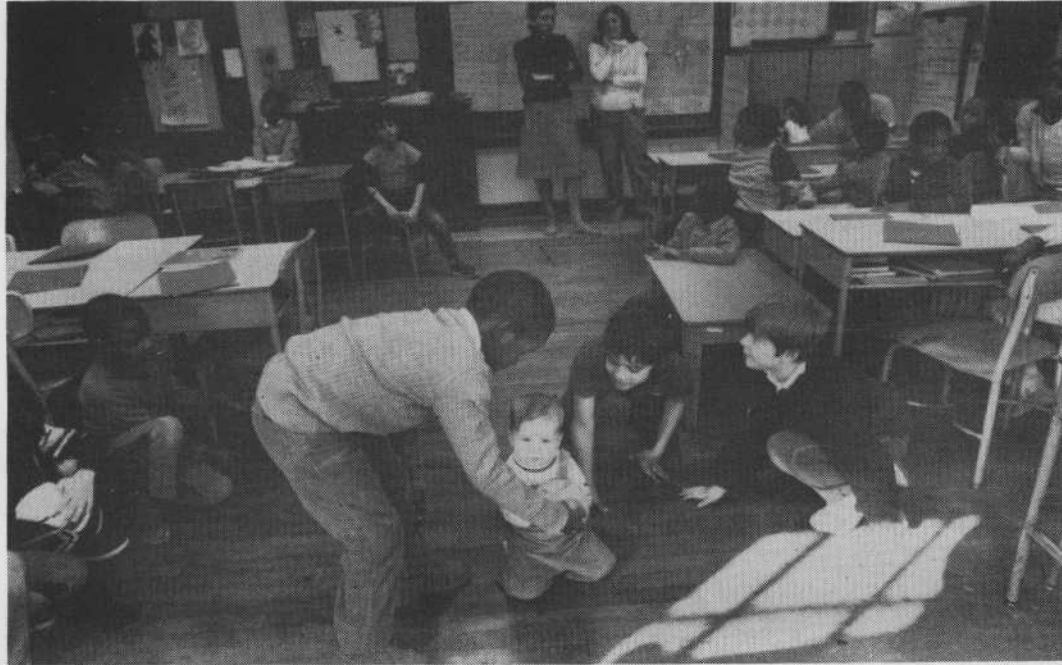
ment. Indeed, they did not even temporarily adopt non-delinquent ways of living.

The Swedish researchers found that undisciplined, asocial, problem teenagers did not necessarily come from what one would consider undisciplined or disorganized homes, nor did they have visibly asocial parents. But the parents of the asocial youngsters did tend to have conflicting values or to be inconsistent in putting their values into practice. And they tended to try to hold their children to values that they themselves did not live by. As a result the children had not been able to internalize those values. Expected by their parents to be more disciplined than the examples set, most of the children turned out to be much less so.

Further study of the family backgrounds of these youngsters revealed that it hardly mattered what specific values the parents embraced - whether the parents were conservative or progressive in the views they held, strict or permissive in the ways in which they brought up their children. What made the difference was how closely the parents lived by the values that they tried to teach their children.

Punishment versus Discipline, by Bruno Bettelheim, will be continued in the next issue.

Education for Parenting



Education for Parenting is a program for teaching "parenting" attitudes, skills, and knowledge of human development from kindergarten through 12th grade. The program was developed by Sally Scattergood and her colleagues with the aid of the Friends Council on Education and several private foundations. The pilot program began at Germantown (Pa.) Friends School in 1978 and has expanded into several schools in the Philadelphia area. Education for Parenting is currently developing a written curriculum (accompanied by videotapes which the program is producing).

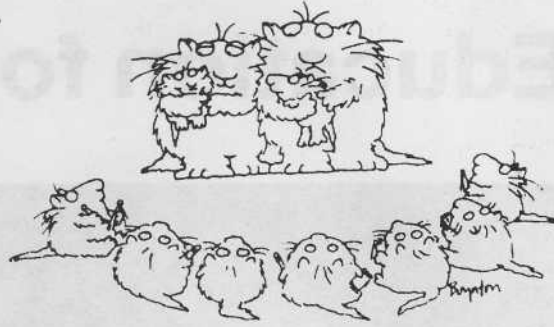
The objective of the program is to bring "parenting" education into the schools to help students develop formally a means to learn about the responsibilities involved in being a concerned, informed, competent parent.

Education for Parenting uses three methods of study: live observation, "hands-on" experiences, and didactic teaching. The combination of these approaches makes for a dynamic, exciting learning situation.

