

Die Kinderversorger



BILL THOMPSON

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Journal of the
National Association of
Child Care Workers

International Network Affiliate

CWLA

Child Welfare League of America

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Die Nasionale Vereniging van Kinderversorgers is 'n onafhanklike, nie-rassige organisasie wat professionele opleiding en infrastruktuur verskaf om versorging en behandeling standaarde vir kinders in residensiële omgewings te verbeter.

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Monthly sustenance

An American colleague wrote once to say how much he enjoyed opening up the latest *Child Care Worker*, his "regular supply of child care sustenance". It was an affirming message for all of us on the Editorial Board whose job it is, month by month, to pack this child care workers' "tuck box". There is always a challenging range of people to consider. Our subscription list includes child care organisations of every sort – with their management committee members, principals, child care staff and other professionals; family welfare agencies, boarding schools, university departments, libraries, government departments and many more.

This issue

This month we begin with something for principals and managers, those whose responsibility it is to lead teams and plan for the future of organisations. Recent conference visitor, Norman Powell, interviews a colleague, Jack Kirkland, whose opinions are particularly relevant and pertinent for us in South Africa today. Cape Town Child Welfare Society follows with the third in its present series on research, taking us this month into the realm of family work – about which many feel that child care workers should learn more.

Following on Sharon Bacher's short story *Pauly* in April, this month we have a racy piece from American Mark Krueger whom we all know as an academic – but whom we now meet as a writer of fiction who very obviously worked in on-line child care himself.

Non-violence

There are three items this month on non-violent management of children with the aim of making the children themselves non-violent: An article from Moira Edmunds at UCT's Centre for Intergroup Studies where groups and workshops on conflict resolution are being offered currently; a report from EPOCH, a new British organisation campaigning against corporal punishment; and a review of Faber and Mazlish's excellent book on *talking and listening* based on their involvement with the famed Haim Ginott. It is peculiar, almost bizarre, that this theme should be receiving the volume of attention it does at this time, almost as if it were a new idea. Surely the fact that we all must learn to negotiate our positions verbally, without temper tantrums or menace, is part of what we used to call good, old-fashioned socialisation? Or, more simply, growing up? Otherwise, what have we been doing with children all

through this "century of the child"?

Information

Finally, there is an inside look into some of the matters discussed by the staff of the NACCW at their two-day meeting in May. There is a strong opinion that far more of the discussion that takes place within the Association should be actively circulated amongst members. The 'rogues' gallery' on page 15 is just to reassure you all that you are in capable hands!

Welcome back

Apart from the fact that it will be a delight for all who are present at the further workshop to be given by Masud Hoghugh in August, it is very important to child care in this country that he has been asked (and agreed) to visit a second time.

It was the opinion of the leadership of the Association and of this journal at the time, that on his first visit Dr Hoghugh had presented to us in South Africa, for the first time, a workable practice model which could be applied across a variety of philosophical settings. Since that time, largely due to the initiative of Lesley du Toit, a sound attempt has been made to implement Hoghugh's Problem Profile Approach, first through a pilot study in Natal and the Border, then through the publication and circulation of the two books *Assessing Problem Children* and *Treating Problem Children*, and then through the current training programme being offered at four centres.

The NACCW has taken Masud Hoghugh very seriously. We believe he offers the right challenge to us to be aware of our responsibility to *move children through our scarce facilities*, both to their own benefit, and to free up space for the children who come after. He offers also the right challenge to us to *be systematic in running our institutions and in planning each child's programme* so that our resources are used intelligently and resourcefully. And with the challenges he offers us a method.

The Problem Profile Approach is no easy way out. In fact all who have adopted it or started to learn about it have felt vastly extended. But they have also known that their practice is on a securer course. Places on the coming National Workshop are strictly limited to 200, and likely to be very much over-subscribed.

If you are in a senior position in your organisation, it will be well worth your speedy response to reserve your place now.

Norman Powell interviews **Jack Kirkland**, an expert in the field of child and youth care practice. Jack received his MSW from Syracuse University, and has had a long history of outstanding experience and accomplishments in the field as a child care worker, a supervisor, administrator (director), trainer, author, and professor. Currently he serves as an associate professor at the School of Social Work at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. He is a member of the Editorial Board of the *Child and Youth Care Quarterly*, a former training co-ordinator for the Peace Corps, and the author of numerous articles and papers. He specialises in the social, economic, and cultural issues that confront minorities in North America and in third world countries.

The Task of the Child Care Administrator

Norman Powell: Why are you involved in work with children and youth?

Jack Kirkland: I believe that our young people are barometers of what we can expect society will become; they are reflections of what parenting is today.

Moreover, young people portend what kind of parents they will be tomorrow. Additionally, not only do young people keep you informed in these dimensions, but they keep you vibrant. They make you acknowledge that change and progress is the tempo of life and by catching the vibrations of youth, you are set to the rhythm of expectancy. They make you see that the cadence of life is fluid and spontaneous and not constricted.

Thus, the uniqueness of any individual can be appreciated even when it may strain one's own tolerance and acceptance over such a wide range of variance. What could be more exciting than to be in a time machine with youth who let you see the present, the past, and the future, who give you knowledge, information, and wisdom to make an impact today and tomorrow?

Interestingly, I had not thought about social work as a profession. I was pursuing political science as a vocation.

I had thought about foreign service, working in one of the U.S. embassies. But, having completed my major sooner than anticipated, I took a course in juvenile delinquency and subsequently took a part-time job at Huntington Family Centers, Inc. Settlement House in upstate New York. I was fascinated by two women, Laura Kholes and Lucille Pritchard, who worked with groups. I saw the magic of their interactive styles and was convinced that this was the challenging career I was seeking. As I worked

with youth who were growing up in the ghetto, as I had, against great odds, I realized that this was where I could make my professional contribution. I acknowledged that this was how I could pay back all those people who had helped me. One thing that really stood out in my memory with the youth I served was that by having indulged in similar activities as they had, I could often anticipate what they were thinking and planning. The group often called me "fortune teller". Youth of all generations often forget that adults who work with them were once youngsters themselves.

Powell: Is there any particular youth in your experience who stands out as having had a special impact on you? Could you explain some of the dynamics of this relationship?

J.K.: As I reflect over a long career, obviously I can recall a number of young people who have left an imprint, an impression, or even some track marks on me. But I guess the one individual who stands out most vividly in my mind was a young 12-year-old boy who was very small for his years. Naturally, he overcompensated for what he lacked in stature, holding his own with boys much larger than he. I observed him reaching beyond his capacity in many competitive endeavours, exhausting himself, yet never complaining about anyone having a favourable advantage. He took his place stoically and took his licks repeatedly in the rougher sports. Although he surpassed most of the youngsters academically, the group did not accept this as any symbol of merit. The test that established the promising flash of manhood was running, hiking, caving, wrestling, soccer, the

ruggedness of spirit, and prowess. Significantly, it was during the summer of 1963, as most of the boys in the group were turning 13, that I took all 10 of them to the agency camp where I served as director. The camp was situated on the edge of a very large lake. Rowing across served as a badge of pride and achievement. One morning this young man said, "I can swim that lake." A barrage of chuckles ensued. The remark had been lifted to a boast to be lived up to by the time I arrived at breakfast, which catered to an additional number of 30 youth, plus a mother's group, as this was a family camp. I felt sorry for the youngster as I imagined that this day would be one that would agonise him for some time to follow. I knew that he could not swallow his words and that he was not the type to "eat crow". It seemed that the entire camp was not going to let him back out of his boast. The campers had outlined how he could be set to the challenge so that I could find no way out for him, and so that he could not wallow his way out of their treat, it was suggested that I could boat alongside him like they do when someone is trying to cross the English Channel.

