

# *The* **child care worker**



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*Above: National Chairman Ashley Theron with newly-appointed National Director Lesley du Toit*

Tydskrif van die  
Nasionale Vereniging van  
Kinderversorgers

Internasionale Geaffilieerde

**CWLA**

Child Welfare League of America

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## National Association of Child Care Workers Nasionale Vereniging van Kinderversorgers

The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent, non-racial organisation which provides the professional training and infrastructure to improve standards of care and treatment for children in residential settings. Die Nasionale Vereniging van Kinderversorgers is 'n onafhanklike, nie-rassige organisasie wat professionele opleiding en infrastruktuur verskaf om versorging en behandeling standarde vir kinders in residensiële omgewings te verbeter.

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# NACCW/NVK

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## Children and the Future

The Matron of a Cape Town children's home regretted in conversation the other day that very few of us are doing anything at all to prepare our children for living in the post-apartheid society, the South Africa of the future. "We all seem to be carrying on as though things will be the same. We are not helping them at all to imagine, let alone deal with their own futures."

To be helpful to children in a time of rapid change, adults, too, need to get into position to see what is ahead, and to deal with their own feelings. Confided a colleague: "I am having to deal with my own anger; I have to learn all over again how to trust people". And another: "As changes become reality, for example in the school system, to my shame I find my own prejudices surfacing ..."

Children's home staff have a particularly difficult task in accompanying children across the historic watershed we are in now. Along with most others, the majority of our children have grown up in separate residential areas and separate schools, and simply do not *know* the others with whom they share their land. Black children and white children alike are having to learn new ways of relating to each other — a stage of development which most South African adults are themselves also only now going through! Frank exchange is needed. It will be important for all of us to be as fully informed as possible of the pitfalls and dangers, as well as of experiences and guidelines which may be helpful at this time. While the politicians are talking, schools will soon be working out their way of handling change, commerce and labour will be doing the same, local residential communities too. The child care 'industry' is invited to use the columns of this journal as a clearing house for ideas and information, opinion and exchange. A major feature of anxiety

is the experience of *not knowing*. By letting the light in on our common experience of national change, we will be helping each other to anticipate and deal with this task — and this will make us more useful to the children.

Mongezi Guma, writing in a recent ELRU Newsletter, says: "Those of us who form part of the context in which these children live have to find an educational road that weaves a path through the violence, beyond the pain of apartheid, i.e. an endeavour to develop an education which is for a normal society." As for the adults engaged in education, so for us engaged in child care.

On page 3 we set the discussion rolling. In an important short paper, Professor Foraker-Thompson, who is a Visiting Professor at the Centre for Intergroup Studies at UCT, reminds us that while the politicians and statesmen may make the macro decisions and changes, it is at the local level, in our homes and neighbourhoods, that people really learn to deal with each other and that change is really effected. Further, she suggests that many of the macro changes do no more than reflect the micro changes which individual people, families and communities, have already made. So she points not only to the power of improved 'people' skills, but also to the fact that at this time our feelings should not be of powerlessness. There is something we can all *do*.

## New Leadership

This journal welcomes a new National Director for the NACCW and applauds the selection of a person who has run the whole career gauntlet of child care, from child care worker, to school counsellor, social worker, programme director and latterly a Regional Director of this Association. It is good to have a new leader who we know can empathise with us at our specific level of practice, someone who has been there! We wish Lesley du Toit every success in her new appointment.

## Regional Director

NATAL REGION

The Association invites applications from suitably qualified people with extensive experience in residential child care for the above full-time post. The successful applicant, to be based in Durban, will be responsible for the promotion of the Aims and Objects of the NACCW in the Region.

Further information: NACCW, P.O. Box 28323, Malvern 4055 or Tel. 44-1106

**The National Association of Child Care Workers**

# More is "Caught" than Taught

Jane Foraker-Thompson and Moira Edmunds offer the first contribution in a series on Children in Tomorrow's South Africa

*Jane Foraker-Thompson, Ph.D. from Boise University Idaho, is Visiting Professor at the Centre for Intergroup Studies at the University of Cape Town and affiliated with the Quaker Peace Project; Moira Edmunds is on the staff of the Centre for Intergroup Studies, University of Cape Town.*

**W**hy are conflict resolution skills important? These skills are necessary for any so-called "civilized" society. They are fundamental to the democratic process. In South Africa, the issues of excessive, generalised levels of violence in all ethnic and socio-economic levels need to be addressed. The issue of racism and practices of discrimination need to be met head on and put to rest. Politicians, leaders of political movements, religious and other societal leaders at the national and regional level may deal with these issues on a theoretical basis, but these problems cannot be ordered to cease to exist, legislated away, banned or solved by executive decree. They can only be truly impacted from grassroots level up. There must be a change of heart within the people, a change of attitude and practice within individuals at local level and, above all, in how children are raised and trained. Only in that way can society be changed. And societies can change direction; they can improve. Human change is not always for the better. Change is not always positive, but it can be! With dedication and will, society can change for the better for everyone. It depends on the vision and the commitment of the people.