Direct Inquiries to: Education for Parenting, 31 West Coulter Street, Philadelphia, P.A. 19144. Telephone (215) 438-1255.

From the Philadelphia Inquirer...

Baby in class gives grade schoolers a peek at parenthood



Melvin Santos, a third grader at the Bache-Martin School in the city's Fairmount section, bent forward as he held out a yellow ball to 1-year-old Christopher Dugan and called to him softly.

Christopher, standing uncertainly a few feet away, reached out as Melvin tossed the ball, grabbed it and then plopped to the floor, with the ball cradled in his lap.

"He's smiling!" Melvin announced as Christopher began rolling the ball toward his older brother, Patrick.

"Why doesn't Christopher throw the ball?" teacher Julie Giguere asked.

"I think he doesn't throw the ball because there are a lot of people around,

and because he's used to rolling it," said Wayne Reed.

The exercise was one of several that Giguere's third graders performed as part of a classroom lesson on child development, and Christopher was Exhibit A.

Mary Ellen Dugan brings her young son to Bache-Martin School once a month so the third graders can see how much he's grown, what he's learned and how he has changed since his last visit.

Welcome to Education for Parenting, which strives to teach young children that parents have responsibilities to their children and that there are specific skills for handling them that can be learned.

"This is a way of teaching caring behaviours," said Harriett Heath, the curriculum director of Education for Parenting.

Reduce Teen Pregnancies

School officials also hope that the program will help reduce teenage pregnancies. Mothers under the age of 17 gave birth to 1,790 infants in Philadelphia in 1984.

But "this is not a sex-education program," Heath said. "In our program we do not dwell on preventing teen pregnancy, but rather on 'what are the long-term effects of nurturing a baby?'"

She said that researchers have found that teenagers who are aware of the commitment and responsibilities of child-rearing are more likely to delay having children until they are able to care for them properly.

Staff members at Education for Parenting point out that adults often repeat the child-rearing patterns established by their parents because those are the only methods they know.

"When you go into child abuse, there are parents who abuse their children because they tend not to know any other way than physically to punish a child and also because they do not know what to expect from children," Heath said. "We show kids there are other ways of dealing with children."

Begun as an experimental project at the Germantown Friends School in 1978, Education for Parenting now is a non-profit educational organization supported by grants from several foundations, including the Philadelphia Foundation and the Harris Foundation in Chicago. The organization's curriculum is in use at several other Quaker and private schools.

And during the last two years the group has been establishing model programs with specially trained volunteer teachers at the George Washington School in South Philadelphia and at the Bache-Martin School.

About 290 students from kindergarten through eighth grade are involved with the program at the two schools this year. The staff members are enthusiastic, and public school officials are considering expanding the program to more schools next fall.

With that in mind, Education for Parenting will be offering a 14-week course for

interested teachers starting Feb. 26.

Elaine Francis, a teacher at George Washington elementary school, which draws many students from the nearby Southwark Plaza, uses the program with her class of seventh and eighth graders.

"The parents have been telling me that the students are kinder at home with their younger brothers and sisters," Francis said. "I get a lot of parents who tell me, 'What are you doing with this son of mine? Keep it up.'"

In one of the program's most popular exercises, young children are asked to bring a hard-boiled egg to school on a Friday. They draw a face on it and make some sort of bed for their "egg baby."

The children take care of their eggs over the weekend and then report on their experiences in school on Monday.

In her paper describing the event at the end of the last school year Raeded Ebah, then a sixth grader at Bache-Martin School, said she had named her egg Rashima, made her a warm bed and taken her to the circus.

"I think I did a good job of taking care of the egg baby," she wrote. "I wouldn't want to have a real baby. It is too hard."

Judy Lechner Knowles, the principal at the George Washington School, said that one child from her school had had to miss a party when his mother refused to babysit his egg.

"Children came back with a new sense of what responsibility means," she said.

Francis, who has taught at George Washington for three years, said she became involved with Education for Parenting because of her concerns about teen pregnancy.

"The first year I was here, a girl in my class turned up pregnant, which was a shock to me because I teach seventh and eighth grade. It upset me badly. I think I reacted as if I were her mother," Francis said. "And I said we cannot just forget these girls, thinking they are too young. We have to do something."

She and Knowles believe that the lessons have begun to pay off.

There have been no pregnancies at the school in the last two years.

Francis said she has overheard her students, talking with friends in the hallway, "saying things like, 'If you have a baby too early, it could come up with so many problems. A baby needs love. It costs so much money and you won't be

“One of the things that makes elementary-age children more suitable is that this is a period in their lives when they are still being parented themselves,”

able to get a good job if you don't finish school.” Francis said.