I could provide water if necessary and would be there with a life preserver and another aide to pull him out when he cried "uncle". That morning, during the general swim period, the whole camp turned out on the waterfront to witness the folly of this tyke and to have a good laugh the remaining four days of camp at his expense. They were well prepared for his untriumphant return from across the lake with me in the boat and him with tail tucked between his legs. The other boys set the record straight by concluding that no one could do what was being projected, which meant of course, their manhood was intact as none of them would dare try such a foolhardy thing. Later, emphatically, one or two of them felt compassionate at the very end and agreed to let him off the hook. I delightfully made the point that the youth had gone as far as necessary, and that the effort was not essential, but this was to no avail. The suspense built up while we waited and the lad geared himself to begin. And, while the crowd held its breath in ambivalence as to whether he would dive in or turn tail, without a moment of hesitation, the young man hit the water to a thundering squeal of laughter and jeers, and he stroked out a smooth cadence nonchalantly. What could I do except go along for the ride, for his safety. He swam, to my surprise, beyond the endurance of all who were watching. Suddenly, it looked like he had a ghost of a chance, and shocking to me and the others, it looked like he had an excellent

chance and it appeared that he might make it. I looked down upon him and I was aware that he was determined. In checking him out as best as I could, regarding his physical and spiritual reserve, I was sure that he would. At this point, about three quarters across the lake, we all knew that he had the best chance possible. The boos turned to cries of support, enthusiastic calls of "hang in there, you can do it". I asked him if he could hear what was being said but got no reply, only the forward stare of grim determination. Well, he made it. Not just for that moment. He is still making it in life. Just this year, some 25 years after my leaving the settlement house, I am told that he owns his corporation and has made a very generous contribution to the agency. In his charitable gift, he did not cite this experience as being significant in his life, but rather the relationship, friendship, and support offered him by the staff.

This experience, and many like it, are what made me best understand that you cannot terminate a relationship. It may lie unconnected, dormant, or appear lonely with intermittent flashes of recall, but it can easily be resurrected if it ever existed. The two of us are etched in each other's lives, and are probably locked into each other's memory forever.

Powell: What is your philosophy of administration? What makes the ideal administrator?

J.K.: It is strange to consider a philosophy of administration as though it were an appendage or something outside of yourself. Administration is something you just do; you do not think about it. It flows like the breath from your lungs. And, it must be equally as consistent even-keeled, and as predictable. It must carry as its hallmark the delivery of quality services to youth. Anyone or anything that impinges or impedes this delivery must be critically evaluated and the obstacle must be removed. Adjustments or corrections can be made in environmental situations. Personal encumbrances must be addressed in staff meetings or in private individual sessions. The ideal administrator is one who is kind and friendly, one who has inner discipline and demonstrates by example, or models his or her expectations by meeting obligations and the acceptable norm for standards of performance.

An administrator must be both a quiet and vocal leader and must know when to be which. He or she must be patient and encourage the development of leadership at all levels. This is done by allocating responsibilities and by giving autonomy to individuals and teams to accomplish problem solving within the context of ac-

ceptable norms and time constraints. Further, the administrator, when appropriately called upon to remove obstacles, must be willing and able to do so to achieve smooth task performance. Moreover, the administrator must be diversified, knowledgeable, and a resource reservoir. This does not mean that he or she must have detailed knowledge about how to run every particular division or department. The administrator must be able to communicate

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with the board, media, and immediate community as a whole. And he or she must be able to raise funds and interact with corporations and foundations for resources that permit the testing of unique applications of service. Such findings should be published and forwarded to community agencies as well as journals and pertinent child care magazines. The administrator must be able to see how political and economic trends or other moving events on a national level, will affect the agency some three to five years in the future. And he or she must know how these trends will affect communities and family dynamics and how they will have an impact upon various ethnic groups. Thus, the agency can educate the staff and plan effectively to meet individual needs. The administrator must have a clear vision of where the agency should go, what must be done, and how it can all be accomplished. And he or she must understand the degree of effectiveness of the agency programs through program evaluation and by conducting longitudinal studies. One's work effort cannot be measured by how tired one is at the end of the day. Evaluations must measure differences one has made in the lives of those served.

CYCA: In your view, what is the most difficult thing to deal with as an administrator?

J.K.: The administrator is one who makes all decisions on the basis of what is the best interest of the individual

without consideration of rank, title, time of tenure, time of acquaintance, previous contributions of staff, or other such factors one might be tempted to ponder in avoidance of this primary responsibility. The considerations may be tempered with providing more information or knowledge or recommending or providing the resources for outside counselling to assist a staff person over a temporary problem. But if it is to the ultimate good of the agency to terminate the staff person, even if he or she were instrumental in the beginning, painful stages of the agency by keeping excessive hours on watch and by holding the facility together with tears, spit, and bubble gum, the person must be terminated. No former debt, guilt, or attempted blackmail based on fear of irreplaceable staff can take precedence over the administrator's obligation to be the best advocate for youth.

The administrator must know the individual strengths of each staff member and how each pulls in harness on the team that is creating a therapeutic environment. He or she must be instrumental in enabling youth to retain their uniqueness while helping each young person mesh into a commonness of social exchange and interpersonal relations that enable them to communicate with and respect each other. The administrator must take a staff and forge it into a team. In a team concert, the ideal that all are equally responsible is central. Fault for individual failure or acclaim for individual success for all psychological growth and health for individuals in residence is totally assumed. All team members are equally concerned and responsible for each other's professional development.

Powell: What responsibility does an administrator have to respond to the special needs of children in the program who are culturally different?

J.K.: If minority youth are expected to become multicultural so that they can function effectively in a pluralistic society, one must expect the staff member who is enabling youth in such choreography to be equally as competent.

If I were to plan a trip to Mars, I would want to know about the atmosphere there, what I would have to do to survive, or what I would need to enhance my stay. We frequently talk about discharge of youth at the same time we do intake. This presumes we know what the young person requires for the transition, yet we often base these assumptions on hunches rather than facts. Minority youth in institutional settings come from low-income, homogeneous communities. Such

areas are devoid of great numbers of positive peer models and adult identity figures. During the eighteen or more months a youth is in a child care institute, the area from which he or she came may have changed drastically. Thus, knowledge about where the youth is returning must be constantly evaluated. Further, the administrator must realise that just because there are staff who are black, brown, red, or white in hue does not mean that the same is true in mentality. There are white staff who cannot relate to poor white youth as they do not understand this minority culture. Conversely, there are black staff members who will not be effective with black youth if they do not understand or respect the culture of such youth. Relationship is a laser, it can cut through anger, pathos, and ethnicity. Thus, whites who understand other cultures can be effective in serving minorities. Additionally, minority youth expect the institutional world in which they find themselves to be a replica of the world they just left behind, one in which minorities play no role in real decision making. These youth will expect to see no minority at the administrative level. And, if they do, they will expect them to be "lackies" or "toms" and much proof to the contrary is essential. Such youth may seek to take advantage of their own depreciation by "milking" the situation, by evoking the guilt of white staff. Minority youth may relate to the avowed myth of unpredictability of behaviour expected of them when angered, and endeavour, as a rule, to scare you into submission, or they may just relate to your ignorance about cultural difference and claim "this is the way our people do this particular thing", which is an excuse to be irresponsible.

It is important to maintain a different rather than a double standard on many things, to know where the lines cross and where they part. Otherwise minority youth will become Euro-cultured and will become foreigners to themselves and aliens in their own community. The institution might declare them psychologically healthy but they are handicapped for life and cannot re-enter the culture from which they departed. As one sands down the cultural edges of youth in the process of rehabilitation, this consideration must be paramount.

Powell: What should we be doing as administrators to prepare for the change in populations that will come?

J.K.: I said eight years ago that the economy was going to wage havoc on minority populations and that minority youth would be flooding child care institutions. The extended family has been decimated. The nuclear family can barely

survive now that higher paying jobs have been eliminated and that sweat or a strong back and a willing mind no longer are criteria for making a living. Minorities trapped economically in depressed, low-income areas could all but post signs, "abandon all hope, ye who enter here." Crime, drugs, teenage pregnancies, school drop-outs, and high unemployment, are not considered deviant situations.