**I**t is you, child care workers, social workers, principals, community developers, parents and all who deal with children and youth on a daily and on-going basis, who will actually shape the direction of your nation's development in the next decade and in the decades to follow. Every trend must have a beginning. Now is the time to start. Build for the future. You cannot undo what has been done in the past but you can influence new directions. You have the future in your hands. Treat this opportunity as a sacred trust. How children are raised determines where the nation will go. Before you protest that this is too big an

assignment, stop and think about it. It is not a matter of *if* it will get done. Children grow up one way or another, for better or worse. So it is rather a matter of *how* they will grow up. What values will influence them? What vision will they have for their own lives, for their society? Will it be a vision of hope, individual and mutual responsibility; of having a legitimate place in society; of open-mindedness; a determination for peace, democracy and social justice? Or will it be a vision of despair, anger, alienation, bitterness, fear, racism, intimidation and oppression?

**S**ocieties can change. They can unlearn bad habits and relearn new ones. It is people such as those at whom this article is aimed that may be regarded as local leaders. They actually have more influence on the direction in which society develops than pronouncements by so-called national leaders. Such leaders actually often watch to see what the people want, or are doing, and then run to catch up and appear to be in front of them. This is even truer in a democracy where social and political trends actually start at grassroots level and percolate upwards, rather than from the top downwards (as in the authoritarian model). In short, the readers of this publication are actually in a very powerful position to be contributors to positive developments in the new South Africa.

**D**emocracy grows best in the soil of social justice, equal opportunity, human dignity and relative calm. A peaceful, non-violent method of conflict resolution is a necessary bottom rung of the ladder leading to democracy. First of all, democracy implies tolerance of different traditions, values and perceptions. This means that there must be room for discussion, critical thinking, friendly conflict resolution and a means of arriving at solutions that hold something positive and reasonable for all parties involved. There is no room in a democratic state for the enforcement of a given exclusive pattern or interpretation — that is authoritarianism. An open society allows for the exchange of ideas through a

process of open search for "truth", for practical solutions, for fair and reasonable compromises. It means that no single party will get everything they want at the cost of exclusion of others, but that all parties will gain some points that are important to them. These are called WIN/WIN solutions as opposed to the old dictatorial ways of win/lose solutions where winner takes all and loser loses all. That sort of "solution", as in war, may leave one party temporarily "victorious" but leaves the losing parties bitter and planning for revenge. There never is peace under these conditions. It is time in human history for people to realise this basic fact. This may require that the adults of this society (South Africa is not unique in this need) learn to exchange some of their old attitudes and practices for new ways. If not, how can they teach future generations to be good citizens in a democracy?

**I** have been given to understand from a wide variety of people who work with children and youth, including teachers and parents, that South African schools are particularly authoritarian and still practise corporal punishment. I suggest that one cannot teach children a peaceful, non-violent way of living unless one models it oneself. This is throwing out a fundamental challenge for change at a most basic level to the system. Again, I ask you to spend time thinking about cause and effect on a small and large, short- and long-term level. Don't say "yes" or "no" to yourselves right away. Think about it and then discuss it with others. Be open, not defensive. Educational research has shown that children learn less from what adults say to them and overwhelmingly by what is modelled to them.

**C**onflict resolution training teaches those who work with children to consciously and conscientiously practise positive conflict resolution in schools, homes and other groups which deal with children. They, in turn, teach the children to handle their own conflicts after teaching them the principles. It is geared to help people understand the importance of peaceful conflict resolution methods. The main skills learned and reinforced through the training are "active Listening" and "validation/affirmation". These constitute good communication skills and good psychology as well as simple common sense. Unfortunately, in our westernised, industrialised, urbanised societies where individualisation and "getting ahead" at any cost have taken precedence over community building and a focus on raising children in a healthy way, we have for-

gotten these skills. Family and community life suffer as a result. Teaching conflict resolution skills is a way of deliberately working to make our communities and society a healthier place for human beings. In some ways, it is a return to ancient knowledge that has been distorted by some of the excesses of modernisation. We can still challenge ourselves to develop intellectually and seek new knowledge, to formulate a fair and equitable and expanding economic base, to develop better societal structures, but have these rest on a foundation of healthy human values and practices.

In short, the teaching of positive conflict resolution practices is nothing short of revolutionary! Peaceful conflict resolution, mediation and negotiation practices are based on the assumptions that disputants are honest and responsible people, that they want reasonable and fair resolutions of different positions, that they need/want to maintain an ongoing relationship (such as within the family, school, workplace, church and in other organisations) and that they are willing to work with other disputants to find a WIN/WIN solution.