“The first time I heard it, I was shocked,” she said. “But the message is getting through. It's getting through!”

Sara P. Scattergood, an experienced classroom teacher, mother of five and grandmother of nine, is Education for Parenting's program director. She was the major creative force behind the project, but she says that Dr. Henri Parens, a research professor of psychiatry at the Medical College of Pennsylvania, came up with the idea that very young children could be taught how to be parents.

Scattergood and another teacher got Parens' permission to try out his ideas at Germantown Friends School, where they both taught. The first classes were introduced in 1978, and Scattergood said the children loved them.

Education for Parenting remains a staple in the educational program at Germantown Friends, where sequential units are taught from kindergarten through the 12th grade.

In the public schools, the program focuses on the elementary grades.

“One of the things that makes elementary-age children more suitable is that this is a period in their lives when they are still being parented themselves,” Scattergood said. “They have not yet turned against their parents, as is common in

adolescence. They are interested in it (parenting) and they use their own experiences.”

The program has always brought babies into the classroom so that students could make their own observations.

The infant visit accounts for one of the two Education for Parenting sessions each month. Before each appearance, the students predict what new skills the infant will have mastered and then record their observations in journals.

In the other session, the class spends about 45 minutes learning about some aspect of child development or the role and responsibilities of parents.

The course has been adapted to highlight specific goals and objectives of the school district's standardized curriculum, including the development of problem-solving and planning skills.

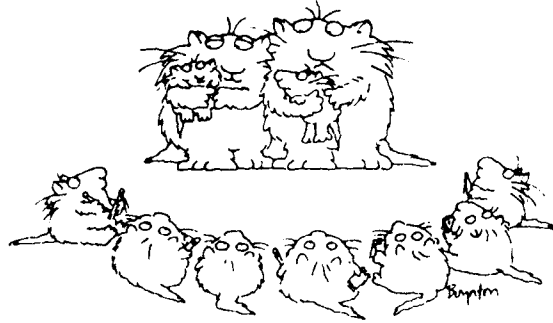
“So many inner-city children come from families where there is very little planning,” Scattergood said. “Things just seem to happen to them and then they respond.”

Bache-Martin teacher Giguere said the program also ties in with specific academic subjects, providing topics for art and language arts classes and exercising mathematical and measuring skills.

“It's the same with the other thinking skills,” she said. “This is the sort of subject area where there are no right answers.”□

Before each appearance, the students predict what new skills the infant will have mastered and then record their observations in journals.

Reflections on a “Parenting Experience”



by Gregory Meyer

“We also learned about separation anxiety, rapprochement, and other developmental stages.”

Education for Parenting is an interesting program for kids. The pilot program for Education for Parenting is at Germantown Friends School, my school. I'm in the sixth grade. The most active grades in my opinion are the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. All fourth, fifth, and sixth graders participate in observing infants in an observation group (Parent/Infant Group). When the group meets, the mothers ask questions while the babies play, a psychiatrist answers the questions and makes comments about what the babies are doing, and the students write down observations in their notebooks.

In my fourth grade class our teacher prepared us before visiting the Parent/Infant Group by reading us portions from the

book, *Before You Were Three*. In the Parent/Infant Group we got a chance to observe babies of all different ages. We watched while the mothers asked questions. In our class we compared babies with each other as well as looking at individual babies.

The setup is this: the babies are in the middle of a circle playing with their toys while surrounded by parents and teachers. The kids that observe are isolated on one side of the room completing the circle. The kids aren't allowed to talk while the group is in session. We can only take notes and cannot attract the attention of the babies. Sometimes the babies wander over anyway and we get involved with them, instead of taking notes as we should!

This year in my sixth grade we are learning about the role of the father...and even had a father visit our class with his baby.

I am able to understand her more and feel what she feels so I can figure out what she wants.

One time my sister, who is a baby in the Parent/Infant Group, saw me and she ran over to me. When she got there, she tried to pull my pencil away from me, but I wouldn't let her. When she tried to again, my friends "egged" her on, until my mom came over and took her back. Actually I think she was trying to get my attention because she doesn't usually see me in school. I also sort of wanted her to come over and play with me. I felt kind of defeated because I wanted to play with her, but there was the rule about only observing in the group and not talking to the babies.

In our classroom after the group we had extensive discussions about how each baby is acting - if any one baby is displaying particular emotions. Sometimes we saw videotapes of babies showing different emotions at different ages. We also learned about separation anxiety, rapprochement, and other developmental stages. We also saw movies about babies' development.