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Culture is not held together by its fused resources. And, when such resources are grossly insufficient, as they are in those enclaves, we tend to talk about a people without a culture and without a class orientation. We call them the "underclass", and they come in all colours. The number of minorities is growing. In America, the projection for the year 2003 will be a 40 percent minority population. Even now, for the first time in history, the public schools in California reflect the Euro-culture as the minority group. For white America to retire comfortably, minority America must be at work, earning better than a minimum wage. Over this period of time, child care institutions will see the largest population influx of minority youth ever in their history. Those agencies that have been exclusively white until today, and hope to stay that way, will have to decide to change over or close their doors, even if privately funded. Many of these same agencies are in a quandary already. They refuse to accept the children of today, and those in the pipeline, hoping that the supply of the mildly disturbed child is going to become abundant once again. Such agencies may as well put up signs now: "going out of business."

Powell: Do you have any recommendations about public policy strategies in responding to special needs children in care who come from diverse cultural backgrounds?

J.K.: If we know that the population of

minority youth will be the figures that I have indicated, we must be aware that the time is here for us to give essence rather than cosmetics to democracy. For a democracy to work, it must have a literate public, people who respect each other, or we will experience the turmoil within our boundaries as evidenced in the Middle East and other areas of the world.

A child care institution must represent a microcosm of what America can and must be and prepare youth for re-entry into a world that accepts people reciprocally and not emphatically. The curriculum in schools must represent this multi-ethnic reality and stop teaching superiority and inferiority covertly and overtly. Not only must the curriculum in schools represent this multi-ethnic responsibility and reliability syndrome, we must stop coming up with excuses for young people's behaviour and start holding them accountable. Yeah, I know what you are saying. How can we do this when adults have such deviant norms? Well, if our position is to do nothing, then let's go get our picnic baskets and sit next to ravines to watch youth, in their wild stampede, go over the cliffs in droves into the malaise of drugs, suicide, gang killings, and other attending and accompanying problems. What kind of society will this be when getting over becomes more important than getting up? Where will we be when what you have is more important than how you got it? We have to define what is good and bad, even if doing so makes us adults the ugly frogs. The cries of "censorship" will come loud and clear about this time. I may even be labelled "conservative", which is a new accusation for me. I never thought that I would stand so accused. One can see how labels often camouflage common sense and how they in no manner, define one's politics.

It is my conviction that we must, through leadership and example, enable youth to define weird behaviour as stupid. Once they define what is truly stupid, we can stamp out a manifestation as complex as teenage pregnancy. Why not? Isn't this how we have defined smoking? Remember, those who dabble in deviant behaviour are not necessarily deviant in nature, only in some experiences. Youth are looking for direction and adult leaders to define a future worth the challenge of self discipline.

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Needs of new mothers in Athlone

Mireille Landman (Clinical Psychologist) and Fozia Ryklief (Social Worker) report on a project of the Parent Centre, Cape Town Child Welfare Society

The arrival of a baby is always a time of crisis for any parent, in which irreversible and decisive changes take place. This transition to parenthood is not a simple nor an easy process. The physical changes and adjustments are only part of the picture. Major emotional adjustments also need to be made.

Ideally, the process of adjustment necessitates:

- The reassessment and renegotiation of personal relationships particularly between the mother and the father and the mother and her own mother.
- The mother's acceptance of her mothering role with the pressure and responsibilities that this brings.
- The acceptance by both the mother and the father of the irreversible losses that the birth of a baby represents. The loss of independence as well as the social, emotional and often financial losses.
- The development of realistic expectations of the child, knowledge of child developmental needs and child management techniques.
- The mother's ability to feel an acceptance of and form an attachment to the baby.
- The adjustment from being a couple to becoming a family.

As with all crises, this is a stage which produces disequilibrium, stress and confusion as well as the potential for tremendous growth. We have seen, too, that parents at this stage are highly receptive to learning. Thus it is an ideal time for the type of preventive intervention that can help to maximise adaptive change which can lead to the establishment of positive early child relationships.

Families at Risk

Most parents go into parenthood largely unaware of what it all means. They have unrealistic expectations of themselves and the baby, little knowledge of normal child development, and no idea of the demanding and relentless task that they are called to perform. Many have little or no social support at this stage. As a result first-time parents are often left feeling inadequate, confused and out of control. The family and child are put at further risk in cases where there are additional stresses. These include those relating to

single parenting, adolescent parenting, parenting a handicapped or premature baby, or where marital conflict is present. Different kinds of stresses are placed on the family by poverty and social disruption. Boger *et al.* (in Kurnetz, 1983) make the point that neglectful, inadequate and abusive behaviour can result from the inability of parents to cope with the day-to-day needs of their new infants.

The one resource that has been shown to be consistently effective in helping women to cope with the stresses that are part of the adjustment to parenthood following childbirth is social support (Price, 1988). Even with temperamentally difficult and irritable babies, mothers with high levels of social support were able to establish more secure attachments (Crockenber, 1981) and experienced less post partum depression during the first 3 months following child birth than mothers with low levels of support (Cutrona and Troutman, 1986). In black adolescent mothers, support from individuals related to a decrease in stress and an increase in self-esteem (Colletta & Lee, 1983).

Women with emotionally close relationships tended to feel less stressed and depressed (Longfellow, 1979, in Colletta and Lee 1983). When social networks provided crisis support, psychological impairment was lessened following childbirth and mothers showed fewer negative responses, greater nurturance, friendlier patterns of interaction, less demanding and restrictive interaction with their babies. (Andrews *et al.*, 1978, in Colletta & Lee, 1983).

Cognitive guidance in the form of advice, explanation and information was related to fewer psychotic symptoms and more positive mood in mothers (Hirsh, 1980).

Pilot study

The work at the Parent Centre over the past 5 years points to an overwhelming need of mothers of pre-school children for information, support and guidance in their parenting roles. In 1987 the need was felt to make this service more community-based. A pilot study was undertaken to investigate the needs of mothers of young babies with a view to providing an appropriate and effective community-

based service.

Objective 1: As a part of the feasibility study undertaken in the community of Athlone, professionals and community workers working with mothers and their pre-school children were interviewed. Organisations and institutions approached included the following: City and Health Clinics, maternity hospitals, the Child Welfare Society Athlone, ELRU (Early Learning Research Unit), Grassroots and the Foundation for Community Work. We examined the extent and purpose of their involvement with mothers, and the workers identified their areas of concern and what additional services they felt were needed in the community.

Objective 2: Based on the information gained, a questionnaire was drawn up for 45 mothers who were randomly drawn from 3 different health clinics. It focussed on getting information on:

- the circumstances of and adjustment to the birth
- difficulties experienced
- the nature and effectiveness of the help received
- the incidence of depressive symptoms
- the nature of the support mothers felt they needed and the times available to them.

Objective 3: Based on the above data, a service will be established which will attempt to meet the needs that have been expressed.

Objective 4: The effectiveness of such a service will be evaluated at a later stage.

Findings

The workers and professionals interviewed stressed the importance of giving parents the time and opportunity to talk providing them with support and informing them on their roles as parents, useful parenting skills and child development. All but one of the mothers interviewed expressed the need for more information regarding the adjustment to the role of parent and their children's developmental needs. Regarding the nature of the services they required, the most popular requests were for support groups, talks and lectures. This was despite the fact that 93.3% of the mothers lived with other adults towards whom they could, if necessary, turn for help. 90% of the difficulties reported by mothers were experienced within the first year. The most typical problems were sleeping difficulties, feeding problems, difficulty in leaving the baby, sickly and crying babies, time management and discipline problems.

Those that sought help identified specific advice and information, relief from the baby, and an opportunity to talk, as being the most useful forms of help.

We found, further, that 33% of the

mothers reported experiencing at least 6 depressive symptoms, 13.3% at least 8 symptoms, 6.6% at least 9 symptoms and one mother experienced 10 symptoms of depression. For 11 mothers, their depressed mood lasted more than 1 week, for 7 mothers, their depressed mood lasted more than 12 weeks, and for 4 mothers, their depressed mood lasted more than 16 weeks.

None of these mothers were recognised as suffering from depression and consequently none received any form of treatment. 12 of the 45 mothers admitted to having felt so overwhelmed at times, that they could have hit their infants. Three mothers admitted to actually hitting their babies while under severe stress.