Adults who learn these processes usually find themselves incorporating them into their own personal and work lives. Often their own relationships improve over time as they learn to put these skills and attitudes to work in their personal lives. Those who bring this training to the children are teaching them a more positive way of behaving that, if taught and reinforced, will change the lives of the young people with whom they work. Like any project dealing with human beings, there will be greater and lesser degrees of success. Part of the success, or lack of it, depends on how thoroughly committed the entire staff of the school or other institution are to learning and implementing this way of dealing with problems. In part, success depends on how capable each child is of receiving and incorporating these attitudes and practices into their own lives. If the children have been seriously damaged by abuse, neglect or discrimination they may not yet be receptive. They may not yet be able to trust, or to reach out. But then again, some children will find such an approach to problem solving a great comfort, even soothing and encouraging. It may help them to build trust in others as well as building up their self-esteem and confidence.

Teaching children the skills of conflict resolution empowers them to handle their own conflicts. This is an important life skill for all of us as *conflicts between*

*human beings are normal, even when we know, love and respect others.* People need to realise that there is no such thing as living life without conflict but we can choose to deal either negatively or positively with conflicts. A negative approach can destroy relationships and organisations, cause social disruption and violence and, ultimately, lead to war. Positive conflict resolution can help strengthen relationships, create safer and more supportive communities and institu-

**“There must be a change of heart within the people, a change of attitude and practice within individuals at local level and, above all, in how children are raised and trained.”**

tions, provide a way of correcting social injustices and help to establish democratic processes at the level of local government. Having to deal with conflicts should be seen as an *opportunity* for personal growth and for relationship, organisational and community building.

The benefits to teachers and administrators of teaching conflict resolution skills in schools and institutions are that it significantly cuts down on time and effort lost in trying to maintain order, resolving disputes and disciplining children; more time is available for personal interaction with the children; there is an improved atmosphere for everyone — child care workers feel more rewarded in their position and children are more inspired because they experience more positive adult role models in their lives and are given more personal responsibility.

The benefits to children of learning positive conflict resolution skills are that they learn new communication skills, they become more conscious of the signals they send to others, they learn to express their anger and frustration in constructive ways by learning to handle their own conflicts, they develop an improved self-image and sense of accomplishment and they help to build the habit of peer co-operation and a stronger

sense of community. Children also have more time, interest and energy in learning and are more apt to start thinking more positively about their future, especially in the case of deprived children who have traditionally lacked opportunity.

The benefits to all adults who learn positive conflict resolution skills are the opportunity for personal growth and increased interpersonal skills, increased sensitivity to situations and the needs of others, greater confidence in dealing with difficult issues, improved assertiveness skills which lead to increased self-esteem, the ability to reach satisfactory results for everyone involved (i.e. a WIN/WIN solution) and the achievement of greater positive control of their own environment and destiny. This is one of those “each one teach one” skills. When people are trained thoroughly enough, they become trainers themselves as well as implementors. In this way the attitudes and methods of conflict resolution skills spread and grow in a grassroots fashion.

South Africa is at an extremely important crossroads. God’s speed in your endeavours. The children are the future in any society. Love them, nurture them, train them well and all of society will benefit. Remember that children “catch” more from what is modelled for them than what they are taught verbally. More is caught than taught.

*Further information regarding any aspect of teaching conflict resolution and mediation skills to children may be obtained by telephoning Moira Edmunds at the Centre for Intergroup Studies on (021) 650-2503/4 or 650-3370 or Petronella Clark at the Quaker Peace Centre on (021) 685-2503 or 685-4458.*

### Children in Tomorrow’s South Africa

Readers are particularly invited to participate in this important series (see this month’s Editorial) by sharing their own experiences, concerns, insights and suggestions, and perhaps by reporting on local discussion groups or workshops. Write to *The Child Care Worker*, P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735

**Founder of the first Child Care Association in South Africa, and since 1982 the National Director of NACCW, 'BG' takes up in March a new job with the Association**



## Interview / Brian Gannon

**CCW:** You are laying down your position of leadership of the NACCW during March 1990. You must have seen the Association come a long way since its was founded?

**BG:** It was in Cape Town in the late Sixties that I, like many other principals and child care workers, felt the need to "touch base" more systematically with others in the field. We were, probably most of us, in relatively uncharted waters — and disastrously isolated from each other — and from the body of knowledge relating to our work. Those were the days when there was little in the way of "respectable" literature on child care. We were, I believe, *inspired* rather than *instructed* for child care work — by such people as Bernard Lyward and David Wills in the UK, by Bruno Bettelheim and Fritz Redl in the USA. These were giants in the world of child care, and we were seeking to understand their *methods* of child care, knowing we could never measure up to them as practitioners. Nor could we measure up in terms of resources; we had to try to apply what we could in our very different situations. We got together, therefore, to learn more, and to support each other.

**CCW:** The NACCW seems to have arisen out of what we might call "the bad old days" of child care?

**BG:** I would hesitate to use a phrase like bad old days ... It is too pejorative. For me there are only two kinds of "bad" child care: the first is bad by intent, and the second is bad through ignorance — and anything else is usually an honest attempt to do one's best. I think many would have been impressed by the quality, the human quality, of child care in the 1960's in spite of the inadequate conditions by today's standards. Child care workers may have had to work with anything from twenty to fifty children in a group or even in a single dormitory, but they took this as their starting point and did what they could from there. "How can we make this better for the kids?" or "How can we derive the maximum educative benefit from this?" Even "How do we survive?!" These were child care workers' questions, and I think we learned a lot from each other as we looked for answers. Moreover, I believe the youngsters could understand these circumstances, and in many ways they got what they needed even out of those poor models. I remember a tearful 14-year-

old, after some hurtful experience with his family, saying to me "I've learned here that there are two kinds of people in the world: those who care and those who don't care".