In my fourth and fifth grade we had a couple of babies visit our classroom throughout the year. In this way we got to see different and more interesting sides of a baby. We asked specific questions of the mother to learn what developmental stages the babies were at and find out about the babies' personal habits. I really liked these classroom activities because they made me a better watcher and listener.

Another related activity was when our fourth grade had a sharing program with a first-grade class. We played games together, we read together, we went to meeting for worship together; we became

very good friends with them. The sharing took place throughout the whole school year, and we were each assigned one child as our special partner.

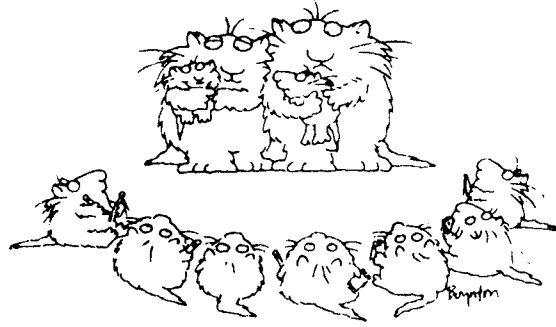
This year in my sixth grade we are learning about the role of the father and comparing it to the role of the mother. We've observed at the Parent/Infant Group, seen movies, and even had a father visit our class with his baby.

I just think Education for Parenting is a great program. It's a great way to teach young kids how to be parents (when and if they become parents). I think it has helped me in the three years I've been in it. If I hadn't taken Parenting I wouldn't have understood my siblings as well (I have a sister 27 months old and a brother 7½ years old). For example, when my sister cries at dinner she is a royal pain, except I know what to do most of the time to calm her down. At least I know she is going through a stage and might need something like a transitional object, such as a "security doll." I am able to understand her more and feel what she feels so I can figure out what she wants.

Education for Parenting has made me more interested in observing babies. It is very hard to raise a kid, but at the same time it is also very rewarding. I've even been rewarded by seeing babies do things I wouldn't have noticed, and I imagine parents see this also. If I hadn't been able to be in Education for Parenting, I would have a much harder time understanding babies and what they demand. □

Gregory Meyer is a sixth-grade student at Germantown (Pa.) Friends School.

I've even been rewarded by seeing babies do things I wouldn't have noticed...



Part I

(Kindergarten to
Third Grade)

GETTING TO KNOW INFANTS AND THEIR PARENTS

The **Getting to Know** curriculum gives the early elementary student a quick overview of the attitudes, information and skills that are related to parenting. The content of these units can be adapted to fit the interests and learning abilities of students kindergarten through third grade, though Units 3 and 4 are more meaningful if the students have had Unit 2..

Introduction

Unit 1 Getting to Know: Newborns and Their Parents

A pregnant couple (or woman) is invited into the classroom. Students ask questions and observe changes. The couple or mother return following birth to introduce their newborn whose development then may be observed and recorded.

Time: 45 minutes a month for six to ten months.

Unit 2 Getting to Know: Infants and Their Parents

An infant and parent are invited into the classroom once a month. Students observe the changes in the infant. They ask parents what the parent has to do to care for the baby. They record what they learn.

Time: 45 minutes a month for six to ten months.

Unit 3 Getting to Know: Toddlers and Their Parents

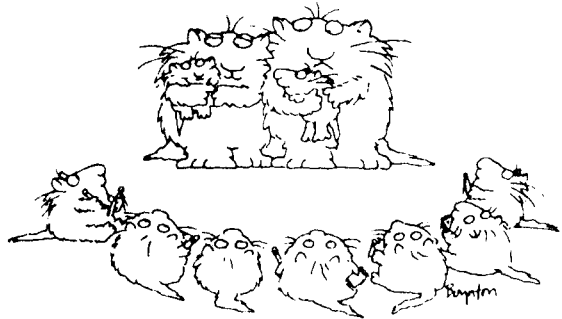
A toddler and parent are invited into the classroom. Students observe the changes in the infant/young child. They ask parents what the parent has to do to care for the child. They record what they learn.

Time: 45 minutes a month for three to four months.

Unit 4 Getting to Know: How to Care for Children Who Are Younger

Teacher helps students plan for children who are younger than they are. Students then carry out their plans while caring for the younger children.

Time: 45 minutes every week for four to six weeks.



Part II (Fourth to Eighth Grades)

LEARNING ABOUT INFANTS AND THEIR PARENTS

This **Learning About** curriculum gives the older elementary student a **basic** understanding of the role of the parent in the development of the child and of the attitudes, information and skills used in undertaking that role.