Conclusion

Although this can only be considered a pilot study, very definite needs have consistently been identified by both the workers and the mothers themselves. Despite the fact that 93.3% of mothers are closely involved with other family members to whom they could turn for help, all except one felt that they needed more information and support. This substantiates the observations made by the clinic sisters, the staff at the Parent Centre and the current research and literature.

Depression

It is furthermore alarming that so many mothers struggle with differing degrees of depressive symptoms that go unrecognised and untreated. This is of particular concern knowing that the future emotional health of the child depends on the emotional availability of its mother in the first year of life.

We feel that by providing accurate information and support, we can minimise the stresses felt by many mothers following childbirth.

Furthermore, the early detection and appropriate referral of postnatally depressed mothers would minimise the suffering experienced not only by mother, but by all the family members, and particularly the newborn.

Action to date

Based on the above data it was decided to provide brief input on topics of interest to mothers who attend four of the health clinics in the Athlone area on a monthly basis. Following further discussions with the clinic staff it was decided that, in addition, a counsellor would be available on a monthly basis at two of the clinics, to see mothers who required individual assistance.

We see this as a first step in the establishment of a much broader support network for parents in the community.

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THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR WRITES *From Lesley du Toit*

It is with great excitement and some trepidation, that I embark on the long-awaited overseas trip. I will be travelling for much of the time with Lee Loynes, a colleague and friend from The Children's Foundation. The trip is a mixture of holiday, work and university, so should keep me on my toes. I look forward to bringing back lots of useful information and material, but also to sharing something of our South African child care concerns and practice with colleagues in the U.K. and U.S.A.

We start out with a few days in London and then a two-day visit to Aycliffe Centre where Dr Hoghugh and I will finalise the content of our National Workshop which he is to conduct in September. Of course there will be much discussion on the PPA and its implementation in South Africa, as well as an opportunity for me to observe the practice at Aycliffe.

Our stay in America begins with the World Congress on Child Care in New York. From there we're planning to visit child care colleagues and programmes in various centres. We hope (this

depends on finance and time) to include visits to Mike Baizerman in Minneapolis, Mark Krueger in Wisconsin, the Star Commonwealth Schools in Michigan, and a visit to Washington. After all this, I'm taking time out to visit friends in Indiana. Towards the end of July, Lee and I will meet up again at Disney World in Florida, where we're hoping to spend three days recapturing our childhood and just having fun! (This is the *real* reason for my visit to the USA.)

We round off our trip (like all good professionals) with a week of hard work at Nova University in Fort Lauderdale. This will be the Summer Institute for the Masters in Child and Youth Care Administration and we'll have the opportunity to meet (and commiserate with) fellow students from Canada, USA, China and South Africa. We fly back via Paris, where we spend two days, and then its back home on the 1st August.

Glynnis Lee will keep the home-fires burning in the National Office and Ros will continue to deal with the Natal Regional programme. Brian Gannon will lead the team from Cape Town as Acting National Director and queries of a professional nature can be directed through Glynnis or directly to Brian.

The heavy click of the door handle is followed by a loud rush of air. "Richard is trying to get out," one of the boys in the back seat shouts. Jeff looks in the rear view mirror. Richard, who is sitting directly behind the driver's seat, is indeed about to step onto Interstate Highway 94 west to Madison — one foot is a few inches from bouncing off the pavement like a handball. His eyes are glassy.

"Richard!" Jeff shouts. The boys scream as the wagon swerves right. Jeff turns sideways, grabs Richard's belt, and pulls him back in the car, squashing Tim in the process. As Jeff tries to drive and hold Richard at the same time, Tim helps by pulling on Richard's shirt and leaning into Fred, who holds on to Tim.

On the side of the road, dust and coughs fill the dry air, and everyone sits quietly. There are six: Jeff, the youth worker, and five emotionally disturbed boys. They have been through Richard's seizures before. This one, however, is frightening enough to keep them still, at least for a moment.

Jeff holds tight to the belt until Richard sinks back into the seat. "Everything is okay. You're in the car with friends," Jeff says.

Faces that look like peering gargoyles work their way through Richard's clouded vision. He smiles sheepishly. The faces begin to giggle and smirk. "Knock it off," Jeff says and instructs Tim to hold Richard's hand while he steps out to close the rear door. Then after Tony, who is sitting next to Jeff in the front, switches seats with Richard, Jeff pulls back on the interstate highway.

On the ride back to the Wiley Centre in Milwaukee, Jeff recalls the first time he saw Richard have a seizure. It was during a baseball game. Richard had wandered away from his position in right field and he ran after him. As he got closer he could tell something was wrong: Richard was weaving and his eyes were glassy. Jeff put both hands on his shoulders and said, "Richard, are you all right?" but Richard didn't respond. He just rolled his eyes like a blind man.

It was an eerie feeling at first; to try to communicate with someone who could stand right next to you and not even know you existed. But now Jeff knows what to do: how to keep talking to Richard and stay with him until the effects have subsided.

The Wiley Treatment Center is an old brown brick building that sits on a hill on the west side of Milwaukee. On the outside it still looks like an old orphanage, but the inside has been remodeled like a college dormitory with double rooms and TV lounges. All



Therapy

A Short Story by
MARK KRUEGER

together 36 boys live here and are cared for by 16 youth workers, most of whom are fresh out of college.

Later, Jeff tries to talk with Richard about the incident. They are standing in the long hallway, which is flanked by bedrooms. Richard's long brown arms are clasped together beneath his twelve-year-old, pot belly. His large round eyes are crystal clear. "What car ride?" Richard says and bites his lower lip with his crooked teeth.

Jeff puts his hand on Richard's shoulder, wonders what it is like to lose portions of one's life like that. "Let's play some

box hockey," he says.

"I like box hockey, do you?" Richard asks.

"Yes."

Richard is the main topic of discussion at the 2:00 pm staff meeting, which has been switched to the play therapy room because the main conference room is being used by members of the ladies auxiliary, who are labeling clothes. The toys are all neatly stacked away. The windowless door is closed and the drapes are pulled in front of the one-way observation mirror. Nadine, Arnold, and Jeff, the three youth workers assigned to work with Richard are present. So is Kathy, a new social worker. She starts the meeting, "I'm going to recommend that Richard see a psychiatrist."

"Not because of this morning I hope. That was my fault, I shouldn't have let him sit next to the door."

"I know, but he's been rather bizarre lately. There may be some explanation for his behaviour that we don't understand... I'll make an appointment with Dr. Reed, a new psychiatrist at the medical complex ... Trust me on this one, okay?"

The next day, Jeff, who is assigned to the therapy appointment, goes to get Richard from the game room. "Richard, we've got to get going to your appointment."

Richard is sitting alone and racing a single checker through an imaginary obstacle course. He cocks his head to the left, sort of like Charley Chaplin, and smiles. As he turns to face Jeff his large eyes dip, then glance into the hallway where Nadine is picking up wet towels. "Why don't you kiss her?"

"Richard, we don't have time to play games. You have to get ready for the appointment."

"Don't you like Nadine?"

"Of course I do... Look at you. You're a mess." Richard is wearing a dirty T-shirt, one brown and one blue sock.

"C'm'on, let's go to your room," Jeff prods.

As they walk to his room, Jeff pulls tiny lint balls from Richard's hair. "Where's your pick?" Jeff asks.

"Where's your pick," Richard says.

Jeff helps Richard change clothes and brush the yellow film, a byproduct of his medication, from his teeth. On the way down the stairs, Richard says, "What appointment?"

"The appointment with the new doctor. The one I told you about yesterday."

"Oh... Guess what I've got." Richard has both hands behind his back.

Jeff moves one step below Richard, tucks the end of Richard's belt into the first loop, and says, "A dime."

"Nope," Richard says and displays the

car keys he lifted from Jeff's pocket. As Jeff grabs the keys, Richard ducks away smiling.

Jeff makes sure that Richard is safely buckled in before he starts out. "Turn it down," he says as Richard plays with the radio dials.

Three or four blocks from Wiley, Jeff hands Richard a Kleenex. "Here, use this."

Richard has messed on his fingers and pants. He wipes his nose as if he's polishing a car and slides down in the seat until the belt buckle is on top of his stomach.