**CCW:** Child Care Associations were also to be formed in other provinces?

**BG:** The idea seemed to have worked in the Cape and very similar child care situations existed in Natal and in the Transvaal. It was a great honour for me to be invited to both of these centres to be present when their Associations were founded in the early 1970's — and later still to the Eastern Cape for a similar occasion. 1975 proved to be a watershed year, since in that year the then Department of Social Welfare & Pensions called the first conference on child care since 1951 — and it was at that conference in Pretoria that a number of us met having brought a mandate from our Associations to merge and form the National Association of Child Care Workers. A rudimentary Constitution was adopted, and we were on our way.

**CCW:** The early NACCW nevertheless looked very different from today's organisation?

**BG:** Certainly the 'national' structures were very flimsy indeed! We gave ourselves fancy titles like Regional Chairman and National Chairman, but virtually all of the activities continued to be organised on a voluntary basis at regional level — we hardly had the funds to make a phone call from Cape Town to Durban! Ernie Nightingale was elected National Chairman, and he was very much the national 'voice' of the NACCW through all those years. The strength of the Association, I believe, has always been its regional emphasis: it was never a national idea which came down from on high; it was always a grass-roots movement which needed some national co-ordination, and I think it remains very much like that today. The 1977 milestone was our first National Conference. We thought it a very grand occasion, though scarcely more than 100 people attended. But by then we had already established international links, since John Williams (past president of the Residential Child Care Association in the UK) and Joop Zalsman-Wielenga (principal of a children's village in Holland who brought us greetings from the Dutch Child Care Association) were our two guest speakers.

**CCW:** To change direction briefly from NACCW to your own career, you personally worked in just three organisations?

**BG:** "Apprenticeship" straight from

university — in fact during my final year — under the never-to-be-forgotten tutelage of Canon Eric Richardson at St Georges Home in Johannesburg. Here the numbers were daunting, and my very first job as an assistant master had me at the age of nineteen or twenty in charge of a group of 48 children! At St Georges I was to have the advantage of working under Harold Brendon Doswell who had been Head of an approved school in England and was also connected with Outward Bound. Also Ken McHolm who stayed with St Georges until just a couple of years ago. None of us on that team kidded ourselves that we were “one big happy family”. Rather, we accepted that we were working in very much a boarding school type of environment, and I think all those people had built good ways of going on from there.

**CCW:** On that point, you are known to be something of an opponent of the so-called “cottage” system ...

**BG:** That’s not true at all. I have always maintained that over-large living groups create unnecessary problems which we then have to waste time dealing with at the expense of the real problems, those which the children brought with them into our system. Also that the ideal shape of a living group must be valid in terms of what the youngsters will go back to. No, but what I have certainly opposed is the mindless belief that once we have our children physically living in cottages, there is nothing more to do. Rather, once we have them in small living groups, we can then only *begin* to work on those very family and personal issues which brought them to us and which prevent them going back into the world. Yet at this very point too many programmes run out of ideas. Worse still, many forget that cottage systems (unlike group homes) nevertheless create large residential groupings of children, perhaps 60 or 120 or more, and although we break them into cottages, the needs of this larger group still have to be addressed — and your programme is the richer for the activities that this generates. Further, there is a terrible danger that our slavish devotion to the cottage system does no more than reproduce those very family models and family expectations which failed in the past, and that it adds nothing new or nothing different to the mix. In my own practice it was always very important to me to provide a *range* of available adults, some parental, others younger and perhaps activity-based, whom youngsters could relate to. I think it is nonsense for a state department to be so dogmatic as to say that the cottage system is the only acceptable model. In many respects playing “housey-housey” in our cottage systems

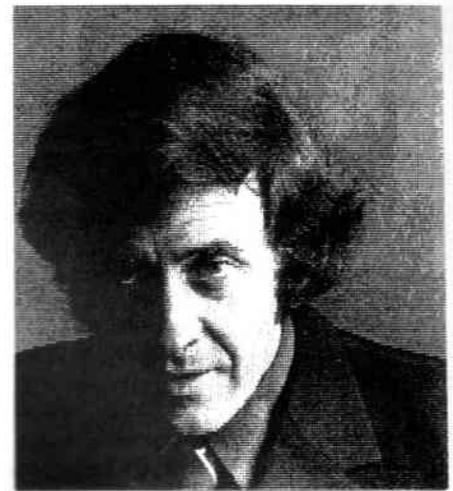
takes the focus off the children’s own families, and this dilutes our permanency planning tasks. As I listen to myself now, I sound very much an opponent of the cottage system! Again, I am not, but whatever model we use, we need to understand very deeply both its benefits and its dangers, and the cottage system has some insidious dangers.