The units are written to be presented sequentially: Unit 1 in Fourth Grade; Unit 2 in Fifth Grade and Units 3 and 4 in Sixth Grade. However, the material is challenging to students in seventh and eighth grades who have not had the content earlier. Units 1 and 2 are viewed as necessary if students are to grasp well the underlying attitudes being conveyed.

Note: Unit 2 lays a foundation for Units 3 and 4 and should always be taught before them. During Unit 1 a new born is brought into the classroom. Infants look very appealing to young adolescence. We recommend this unit not be taught above Fourth Grade without counterbalancing with information about the responsibilities of parenting and how beautiful babies develop into curious toddlers.

Introduction

Unit 1 Learning About Newborns and Their Parents

A pregnant couple/mother are followed through the latter part of the pregnancy and into the first months with a newborn. Additional discussions center on the costs of having and caring for a baby.

Time: Two hours a month for ten months.

Unit 2 Learning About Infants and Their Parents

A parent with infant six-to-seven months old in fall is followed throughout the year. Additional discussions focus on how human development is fostered.

Time: Two hours a month for ten months.

Unit 3 Learning About Toddlers and Their Parents

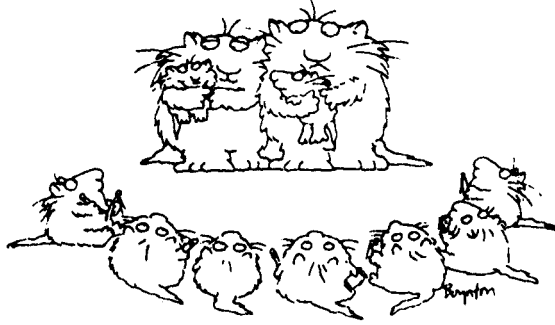
A parent with toddler visits the class at the beginning of the school year. Additional discussions center on how to encourage infants to explore and yet keep them safe.

Time: Two hours a month for three months.

Unit 4 Learning About Caring for Infants

Students have an opportunity to interact with infants using their knowledge of human development in planning.

Time: One hour a week for six weeks.



Topic I

LEARNING ABOUT PARENTING THROUGH RELEVANT EXPERIENCES

The first part of the **Handbook** suggests how experiences common to many elementary curriculum and/or group activities can integrate the basic goals of LAPLTC.

Introduction

Unit 1 Learning About Parenting Through Learning to Care for Dolls

Basic skills of how to hold a baby, how to respond, can be taught in the doll corner. A page of suggestions make up this unit.

Time: No special time need be set aside.

Unit 2 Learning About Parenting Through Learning to Care for Animals

Pets, often an integral part of the classroom, provide many opportunities for students to problem solve issues similar to those faced by adults deciding whether or not to be parents. This unit suggests how teachers can present the attitudes, information and skills relevant to parenting as they incorporate pets into their classrooms.

Section 1 Choosing a Pet

Unit raises the questions for students, "Are they ready to take care of a pet and what kind of pet can they adequately care for?"

Time: 4 sessions, approximately forty-five minutes each.

Section 2 Caring for a Pet

Unit helps class plan to care for a pet.

Time: 1 session, and then ongoing.

Section 3 Planning to Allow Your Pet to Have Babies

Students consider what is involved in having and caring for babies of one's pets.

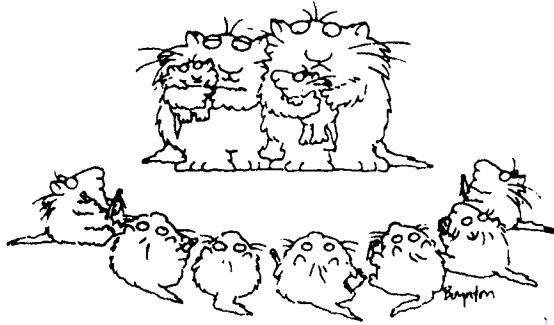
Time: 2 sessions, approximately thirty minutes each.

Section 4 Caring for a Visiting Pet

Unit gives suggestions to teachers how they can help their students plan for a visiting pet making the experience a learning/caring one.

Time: 1 session approximately one half hour and then ongoing.

Unit 3 Learning to Care by Nurturing an Egg



Topic II

TEACHING LEARNING ABOUT PARENTING USING TRADITIONAL ACADEMIC SUBJECTS

Throughout the curriculum there are many opportunities for students to use their academic skills. In this part of the curriculum more specific suggestions are given to the teachers how they can use the content of the curriculum for strengthening their students' mastery of basic skills.