After he complies with Jeff's request to sit up, Richard says, "Who's paying?"

"Who's paying what?"

"For this appointment, silly."

"The government, I guess."

"My insurance money is all gone. I used too much. That's what they told me when I lost my glasses."

Jeff suddenly remembers that Richard is supposed to have his new glasses with him, but doesn't bring it up. "The agency will pay somehow," he says.

"Why don't you pay?" Richard asks.

"Because the agency will pay."

"Don't you like me?" Richard asks.

"Of course I do."

"My auntie used to give me money whenever I wanted it."

"Now Richard, you know that's not true."

"How do you know?"

"I've talked with your aunt several times" Although he doesn't expect it to go anywhere, Jeff continues his conversation with Richard. Sometimes it is good to pass phrases back and forth even if they aren't connected in any logical way.

They arrive early for the 2:30 pm appointment and sit in the folding chairs in the hall. This is Richard's third visit to a psychiatrist since he was removed a year ago from the loving but very unstructured home of his aunt and grandmother. Soon Dr. Reed, eager to start his new practice, steps in the hall and says, "Please come in."

With the exception of a Jackson Pollack print from a recent Metropolitan Museum showing, his office is relatively sterile. Richard sits in a wooden chair with his elbows on the arm rests, forcing his shoulders upwards. Jeff, who is sitting to Richard's left in a similar chair, laughs to himself about how serious the normally slouched Richard looks. Reed wheels his desk chair across from Richard, forming a semi-circle. He crosses his legs and clasps his hands below his knees. His yellow tie with a small dark blue circular pattern, white shirt, blue suit trousers, and tassel loafers give him the appearance of a confident stock broker. The initial smile he gives Richard, however, does not hide his concern about getting the in-

terview questions in order. "So Richard, tell me a little about yourself. What do you like to do. What are your favourite hobbies, that kind of stuff."

Richard, who now also has his legs crossed and hands clasped beneath the knee, says, "Tell me about yourself?"

Reed pauses, says, "I'm new here. Just like you ... We're not here to talk about me though. I'd like to try to help you. Tell me what it was like living with your aunt and grandmother?"

"Do you kiss your wife?"

"I'm not marr... Richard, are you trying to play a game with me?"

"No, do you want to play a game? Want to see some magic?"

Reed plants both feet in front of him, leans forward.

"Richard, the purpose of this meeting is to talk about you and your feelings."

"I feel fine. Did you ever feel a rabbit? I did."

"How do you feel when you feel fine?"

"I like to watch Dallas, but they won't let me." Richard raises his shoulders up to his ears and pinches his lower lip.

"Well you're probably supposed to be in school or some other activity at that time."

"Don't you like TV?"

"Richard, that's not the point of our visit. Please try to cooperate."

"How much do you get paid?"

Reed gets up and looks out the window.

"Let's try something else. Richard, would you walk a straight line from your chair over to that coat rack."

"I'm not drunk," Richard says.

"I know you're not. This is just a little activity that might help me understand why you have some of the spells you have."

"I can spell, can you?"

"Richard, please do as I ask?"

"Show me first."

A skeptical Reed gets in front of

Richard's chair and begins to walk towards the coat rack. "You're going crooked," Richard says as he sneaks to Reed's desk. Jeff makes a move to stop him, then sits back in his seat.

Richard picks up a silver ball point pen and clicks it in front of his eye several times.

"Do you like that pen," Reed says.

"Do you like it", Richard says and begins to draw a face on his thumbnail.

At a loss for words, Reed picks up his appointment book and pages through it.

"Who's coming in next?" Richard asks, "Your mother?"

Reed asks Richard for the pen, tells him to sit down, turns to Jeff and says, "I want to see him again in a week. I think it will take a little while before Richard and I can trust one another."

Reed tells Richard he can have the pen if he likes. Richard thanks him and says that next time he'd like to talk about Dallas. On the way out, Richard tells Jeff that he likes Dr. Reed because he's silly. With Richard safely buckled in his seat, Jeff smiles and asks Richard if he'd like to play box hockey when they get back.

Dr Mark Krueger's work is well known to students on NACCW courses in South Africa. He is attached to the Child and Youth Care Learning Centre at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee where programmes are funded in co-operation with the Wisconsin Association of Child Care Workers. Mark is a regular reader of *The Child Care Worker* ("I look forward to getting it each month", he writes) and has recently extended his writing on child care to include fiction. This story is reprinted with the permission of the Child Welfare League of America. The story first appeared in *Child Welfare*.

VISIT OF DR MASUD HOGHUGHI: SEPTEMBER 1990

Two-Day National Workshop

Day One: The Staff Team

Day Two: The Troubled Adolescent

11 to 12 September 1990 at T.B. Davis Lecture Theatre LG, Natal University
The Workshop is open only to members of the NACCW
Cost: R100.00 per delegate. No transport or accommodation arrangements are being made by the organisers.

Registration Forms are available from your Regional Office or Regional Chairperson, or write to NACCW, P.O. Box 28323, Malvern 4055.

Closing date for applications: 10th August
Only 200 registrations can be accepted.

NON-VIOLENCE NOW

Towards a rationale for non-violent action and peaceful co-existence within racially mixed children's homes, institutions and community organisations

Moira Edmunds

Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town

We are guilty of many errors and many faults,
but our worst crime is abandoning the children,
neglecting the fountain of life.
Many of the things we need can wait.
The child cannot.
Right now is the time his bones are being formed,
his blood is being made and his senses are being developed.
to him we cannot answer 'Tomorrow'.
His name is 'Today'.
— Gabriela Mistral

We frequently find ourselves in violent and potentially explosive situations as a result of the repressive society in which we live. Now, more than ever, non-violence training is needed for our children. Such training excludes the use of violence and uses instead a commitment to truth and reason as its power. Non-violence training encourages children to develop their own resourcefulness to respond positively to others in violent or potentially violent situations. Through training for non-violent action, we are able to re-train children out of the rigid, customary ways of looking at and dealing with problems which confront them. As a result, children are able to be more flexible in new situations and respond more positively to people of different beliefs and actions. This is becoming increasingly vital at a time when the possibility of racial integration in our society becomes a reality. Agreement on a particular theory is unnecessary for people to use cooperative training. Where members of a group have different theories, they can explore differences, discover similarities and often find a common basis for working together. Training in a wide range of skills (in a way that encourages initiative) is important in helping children, and indeed all of us, to develop an analysis, vision and strategy tailored to the exact circumstances in which we find ourselves. It also builds understanding of group interaction, decision making processes and of how to work in more effective and

satisfying ways and, finally, it teaches us to face and resolve conflicts and problems which arise as we live and work together with others of different socio-cultural and racial backgrounds.

Creating a vision

We are facing a unique time in history, deserving of unique responses. Changing economic, political, social and environmental realities necessitate that we make a fresh analysis and project bold new strategies. By creating a vision of the kind of society in which we want to live we are more effectively able to develop these strategies, and then, by practising these strategies, we can develop group analysis, vision and direction and move toward co-operative action for change. Analysis, vision and direction should never be absolute (for it is autocracy which we seek to escape) but should remain flexible and always open to questions and new information.

Structures and methodology contribute to results achieved. Consensus is a method of decision-making which can help create trust and co-operation among different groups. Basic psychology tells us that processes which make it possible for people to release feelings are needed to free people from learned responses and clear their minds for "present thinking". Processes which make it possible to resolve conflicts without "winning" or "losing" at another's expense. By providing situations which give children the opportunity to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, we help to move them towards a society based on mutual trust, understanding and acceptance.

Theory and practice

Work for social change is more effective when theory balances practice. Practice provides the opportunity to obtain and test knowledge and information become more meaningful. Uniting theory and practice is a time and energy consuming process, but long-term, positive change is more likely when thought and action are combined.

The following factors are important to

any theory of change and seem to be consistent with the theory of non-violence.

- The existence of conflict must be faced and differences of needs and opinions must be recognised. Hidden conflicts must surface before they can be resolved. If one party's needs are met by the use of force and the other's needs are not met, the conflict is not resolved, but only hidden, and will surface again as soon as the weaker party has enough power to force a change.