**CCW:** We digressed. We were talking about the children’s homes you worked with ...

**BG:** When I was 23, I was challenged by Sister Felicity, an Anglican nun working at St Joseph’s Home, to start a second children’s home for ‘coloured’ children in Johannesburg since with only the one, many Johannesburg youngsters had to be sent as far afield as Cape Town. This started an extraordinarily fulfilling period in my life. Our eyes fell on the disused Nokuphila Hospital in Western Township (Nokuphila means ‘for the sake of life’, very apt) and I soon moved there making the old operating theatre my home! I taught part-time at St Barnabas College to make a living while planning and fund-raising for the new children’s home. A colleague from St Georges, Derek James, joined me a year later, and together we taught Latin and History in the mornings and after school prepared for the opening of what was to become St Nicolas Home. The needs were enormous, and though the term “street children” was not in currency at the time, we were to find many of our clients sleeping in the storm-water drains under the railway line between Newclare and Westbury stations, in abandoned motor cars or just around paraffin-can fires on street corners. Over the next years we built up a good staff team as the numbers built up to 55 children. A book could be written about those years, but they ended when, presumably because I had offended some petty bureaucrat, I was informed in 1967 that my Group Areas Act permit to live in ‘Western’ would not be renewed. The operating theatre, its bright centre light the envy of my friends, would no longer be my home.

**CCW:** It was then that you came to Cape Town?

**BG:** In 1967, when I was 27, I was appointed Warden of St Johns Hostel (a title which the 1960 Children’s Act changed to Principal) and remained there for fifteen years. Again, these were to be years of growth, in terms of buildings as well as in lives — my own included. They were full years, and started as such when (for 64 children) I was introduced to the child care staff and found only one hand to shake! That hand belonged to Patrick Harris (in whose



**“Whatever else we may do at the macro level, each of us should continue within our own work situation to seek competence, and excellence of practice, so that we have something real to offer when better days dawn.”**

memory Patrick’s House in Cape Town is named) and in those early days we were to invent the thirty-hour day, and many months later something called the day-off! Seriously, over those fifteen years the team at St Johns developed a very secure yet flexible programme, and when I left in mid-1982 there were 39 hands to shake! But if child care was very different at St Johns in 1982, it was also very different throughout the country, and these two facts were very much interconnected. Child care people throughout South Africa had formed a far more collegial group and we had been of help to each other. The NACCW was now seven years old. There had been further National Conferences in Durban (1979) and Johannesburg (1981), and our guest-speakers at the latter were Jerry Beker from the University of Minnesota which has gone on to be a most supportive institution, and Peter Righton from the UK. I think by that stage the NACCW had, if nothing else, succeeded admirably in promoting active dialogue in child care. People met, regionally, nationally and internationally, they were better informed about each others’ programmes and methods, they were less isolated. They knew where to go for advice and help.

**CCW:** By this stage the NACCW was employing its own professional staff?

**BG:** I became part-time National Director in mid-1982, but I was not the first

person to work for the Association. In the Transvaal Joy Hansen had worked part-time as a professional officer, and had laid some of the very important groundwork with regard to training courses and consultancy services. It has been only over the past five years that the NACCW's staff has developed. In 1985 I started full-time and in August of that year Di Levine became Transvaal Regional Director. Two years later Lesley du Toit joined us in Natal and the Eastern Cape and then in 1989 three new staff were appointed: Marcelle Biderman-Pam, Vivien Lewis and Ros Halkett. Today, when one includes our Fund-Raiser and the secretarial staff, there are fourteen staff members and yet others who work regularly on a sessional basis as lecturers and translators. The whole practice of employing staff has taken considerable thought. For example, to what extent do staff work at the request of members and member organisations, and to what extent do they keep within specified task areas such as training and consultation? A balance between the two, between responsive and proactive work, was decided on. To what extent do staff want to be seen as the only "do-ers" of the Association, for example, as those who carry out Conference resolutions? Only to a limited extent, since this removes the responsibility of membership from the majority, and this also causes the splitting whereby members ask "Why haven't you done this ...?" instead of "How can we do something about this?" But on the whole, having a professional and supporting staff has certainly given the NACCW the legs to get on with much that would otherwise be impossible. A social work professor at one of our universities telephoned me one evening to say that she was always bowled over by the *Newsbriefs* page in our journal because of the sheer volume of activity this always reflected.

**CCW:** This journal, *The Child Care Worker*, is probably the most familiar face in the Association, and seems to have been around a long time.