Time: No extra time is involved.

Introduction

Unit 1 Learning About Parenting: Developing Reading Skills

Teaching Comprehension Skills
Developing Reading Comprehension
Bibliography of Children's Books on Related Topics

Unit 2 Learning About Parenting Using Mathematics

Throughout the first three parts of the curriculum there are suggestions for using arithmetic. In the following units additional specific suggestions are made as to how the mathematical skills students are learning can be used during the teaching of LAP.

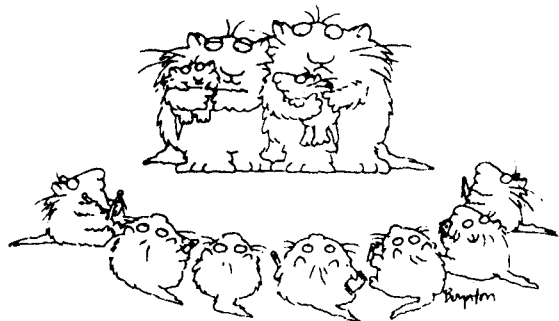
- Section 1 Measuring
- Section 2 Estimating
- Section 3 Time
- Section 4 Graphing
- Section 5 Statistics
- Section 6 Figuring the Costs of Caring for Pets
- Section 7 Figuring the Costs of Providing for a Family

Unit 3 Learning About Parenting Through Literature and Social Studies

This unit presents illustrations of how the goals of LAP can be emphasized during discussions of literature and/or in social studies classes.

Unit 4 Learning About Parenting Through Science

(Relate parents as scientists: teaching the scientific method through parenting).



Topic III

THE WHY, WHAT AND HOW OF TEACHING LEARNING ABOUT PARENTING: LEARNING TO CARE

This part of the curriculum gives teachers the background information needed to present the program effectively to their students. Described here are: the theoretical foundation of the curriculum which the teacher identified and included into the curriculum; the goals of the curriculum and suggestions for teaching it.

Introduction to The Why, What and How of Teaching LAP

A. Why Teach LAP

B. What Is Taught

1. Theoretical Assumptions
2. Attitudes, Information, Skills, Adults use When Parenting
3. Major Goals and Objectives of LAP with Illustrations of Teaching Subobjectives and Predicted Outcomes
4. Curriculum Contents with Objectives and Methods of Assessment
5. Classroom Time Involved in Teaching LAP

C. How To Teach/Implement LAP

1. Integrating Theory into Classroom Activities
2. Parenting Skills Emphasized in LAP
 - a. Planning/Problem Solving
 - b. Observing
 - c. Brainstorming
3. Working with Parents
4. Helpful Hints for Teaching LAP
5. Materials
 - Bibliography
 - Visual Aids
 - Programs Available for Building Prosocial Behavior

Curriculum, Handbook, and other materials are available from: Education for Parenting, 31 West Coulter Street, Philadelphia, P.A. 19144. Telephone: (215) 438-1255.

Father who acknowledges lack of parenting skill closer to criminal than comic

By David Johnston
The Los Angeles Times

I'm tired of reading articles by fathers telling how they barely survived a weekend, or even just a morning, taking care of their children because mom wasn't around.

What prompts grown men to publicly confess that they can't take care of their own offspring?

And what will children think?

Probably that dads are wimps.

Pieces about dad as incompetent househusband appear in print about as often as columnists with holes to fill discover they have nothing to say.

Intended to be humorous, these confessionals typically follow a formula: The Little Woman went to visit her parents or go into the hospital or - in modern times - take a business trip, leaving dad to star in a role to which he was not accustomed: Parenting.

Maybe someone (male editors, perhaps?) find such pieces amusing. I think they're condescending sexist claptrap. And I think the men who write them are wimps.

Often these fathers acknowledge in print that never before have they been solely responsible for the care and feeding of their own child or children. That's closer to criminal than comic.

If there's an infant at home, the hapless father usually explains his incompetence at the simple task of changing baby's diaper without endangering life (baby's) and limb (dad's). Maybe that's why Procter & Gamble puts sticky tape on Luvs.

If the kids are older, the theme shifts to dinner that ended up in the garbage, for-

cing dad to brave the dangers of nighttime traffic to reach the fast-food drive-through lane.

Sometimes the kids had to save dad from trying to hard-boil eggs in the microwave.

There must be a market for these moans of familial incompetence because they recur with the regularity of dirty diapers.