- The amount of power people in authority have is dependent on the amount of co-operation those subject to them give them. Violence or manipulation may be used to encourage co-operation, but power can be removed by nonco-operation.

- Social problems result from both personal and systemic causes. Both people and institutions need to evolve new values and behaviour to effect social change.

- People and institutions have the capacity to do much good and much harm. People whose basic physical and emotional needs are met want to live in harmony with other people. Institutions do not make moral choices, but do develop a life of their own and have a great influence on people's condition. They may shape choices as long as people are unaware of their influence.

- Truth is to be found on all sides of a conflict. It is necessary to respect those who differ from us as a source of truth and as part of the solution to any problem. If we are to practise non-violence and accept points of view different from our own, we need to adhere to the truth as we see it, but remain open to the possibility that our position and goals may change as we listen to others.

- A policy of non-injury and non-retaliation (physical or otherwise) tends to disarm opponents. We should not seek to destroy others but to reveal truth and solve problems.

- Acceptance of suffering and sacrifice may be necessary. Because others have often been required by force to suffer, willingness to share suffering will make mutually acceptable solutions more likely. In looking for solutions, it is often necessary to sacrifice some of our "wants" to the needs of others if we are to find lasting solutions.

- Openness must be maintained if internal democracy and peaceful coexistence are to be established.

- Injustice and prejudice in our society are deeply rooted and attempts to eradicate them will take time, energy and personal and group discipline.

- Social changes are more likely to persist if they are made voluntarily and not as a result of violence or manipulation.

There is a pressing and immediate need for grassroots groups to analyse, discuss and act to solve a whole range of serious crises facing children's homes and community organisations. People are needed who are aware of the kinds of social problems such institutions face and who are skilled enough to initiate and effect positive change. This requires that people have a practical and effective concept of change which empowers them to take charge of learning processes in their environment.

Training for non-violent social change:

- exposes children to macro-analysis, a society-at-large view of social issues and their interrelationships. By examining the relationship between seemingly isolated social problems, a deeper and more complete understanding of the changes needed and occurring in society is developed.

- helps children develop a vision of what they would like their society to be.

- provides children with skills to help them resolve personal and group conflicts as well as offering them skills in a whole variety of areas related to social change.

- offers children the opportunity to participate in and understand the dynamics of consensus and democracy.

- creates an experience of community and affirmation that is important for human growth.

- allows children and institutions to build a learning experience based upon their own interests rather than on a pre-determined scheme.

- offers a co-learner process which can dissolve the child/adult, leader/follower barriers.

- any strategies for institutional change operate from the top down. They rarely focus on how individuals and groups can be directly involved in any change. They focus on changes in consciousness through information gathering rather than on teaching skills which help children to act in making changes. Training for non-violent social change.

- links consciousness raising and action

- involves experiential learning on topics which directly concern children

- focusses on learning skills

- is developed from the perceived needs of the children/home/institution

- helps to create a lifestyle consistent with changes needed on institutional levels.

Adults and children

Children, and particularly those who have been abused or come from poorer backgrounds, often suffer indignities because of their age and vulnerability. Often their choices are severely limited in basic areas such as what they eat and

wear, with whom they associate, where they live and how much money they have to spend.

Patterns of submission and oppression are learned at a very young age. Although adults can often remember in detail unpleasant and unfair ways they were treated as children, they frequently use variations of this same hurtful behaviour in relating to young people.

There is evidence that in each generation, more people are aware of how the

day-to-day treatment of children by adults shapes behaviour. Thus they can encourage change for the better. Ending injustice to and oppression of children is a means to encourage them to take responsibility for decisions about the structure and events of their own time, to develop their natural abilities to handle difficult situations, to appreciate themselves and others, and to contribute directly to society as creators and producers.



Open for business

It was Thursday the 17th May. A movable calendar over the blackboard lied: "It is Tuesday the 15th May". I envied someone who could be only two days behind in keeping the gadgetry in her office up to date. There are parts of my office where I haven't even got the year right. I always relied on the excuse that I was a child care worker — I mean, everyone understands a busy schedule getting in the way of efficiency and tidiness. Yet this was also a child care worker's office.

The calendar may have been a little tardy, but nothing else in here lied. There were no token gestures (like those regulation teddy bears marshalled on beds). No relics or keepsakes which implied that this was somebody else's room or yesterday's room. No clever posters to say what the room was; the room was. Stiff with things, things to look at, things to do,

things to engross, things to enchant, things to challenge and bemuse.

The room was waiting.

There were living things, plants in pots, fish in bowls. A guitar, drum and tambourine coaxed from their corner shelf. A forever of pencils, paints, paper and crayons enticed from the table which was set for play. A zillion books posed on the shelves, some to entertain, some to help, some to answer doubts and fears. There was a doll-house with rooms ready populated and furnished; there were creative things to make what you will; there were clever things like weights and scales and science sets.

There were hoekies and draaitjies where one could hide; flat open floor for movement and games; a desk and chairs for serious stuff. It seemed organised down to the last square inch — yet was joyously chaotic. The message: This is a child care worker's room — come in. Open for business.

EPOCH (End Physical Punishment of Children) is a newly-formed organisation in the United Kingdom. Here it presents its views on physical punishment of children

Hitting people is wrong... and children are people too

Over five million European children are already protected from all physical punishment in their home as well as in institutions. Five European countries — Sweden (in 1979), Finland (in 1983), Denmark (in 1985), Norway (in 1987) and Austria (in 1989) have adopted laws which prohibit parents hitting their children. The purpose in each case has been educational, to change attitudes, not to punish parents. There are no criminal penalties attached to the bans. The reforms have not led to a rush of children taking their parents to court over physical punishment, and numbers of children taken into care in Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries are low and reducing.

'Children are entitled to care, security and a good upbringing. Children are to be treated with respect for their person and individuality and may not be subjected to corporal punishment or any other humiliating treatment.'

— Swedish Parenthood and Guardianship Code.

Law and opinion

In Sweden, school corporal punishment was outlawed in the fifties; in 1966 the legal provision confirming parents' right to use physical punishment was dropped, and in 1979 a new law was passed with little opposition, stating: 'A child may not be subjected to physical punishment or other injurious or humiliating treatment'. Opinion polls have shown a dramatic change in the attitudes of Swedish parents: between 1965 and 1981 the proportion believing that 'physical punishment is sometimes necessary' reduced from 53 per cent to 26 per cent, and those believing that children should be raised without physical punishment increased from 35 per cent to 70 per cent. In 1985 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe proposed, in a recommendation on family violence, that member states should 'review their legislation on the power to punishment, even if violation of such a prohibition does not necessarily entail a criminal penalty'. (Recommendation R[85]4)

The point of changing the law is to make sure everyone — including children — know that physical punishment is no longer acceptable.

Law and physical punishment in UK

Parents have long-established common law rights to hit their children — provided the punishment is 'moderate and reasonable' (there used to be similar rights to beat wives, servants and apprentices). Extreme forms of physical punishment can lead to prosecution, but the courts have been notoriously slow to protect children from even excessive punishment.

Section 1 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1933, which makes cruelty including assault, ill-treatment and neglect of children an offence, has a specific exemption allowing physical punishment. Section 1(7) states: 'Nothing in this section shall be construed as affecting the right of any parent, teacher or other person having lawful control or charge of a child or young person to administer punishment to him'.

In 1987 a Council of Europe meeting including UK representatives on 'Violence in the Family' recommended: 'Corporal punishment of children by their parents should be strongly discouraged. In some countries it is illegal, and efforts should be made to see whether it cannot be banned in other countries'.

Corporal punishment in the penal system and in the armed forces has long been abolished, and in August 1987 the UK became the last European country to end school corporal punishment (but pupils in independent schools whose fees are being paid by their parents still remain unprotected). Abolition in all child care institutions has also been promised.

In 1981 the Government-appointed Children's Committee recommended in a discussion document: 'The United Kingdom should embark upon a progressive programme, governed by a specific time-scale, to eliminate the use of corporal punishment on children and young people.'