**BG:** Stretching back to before 1970, my files are littered with attempts to start a journal in South Africa. We actually launched one called *SA Child Care* in the mid-1970's. It was quite ambitious, rather the same size as the present journal, but it was a financial disaster and nearly had its editor and circulation manager in the debtors' prison! It lasted for three (rather good) issues. Then the Transvaal Region managed, somewhat more successfully, to keep a roneo'd magazine called *Trans-Care* going for several issues. It was in 1983 that we managed to get *The Child Care Worker* off the ground

— and it is now in its eighth volume with a circulation of 3000. The National Executive has always given the journal a very high priority, since in a country so geographically spread out, this is the one way in which we can say "Hi" to child care people every month, no matter where they are. The small Editorial Board nevertheless struggles to pitch the journal at exactly the right levels, since its readers include so many people concerned with residential care, from child care aides to university professors! 85% of those who responded to our recent readership survey were graduates, and one of my tasks, as my work now focusses more on the journal, will be to discover ways of making it as relevant for front-line workers. Another question is the absence of original material in Afrikaans. A large proportion of child care workers and administrators are Afrikaans-speaking (certainly by far the majority of the NACCW's students are Afrikaans) yet for months at a time the only contributions received are in English. We'd like to redress that balance. But the Editorial Board has been asking itself even more radical questions, like "In 1995 will we still be looking at the same shape in *The Child Care Worker*?" — and this is, for me, a healthy sign that the thing is still alive and may yet jump in some interesting directions in the years ahead.

**CCW:** On a more sombre note, many members felt that 1989 ended on an unhappy note for the NACCW. There was a degree of conflict about the Association's future role, and there was your resignation as National Director. Do we have any reason to be optimistic about 1990?

**BG:** Absolutely. I am sure that the NACCW grew — and grew stronger — through its experiences around Conference time. As for my own resignation, that was only in the best British parliamentary traditions! When you are running an organisation and a major screw-up is coming down the tracks over which you have no control, the honourable thing is to resign. It was clearly necessary for the organisation as a whole to make up its own mind about certain priorities and approaches, since an ambiguous situation was embarrassing and undermining to staff. The National Executive met in Johannesburg in November and, wisely, they asked all NACCW staff to join them, so that there was very healthy and open discussion. Certainly there was hard talking, but what took place was a very sensible meeting with entirely positive outcomes. Issues were referred back to Regions, and when the National Executive met again this month, they had available to them the feelings of the grassroots member-

ship. The result has been most helpful, a minimum of blood has been spilt, and the NACCW is back on track with new ideas for the future and in better shape than before!

**CCW:** So there has been some 'musical chairs' in the staffing of the Association.

**BG:** The shape of my job is very different from what it was six months ago. I shall be with the NACCW part-time as Editor of *The Child Care Worker* and in charge of publications and academic resources. I am very pleased to be still on the team. We have a new National Director in Lesley du Toit whom I have always respected more highly than I can say for her workmanlike and thorough approach to her NACCW tasks and to her practice before she joined us. Lesley has the deepest understanding for child care workers at all levels, and for the work they do, and I can think of no better person to lead NACCW into the next stage of its life.

**CCW:** A word on child care in general in South Africa. The future ...

**BG:** There are some huge tasks ahead in South Africa, education, the economy, housing, but I have always believed that child care was small enough for us to get it right. It is a service which is accustomed to working with less than enough. It is manned by a special breed of people whose whole orientation is based on starting with a messy present and building a better future. We should have been able to do more. But, certainly as far as my own job has been concerned, I have the depressing feeling that every time we placed one brick upon another in order to gain a more cohesive idea of what we were doing, the ideology boys came along and tore the bricks apart and sent them off to their respective group areas and separate administrations. Everybody had to keep on starting again, re-inventing the wheel. Instead of unity of purpose, we have chaos. The NACCW, solely in its child care tasks, deals with *twenty four* different state departments! Its like sorting papers in a gale. We now even have state departments ringing us to ask which state department they should ring ...

When it comes to child care policy and practice, until children in South Africa come to be regarded simply as children, I am pessimistic. In the mean time, whatever else we do at the macro level, each of us should continue within our own work situation to seek competence, and excellence of practice, so that we have something real to offer when better days dawn. I like to believe that the NACCW makes an honest contribution to that end. □

An urgent response to our discussion last month on the legalisation of drugs by one who has seen the effects first hand ...

# COKE IS NO JOKE

Jeannie Karth

*Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall  
all the King's horses and all the King's men  
Couldn't put Humpty together again.*

This familiar nursery rhyme embodies the tragic tale of those foolish enough to experiment with cocaine. For those who think experimenting is without abnormal risk should know that the chances of rapid addiction are abnormally high and the success rate with treatment for addiction depends on too many factors: early intervention, a good pre-morbid functioning, having enough money, a support system, a job, and continued treatment to stave off a relapse which seems to be a problem, as relapse may be a new acquired drive.

What is cocaine? It is an alkaloid found in the leaves of a small tree or shrub, the *Erythroxylon coca*, indigenous to western South America. It is extracted from the leaves quite simply and converted into 3 forms: a paste, a powder or rock form. Cocaine can be used intranasally (sniffed), intravenously (injected) or inhaled (smoked). The intranasal method takes the longest to reach the brain: 1-3 minutes, the intravenous takes 30-120 seconds, while inhalation takes 5-10 seconds. The rock form of cocaine called crack, is smoked and is the most lethal form of cocaine. The 'high' or 'rush' associated with the 3 forms of administration also give a clear explanation as to why crack has become such a major problem so quickly.