Mike McGrady, the *Newsday* humor columnist, wrote a book called *The Kitchen Sink Papers* back about the time of the *Pentagon Papers*. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that McGrady's advance and royalties would hire a lifetime supply of paid help around his home.

There's even a movie - *Mr. Mom* - in which Michael Keaton can't keep up with it all, at least not at first.

The trouble with these confessionals is I don't believe them. I certainly don't want to believe them.

**Looks and money are the
logical values of my
generation.**

And if I'm wrong - if the land of the free and the home of the brave really abounds with men who can't make formula or iron a dress - I fear for the Republic. How can

Special thanks to Barbara Graham for drawing this article to the attention of the editor.

Our parents and grandparents decided that commercial television would become our national religion...

a nation of free men, who can't get their kids out the door to school, expect to win the hearts and minds of Earth's peoples?

The implication of these pieces is that Real men Don't Do Women's Work. They may be cast as one man's discovering that his wife can do things he hasn't ever done before. But the message I get is more along the lines of Boy in Man's Body Wants to Justify Making His Wife Do Unpleasant Tasks So He Can Avoid Them.

That's about as unmanly as you can get. How much macho does it take to hand your own baby to your wife so she can change the dirty diapers?

I got to thinking about this the other day when I came across another of these pieces. How, I wondered, did we create a society in which a father writes about parenting his own child as if it were an unusual event, as if it were not the norm?

This piece appeared in one of the local Yuppie-oriented weeklies that fill their news columns with mournful tales about how difficult it is to find a mate attractive enough (female) or rich enough (male) to adorn the front passenger seat of a BMW.

Looks and money are the logical values of my generation, the first to come of age since our parents and grandparents decided that commercial television would become our national religion, an electronic shrine in every living room preaching consumerism and the dogma

that appearances are what count.

Now many of Earth's most dedicated disciples of things and looks want to replicate themselves and they expect that their children will be beautiful too.

A decade ago a young woman considering marriage upon graduating from Michigan State University asked my advice on whether her boyfriend would make a good father, especially since she wanted a large family. I proposed a little test.

I suggested she invite her beau to a family gathering to observe how he acted under the pressure of being the lone outsider in a house full of potential in-laws.

Once he seemed comfortable I told her to choose from among her infant nieces and nephews one that had just nursed without burping or who lacked diapers.

"Hand him the baby and be patient," I told her. "You'll learn a lot about his character."

Later she told me what happened.

When his plaid shirt got wet, he didn't just get flustered, he got furious and blew up. She didn't marry him.

My three sons know how to change diapers, just as three of my daughters know how to play baseball and the fourth will when she's old enough.

The other day I took care of my kids all day. We had a great time. We usually do. That shouldn't be news.□

an electronic shrine in every living room
preaching consumerism and the dogma that ap-
pearances are what count.

“Hey Son, I Love You Too”

by D.L. Stewart

If I wanted to, I could come up with a dozen excuses, I was tired after a long day. Caught off guard. Or maybe I was hungry. The simple truth is, when I walked into the living room and my 12-year-old son looked up and said, “I love you,” I didn’t know what to say.

For several long seconds all I could do was stand and stare down at him, waiting for the other shoe to drop. He must need help with his homework; that was my first thought. Or he’s going to hit me up for an advance on his allowance. Or he’s assassinated his brother - I knew it would happen someday - and he’s preparing me gently for the news.

Finally I said, “What do you *want*?”

He laughed, and started to run from the room. But I called him back. “Hey, what was that all about?” I demanded.

“Nothing,” he said, grinning. “My health teacher said we should tell our parents that we loved them and see what they said. It’s sort of an experiment.”

The next day I called his teacher to find out more about this experiment. And, to be truthful, to find out how other parents had reacted.

“Basically, most of the fathers had the same reaction you did,” my son’s teacher said. “When I first suggested we try this, I asked the kids what they thought their parents would say. They all laughed. A couple of them figured their folks would have heart attacks.”

Some parents, I suspect, resented what the teacher had done. After all, a health teacher’s job is to teach children how to eat balanced diets and brush their teeth properly. What does saying “I love you” have to do with that? It is, after all, a personal thing between parents and their children. Nobody else’s business.

“The point is,” the teacher explained, “feeling loved is an important part of health. It’s something all human beings require. What I’m trying to tell the kids is that it’s too bad we don’t *all* express those feel-

ings. Not just parents to children and not just boys to girls. A boy should be able to tell his buddy that he loves him.”

The teacher, a middle-aged man, understands how difficult it is for some of us to say the things it would be good for us to say. His father never said those things to him, he admits. And he never said them to his father - not even when his father was dying.