How often are children hit

John and Elizabeth Newson's research at

Nottingham University's Child Development Research Unit has found that 62% of the random sample of 700 parents interviewed hit their one-year-old child; even more hit their four-year-old child and seven per cent of these four-year-olds are hit at least once a day. By the age of seven, at least 8% are being hit once a day and a further 33% not less than once a week. 22% of seven-year-olds receive corporal punishment with an implement, and 53% have been threatened with an implement: thus three-quarters of seven-year-olds are either hit or threatened with implements (91% of boys and 62% of girls). By the age of 11, 18% (22% of boys) are being hit once or more a week and 15% of boys are being punished with an implement.

'The majority of British parents we have interviewed seem to believe that physical punishment is an inevitable and probably necessary aspect of ordinary child upbringing', John and Elizabeth Newson. The Newsons' figures, based as they are on face-to-face interviews, must surely be underestimates. From their most recent interviews they indicate that 'there is no reason to suppose that the extent of parental punishment has decreased across the board'. A 1985 study found almost two-thirds of one-year-old babies being smacked.

A new voice

EPOCH is a new national organisation which aims to end physical punishment of children by parents and other carers. Now that hitting has been almost eliminated in schools and child care institutions, it is time to end it in the home as well.

EPOCH hopes to achieve its aim through public education, research and legal reforms.

First and foremost EPOCH wants to see changes in attitudes to children; to see children recognised as people — and recognition that it is as wrong to hurt a child as it is to hurt another adult. Far from having a right or even a duty to hit children, parents have a right to information about non-violent ways of bringing up their children, and a duty to discipline them with their heads and hearts rather than with their hands or implements. EPOCH will work with and for parents and other organisations to promote non-violent, positive methods of bringing up children.

The law protects the rest of us from violence at the hands of anyone else. Why shouldn't it protect children too?

Positive effects

EPOCH believes that ending physical punishment will have many positive ef-

facts:

- children can only achieve their full potential when they are recognised as individual people with rights of their own;
- the current acceptance of physical punishment helps to cause more serious child abuse;
- even 'light' physical punishment can unintentionally cause significant injuries to small children;
- children who are hit by their parents learn that violent solutions are acceptable and are more likely in turn to hit their own children. Violence breeds violence.

SOME QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

What do you mean by 'physical punishment'?

We mean any action which is meant to cause pain to a child, such as hitting, slapping, smacking, with a hand or with a slipper, strap, stick or other implement. We also include violent shaking and any kind of forcible imprisonment, such as being locked in a room or cupboard or tied in a cot.

What's so wrong with hitting children?

Better to ask 'what's right about it?' Everybody agrees it is morally wrong to settle arguments between adult people with blows. But children are people too. Why should they of all people lack equal protection from all form of violence — particularly when they are among the most vulnerable physically?

Physical punishments are not only morally wrong, they don't work either. A whack on the bottom may stop children for that moment. But it won't stop them doing the same thing later on because being hit does not teach them anything useful. It doesn't teach them how you want them to behave, and it doesn't teach them to try to please you. Research evidence shows that children who have been slapped or hit are usually so overwhelmed with anger and hurt feelings that they cannot remember what they were punished for.

But surely you need to use physical force to keep children safe?

There is all the difference in the world between using your strength to snatch a child away from a hot stove or prevent them running into a busy road, and intentionally causing pain as punishment.

Surely a tap on the legs doesn't count?

Yes it does. Lots of parents 'tap' babies, but many, many more smack four year-olds. That's because hitting doesn't work except to relieve parents' feelings. If you let yourself smack your toddler for fiddling with the TV, what can you do when

the toddler fiddles again except smack again — harder? And what can you do with the five year-old who refuses to stay in his room to 'cool off' except lock the door....?

But is the ordinary kind of smacking that goes on in loving homes worth all this fuss?

Yes it is — because violence really does breed violence and violence is a major problem in today's society. We are not saying that hitting at home is the only cause of that violence, but we are saying that ending hitting at home would help to reduce it. Children model a lot of their behaviour on their parents. Parents who use physical punishment are directly teaching their children that physical force is an acceptable way to get what you want. If we want less violent adults we have to bring them up believing that physical force is not acceptable.

But aren't ordinary physical punishment and child abuse two quite different things?

When serious cases of child abuse are investigated, they are frequently shown to have started with occasional smacks given in the name of discipline which gradually escalated into tragedies. Current acceptance of physical punishment causes a dangerous confusion. Most of those responsible for seriously injuring children are found to have been physically punished in their childhood. And even light blows can accidentally cause serious injury to small children — for example, 'clips round the ear' have burst ear drums and permanently damaged hearing, and smacks catching a child off balance have led to falls and head injuries.

But children need discipline; what should replace physical punishment?

EPOCH certainly doesn't argue against discipline, or against consistent limits for children. The best responses to bad behaviour are always directly linked to parents' disapproval, irritation or anger, the removal of the toy or playmate the child is hurting, or the ending of the game or meal which is being ruined for everyone else. Rewards work better than punishments for children, just as they do for adults. There are already many parents who don't hit their children in any circumstances, but certainly believe in discipline and limits. You don't spoil a child by not hitting them.

How can you expect parents under stress, suffering from family poverty, unemployment and lack of proper child care support not to hit their children?

EPOCH agrees that our society needs to do much much more for those who bear the burden of child-rearing and it will

support those campaigning for reforms. But there are no clear links between such social factors and the frequency or severity of hitting children. The fact is that while there continues to be confusion over what is acceptable, hitting children is likely of itself to increase stress and violence within any family. In any case, why should children and only children wait for equal protection from violence until we've sorted out these other major social ills?

If you stop parents hitting their children, they'll resort to even worse forms of punishment — and what about emotional abuse anyway?

Obviously other kinds of punishment can be harmful too. We concentrate on physical punishment because its harmful effects have been clearly demonstrated, because it is very frequently used, it is clearly defined and because children are the only people in our society who are not protected from it. Changing attitudes to physical punishment, and hence to children, will discourage other harmful forms of punishment.

Won't every parent sometimes lose his or her temper and hit their child?

While hitting children remains as acceptable as it is today, the answer is probably 'yes'. But do all adults sometimes lose their temper and hit their partner? No, because hitting other adults (or even pets) is beyond the pale. If hitting children was equally unacceptable, most parents would never do it and the few who sometimes did would regret it and try not to. That is all it would take to shift social attitudes towards a new respect for children as people.

Lighthouse Children's Home

A new street children's project in Strandfontein needs a

Child Care Worker

A single man to live in. Must be a committed Christian. Contact Hilary Joseph on 021-33-3060

Affiliated to
Child Welfare Society

NACCW staff gathered in Durban last month for a two-day Staff Meeting held at the National Office. A report on some of the issues discussed at ...

Staff Meeting

Previously staff meetings had meant three of us grabbing a few moments together during national functions like workshops and conferences. As the staff of the NACCW increases, one of the new National Director's tasks is *team building*. The 1989 Conference highlighted the need for better communication within the Association as a whole. The fact that important staff team functions are spread over huge geographical distances stresses better contact all round. Our staff meeting last month filled two days, but here is a report back on some of the discussion.

Feedback From Regional Workshops

Each region had been asked during the previous month to workshop its aims, objectives and projects for the short and medium term. The following reports were given:

Transvaal: Aims mainly centered on training.

- Closing the gap between the knowledge of child care workers and management
 - Offer NACCW courses
 - Attempt to initiate the Technikon course
 - Develop a full-time centre for the training of child care workers.
 - Develop short courses (Training for trainers, social skills)
 - Development of the social workers' orientation group into a full course
- A number of strategies were then proposed towards achievement of these aims. In discussion, there was concern at the lack of aims related to the Association or membership in the Transvaal. The concentration seemed to be on professional tasks which placed too much of a burden on the very limited number of staff members. The Transvaal Region also drew attention to needs in their area:
- Facing the rapid change toward non-racialism in children's homes
 - Setting standards for children's homes
 - Procedures for staff screening and selection

Natal: The aims of this Region included:

- To develop services to Zulu homes in the area
- To reach out to organisations not participating in the NACCW with a view to increasing membership and establishing

reasons for non-participation

- To promote teamwork as a method of the functioning
- To encourage and support the activities of the Institute of Child Care
- To upgrade the level of participation of domestic workers within the child care team
- To explore the viewpoint of black child care workers and encourage their active participation in the child care field
- To research and evaluate NACCW's position and support and plan a relevant service to the region
- To promote International Literacy Year
- To ensure that all NACCW interactions are conducted with respect to all members of the profession and to democratic services.