When sniffed the high lasts from 30-40 minutes; when taken intravenously it lasts from 10-20 minutes, while with the inhaled crack from, the high lasts only 5-10 minutes. So crack which is smoked takes 5-10 seconds for its effect to reach the brain and this rush or high lasts only 5-10 minutes. The part of the brain that is affected is the reward centre and the crack mimics the most important rewards—sex and food. In an experiment done with rats, when given an unlimited supply they stopped eating or sleeping and despite convulsions almost every rat self-administered until it died. This degree of loss of control and compulsivity is the hallmark of cocaine addicts.

Nothing in the world compares to the first rush or 'high' of cocaine and the user begins a futile chase for this initial high, because the physiological effect of repeated cocaine use causes a diminished effect — less and less euphoria with successive doses. It is useful to understand what happens in the brain when cocaine is administered. Cocaine is a stimulant and interferes with three chemicals found in the brain which form part of the neurotransmitters. These neurotransmitters act as messengers between individual nerve cells and relay information believed to have a role in controlling emotions and feelings of pain and pleasure. The three neurotransmitters that are affected by cocaine have a natural stimulant effect on the brain. Normally the brain would regulate the distribution of these 3 chemi-

als; however cocaine interferes and forces the brain to rapidly release its supply of these three specific transmitters — this is the cocaine high, the rush.

Normally the brain replenishes its supply of these three chemicals, but when cocaine is frequently used it cannot keep up the supply so more and more cocaine is needed to achieve the same high. When the brain can't even supply enough of these chemicals for its everyday requirements, it goes into withdrawal, causing intense feelings of depression and physical pain associated with cocaine craving. Now the addict uses cocaine, not for the rush, but merely to prevent the craving. Although the addiction process is basically the same whether cocaine is sniffed, injected or smoked, it is the length of time this process takes that is dramatically shortened when the drug is injected or smoked. For this reason crack has become a major drug problem to-day. A further factor worth noting is that research indicates that very few cocaine addicts (1% in a study of 16,000 clients in 1985) use cocaine only. So when the dangers of alcohol and 'gateway' drugs such as marijuana are stressed, these warnings should not be taken lightly. In this case one thing does indeed lead to another with tragic results.

Various disturbing factors are emerging about crack users: two thirds of crack addicts are violent in the high stage. In Washington three quarters of all crimes are cocaine crimes and in Manhattan alone 83% of people arrested for any crime have cocaine in their urine. Cocaine affects the central nervous system, the respiratory system and the cardiovascular system — crack is particularly dangerous to the cardiovascular system.

Overdose deaths occur with cocaine sniffing while cocaine smoking is regularly found responsible for the complete collapse of the cardiovascular system. In Time Magazine, 19 February 1990, an article appeared warning that in the U.S. evidence is emerging that cocaine abusers are using heroin to help deal with the severe depression which follows a cocaine-induced high. This increases the danger of death linked directly to the drug usage.

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We conclude this month the full text of the new UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, a major new document of interest to all who are concerned with work for children ...



# A New Convention on the Rights of the Child

## Article 26

1. States Parties shall recognize for every child the right to benefit from social security, including social insurance, and shall take the necessary measures to achieve the full realization of this right in accordance with their national law.

2. The benefits should, where appropriate, be granted, taking into account the resources and the circumstances of the child and persons having responsibility for the maintenance of the child, as well as any other consideration relevant to an application for benefits made by or on behalf of the child.

## Article 27

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social development.

2. The parent(s) or others responsible for the child have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development.

3. States Parties, in accordance with national conditions and within their means, shall take appropriate measures to assist parents and others responsible for the child to implement this right and shall in case of need provide material assistance and support programmes, particularly with regard to nutrition, clothing and housing.

4. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to secure the recovery of maintenance for the child from the parents or other persons having financial responsibility for the child, both within the State Party and from abroad. In particular, where the person having financial responsibility for the child lives in a State different from that of the child, States Parties shall promote the accession to international agreements or the conclusion of such agreements, as well as the making of other appropriate arrangements.

## Article 28

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular:

- Make primary education compulsory and available free to all;

- Encourage the development of different forms of secondary education, including general and vocational education, make them available and accessible to every child, and take appropriate measures such as the introduction of free education and offering financial assistance in case of need;

- Make higher education accessible to all on the basis of capacity by every appropriate means;

- Make educational and vocational information and guidance available and accessible to all children;

- Take measures to encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that school discipline is administered in a manner consistent with the child's human dignity and in conformity with the present Convention.

3. States Parties shall promote and encourage international co-operation in matters relating to education, in particular with a view to contributing to the elimination of ignorance and illiteracy throughout the world and facilitating access to scientific and technical knowledge and modern teaching methods. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

## Article 29

1. States Parties agree that the education of the child shall be directed to:

- The development of the child's personality, talents and mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential;

- The development of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and for the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations;

- The development of respect for the child's parents, his or her own cultural identity, language and values, for the national values of the country in which the child is living, the country from which he or she may originate, and for civilizations different from his or her own;

- The preparation of the child for responsible life in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes, and friendship among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin;

- The development of respect for the natural environment.