There are a lot of us like that. Men and women who were raised by parents who loved us but never said so. It is a common reason for the way many of us behave.

But as an excuse it is starting to wear thin. Our generation has devoted a great deal of attention to getting in touch with our feelings. To verbalizing our emotions. We know, or should know, that our children - sons as well as daughters - need more from us than food on the table and clothes in the closet. We know, or should know, that a father’s kiss will fit as comfortably on the cheek of a son as on that of a daughter.

It’s no longer enough for us to say that our fathers were Archie Bunkers who raised us to be “that way.” We have done too many other things that our fathers never did. Our fathers didn’t stand in the delivery room, vacuum floors, or cook desserts.

If we can adapt to all of these changes, surely we should know what to do when a 12-year-old son looks up and says, “I love you.” I didn’t, not at first. It’s not always easy to make the leap from John Wayne to Alan Alda. But when my son came to me that evening for his bedtime kiss - a kiss that seems to be getting briefer every night - I held on to him for an extra second. And just before he pulled away I said in my deepest, most manly voice, “Hey, I love you too.”

I don’t know if saying that made either of us healthier, but it did feel pretty good. Maybe next time one of my kids says, “I love you,” it won’t take me a whole day to think of the right answer. □

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PARENTS SENSIBLES

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LA FORMATION DES PARENTS

Après avoir passé vingt ans à observer et à travailler avec les enfants dans les écoles élémentaires, je suis convaincu de l'importance immense, pour l'enfant, des premières années de sa vie. J'ai constaté que les professeurs et la salle de classe jouent leurs rôles dans la formation d'un enfant, mais, en fin de compte, l'ensemble de leurs efforts et le niveau de leur succès dépendent presque toujours de la formation de l'enfant dans son environnement primaire chez lui, avec ses premiers enseignants - ses parents. Les bons professeurs qui observent d'un oeil juste discernent les grandes différences dans le développement et le degré de préparation qui existent parmi les élèves au moment de leur entrée dans le système formel d'éducation.

Presque tout le monde admet que c'est difficile d'être une mère ou un père et que les parents doivent faire face à un grand défi pour mener leurs responsabilités à bon terme. Et nous croyons qu'on ne prend pas un grand risque en disant que les "nouveaux" parents manquent de la confiance durant les premières années d'élever leur premier enfant. La grande plupart des parents commencent leurs rôles d'être parents avec une connaissance très limitée du développement des enfants, et quand il s'agit des moyens critiques d'améliorer la qualité des premières années de leur enfant, ils ne sont pas vraiment bien informés, ils ne savent pas ce qu'ils font (ou négligent de faire) avec et pour l'enfant, aura, sans doute, une influence sur les progrès de leur enfant, cinq ans plus tard, quand il sera élève dans un système formel d'éducation.

Le titre La Formation des parents signifie un champ de connaissance qui est unique et important mais qui est, en effet absent des programmes d'études qui existent à présent. Et c'est bien la formation dont nous avons besoin durant de la première moitié de nos vies.

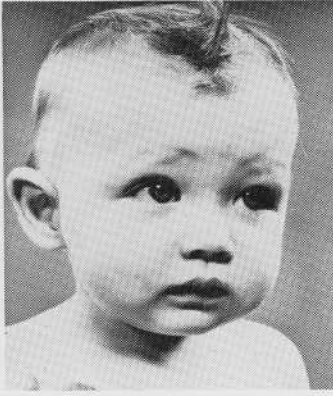
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Recognizing that the capacity to give and receive trust, affection and empathy is fundamental to being human.

Knowing that all of us suffer the consequences when children are raised in a way that makes them affectionless and violent, and;

Realizing that for the first time in History we have definite knowledge that these qualities are determined by the way a child is cared for in the very early years.

CREDO



WE BELIEVE THAT:

- The necessity that every new human being develop the capacity for trust, affection and empathy dictates that potential parents re-order their priorities with this in mind.
- Most parents are willing and able to provide their children with the necessary loving empathic care, given support from others, appropriate understanding of the task and the conviction of its absolute importance.
- It is unutterably cruel to permanently maim a human being by failing to provide this quality of care during the first three years of life.

THERE IS AN URGENCY THEREFORE TO:

- Re-evaluate all our institutions, traditions and beliefs from this perspective.
- Oppose and weaken all forces which undermine the desire or ability of parents to successfully carry out a task which ultimately affects us all.
- Support and strengthen all aspects of family and community life which assist parents to meet their obligation to each new member of the human race.