In discussion, the staff felt that perhaps the region was experiencing a "grief" reaction at losing their Regional Director. The goals seemed to be related more to assessment and restructuring for the region.

Western Cape: This region listed aims and objectives for the various professional groups in the region and these were summarised as the following:

- To support administrators and provide management training opportunities
- To support, teach and advocate for child care workers
- To support social workers and provide training in this area
- To provide training courses on a regional level
- To disseminate information and network services for street children
- To organise regional meetings in order to bring together members of the NACCW for fellowship and education. Projects and tasks were submitted in writing. These basically centred around the professional group meetings and training courses.

Regional Meetings

The Director asked that regional meetings be given ongoing attention in each region as these were representative of the NACCW as a body. They were also the forum at which issues could be raised and dealt with on the spot or within regions, or channelled to the National Ex-

ecutive. Staff agreed on their significance and agreed to ensure that regional meetings are held regularly.

Street Children

Staff reported confusion following on recent developments regarding NACCW's involvement in street children's projects. At this stage the NACCW had been asked by the street children movement (a) to be an umbrella body for their child care workers, and (b) to assist with the mediation of information on street children. A high percentage of students on NACCW courses were from street children's organisations. At this stage the NACCW had not been asked by anyone to stop this involvement. It was noted that the National Council for Child and Family Welfare had a legitimate 'territorial' interest in this area, since so much support and supervision of street children's projects was given by local child welfare societies. At the same time there were projects unattached to child welfare societies. The more recent involvement of community organisations in street children was referred to. This group had initially been unwilling to acknowledge even the existing projects, but more recently was consulting with them. It was agreed that the National Director should discuss the issue with the Director of National Council and then follow this up with Jacqui Michael of The Children's Foundation.

Black Child Care Needs

The way in which state departments were approaching this need was discussed. Renewed interest was reported in the *Alternatives in Black Child Care* project, which had been worked out in 1984 to 1986 by the NACCW in co-operation with other agencies. It was agreed that copies of the original report should be circulated to all staff, and that this project would require further working groups to take it further.

Refugees and returning exiles.

In Natal the refugee camps resulting from the violence were a reality. In addition, there were varying estimates of the number of returning exiles (from 20 000 to 400 000) among whom would be children and adolescents. South African Council of Churches groups had contacted NACCW at regional levels asking for involvement and input.

The NACCW should offer assistance in mediating child development principles in practical terms which could be superimposed on whatever provisions were being made. In this regard information should be collected on previously used management and/or resorption models, for example, in Israel. Also information

could be sought from UNICEF through FICE, and from the UN High Commission on Refugees work in Namibia, as well as input from the Save the Children Fund. The staff expressed their deep concern for this aspect of child care in South Africa, together with their feeling of being overwhelmed.

Contact With Members

Lesley du Toit concluded the meeting with a request that Regional Directors explore every possible method of maintaining personal contact with members of the Association. Various suggestions were made, including personal visits and 'at homes' at the Regional Offices. Lesley referred to the immediate task of team-building within the Association at this time when there were difficult pressures in several areas.

Closing dates ...

A number of important closing dates are on the horizon:

■ *The Diploma in Child Care Administration.* Prospective students must register before the 15th July to participate in this course. Further enquiries from Marcelle Biderman-Pam on 021-438-4006.

■ *Course in Supervision.* Students for this course offered in the Western Cape Region must enter before 20 July. Enquiries may also be directed to Marcelle Biderman-Pam on 021-438-4006.

■ *National Workshop on The Staff Team and The Troubled Adolescent.* (See box on page 9) The closing date: 10th August.

Child Care Worker

Resident child care worker preferably but not necessarily male, required for group home with five teenaged children. Experience essential. For further particulars telephone 021-45-3208 or 461-1800.

Oranjia



The Staff Line-up
 Top: National office staff. Lesley du Toit (National Director) and Moira McDonald (PRO), based in Durban. Marcelle Biderman-Pam (Professional Officer) and Brian Gannon (Journal and Publications) based in Cape Town.
 Left and below: Regional staff. Di Levine (Regional Director, Transvaal), Vivien Lewis (Regional Director, Western Cape) and Ros Halkett (Assistant Director, Natal)



How To Talk So Kids Will Listen & Listen So Kids Will Talk

Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish
Avon Books, New York, 1982

The authors first captured my attention with *Liberated Parents Liberated Children* (1974, Avon Books, New York) in which they shared their experiences over five years in the parent workshops of the late Dr. Haim Ginott. Inspired readers of this book wrote to the authors and appealed for a "how to" book — a book with "lessons", "practical exercises" and even "tear-out reminder pages". While pondering the idea they carried on with their busy lecturing and workshop programmes (which now are being used by over 15,000 people in and out of the USA). They used material from these workshops to produce this book which clearly and simply shows *how*.

Their new book gives adults the theory, the skills and a practical guide on how to implement what they have learned, at their own pace. The book contains countless examples of dialogues which enable parents to adapt this 'new language' to suit their own style. The authors chose the most commonly asked questions and include stories, experiences and new insights that parents in their groups shared in the groups they ran. Underlying their method of communication are some basic principles and values:

"We want to find a way to live with each other so that we can feel good about ourselves and help people we love feel good about themselves".

"We want to find a way to live without blame and recrimination".

"...to be more sensitive to one another's feelings".

"...to find a way to express our irritation or anger without doing damage".

"...to find a way to be respectful of our children's needs and to be just as respectful of our own needs".

"...to find a way that makes it possible for our children to be caring and responsible..".

The text is creative and alive. Examples

are given in narrative style and explicit practice techniques and communication skills are presented in various formats. Cartoons illustrate dialogues indicating do's and don'ts, making it even more engaging for the reader. You will definitely find yourself on every page!

The contents of the chapters include: Helping children deal with their feelings — in this chapter the 'language of empathy' is described as not part of our 'mother tongue'. Fluency in this language requires learning and practice.

Engaging co-operation — in this chapter readers are helped to create a climate of respect in their relationships in which the spirit of co-operation can grow.

Alternatives to punishment are dealt with in Chapter Three. Some of their suggestions include:

- State your expectations
- Show the child how to make amends
- Give a choice
- Take action
- Allow the child to experience the consequences of his misbehaviour.

Problem-solving approaches are described, illustrated and explained in an alive atmosphere.

Encouraging autonomy — how do we rear independent individuals who will one day be able to function without us — not as our clones but as unique individuals with their own tastes, styles and dreams?

The chapter on praise examines what parents can do to enhance a child's self esteem. Praise they say is a 'tricky business' and brings about unexpected

reactions. The writers constantly engage the reader in self examination exercises to explore one's own reactions and responses. The dangers of praise are explained, and the differences between 'descriptive praise' and 'evaluative praise.' Freeing children from playing roles — the penultimate chapter. "The way parents see their children can influence not only the way children see themselves but also the way they behave." How often do we cast children into roles, give them labels which eventually become moulds, or worse, shackles which restrict change and growth? The authors help parents who wish to liberate their children from playing at roles.

The final chapter continues with this theme. The authors quote one parent's expression of what is involved: "To change a role you've really got to be able to put it all together — feelings, autonomy, praise, alternatives to punishment — the works."

Faber and Mazlish state at every opportunity that life's dramas do not always have us thinking on our feet. We say and do things we regret. "The process of living and working with children requires heart, intelligence and stamina. If our children deserve a thousand chances, and then one more, let's give ourselves a thousand chances and then two more — we are, after all, only human".

If you are looking for a hands-on, rolled up sleeves book on communication skills and relationship skills, read this book — many times.

— M. B-P.

Instead of



Talk about your feelings



Instead of



Show respect