2. No part of the present article or article 28 shall be construed so as to interfere with the liberty of individuals and bodies to establish and direct educational institutions, subject always to the observance of the principles set forth in paragraph 1 of the present article and to the requirements that the education given in such institutions shall conform to such minimum standards as may be laid down by the State.

## Article 30

In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

## Article 31

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational and leisure activity.

## Article 32

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.

2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational

measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:

- Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
- Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
- Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

#### Article 33

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties, and to prevent the use of children in the illicit production and trafficking of such substances.

#### Article 34

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

#### Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

#### Article 36

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

#### Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

- No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;
- No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest ap-

propriate period of time;

- Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty

### Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court ...

shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;

- Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

#### Article 38

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.
2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.
3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.
4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by

an armed conflict.

#### Article 39

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

#### Article 40

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child alleged as, accused of or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which takes into account the child's age and the desirability of promoting the child's reintegration and the child's assuming a constructive role in society.
2. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of international instruments, States Parties shall, in particular, ensure that:
  - No child shall be alleged as, be accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law by reason of acts or omissions that were not prohibited by national or international law at the time they were committed;
  - Every child alleged as or accused of having infringed the penal law has at least the following guarantees:
    - To be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law;
    - To be informed promptly and directly of the charges against him or her, and, if appropriate, through his or her parents or legal guardians, and to have legal or other appropriate assistance in the preparation and presentation of his or her defence;
    - To have the matter determined without delay by a competent, independent and impartial authority or judicial body in a fair hearing according to law, in the presence of legal or other appropriate assistance and, unless it is considered not to be in the best interest of the child, in particular, taking into account his or her age or situation, his or her parents or legal guardians;
    - Not to be compelled to give testimony or to confess guilt; to examine or have examined adverse witnesses and to obtain the participation and examination of witnesses on his or her behalf under conditions of equality;
    - If considered to have infringed the penal law, to have this decision and any



General Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, every two years, reports on its activities.  
6. States Parties shall make their reports widely available to the public in their own countries.

#### Article 45

In order to foster the effective implementation of the Convention and to encourage international co-operation in the field covered by the Convention:

- The specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs shall be entitled to be represented at the consideration of the implementation of such provisions of the present Convention as fall within the scope of their mandate. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies as it may consider appropriate to provide expert advice on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their respective mandates. The Committee may invite the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund, and other United Nations organs to submit reports on the implementation of the Convention in areas falling within the scope of their activities;
- The Committee shall transmit, as it may consider appropriate, to the specialized agencies, the United Nations Children's Fund and other competent bodies, any reports from States Parties that contain a request, or indicate a need, for technical advice or assistance, along with the Committee's observations and suggestions, if any, on these requests or indications;
- The Committee may recommend to the General Assembly to request the Secretary-General to undertake on its behalf studies on specific issues relating to the rights of the child;
- The Committee may make suggestions and general recommendations based on information received pursuant to articles 44 and 45 of the present Convention. Such suggestions and general recommendations shall be transmitted to any State Party concerned and reported to the General Assembly, together with comments, if any, from States Parties.

### PART III

#### Article 46

The present Convention shall be open for signature by all States.

#### Article 47

The present Convention is subject to ratification. Instruments of ratification shall be deposited with the secretary-

General of the United Nations.

#### Article 48

The present Convention shall remain open for accession by any State. The instruments of accession shall be deposited

... a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practise his or her own religion, or to use his or her own language.

with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

#### Article 49

1. The present Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date of deposit with the Secretary-General of the United Nations of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession.
2. For each State ratifying or acceding to the Convention after the deposit of the twentieth instrument of ratification or accession, the Convention shall enter into force on the thirtieth day after the deposit by such State of its instrument of ratification or accession.

#### Article 50

1. Any State Party may propose an amendment and file it with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Secretary-General shall thereupon communicate the proposed amendment to States Parties for the purpose of considering and voting upon the proposals. In the event that, within four months from the date of such communication, at least one third of the States Parties favour such a conference, the Secretary-General shall convene the conference under the auspices of the United Nations. Any amendment adopted by a majority of States Parties present and voting at the conference shall be submitted to the General Assembly for approval.
2. An amendment adopted in accordance

with paragraph 1 of the present article shall enter into force when it has been approved by the General Assembly of the United Nations and accepted by a two-thirds majority of States Parties.

3. When an amendment enters into force, it shall be binding on those States Parties which have accepted it, other States Parties still being bound by the provisions of the present Convention and any earlier amendments which they have accepted.

#### Article 51

1. The Secretary-General of the United Nations shall receive and circulate to all States the text of reservations made by States at the time of ratification or accession.
2. A reservation incompatible with the object and purpose of the present Convention shall not be permitted.
3. Reservations may be withdrawn at any time by notification to that effect addressed to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, who shall then inform all States. Such notification shall take effect on the date on which it is received by the Secretary-General.

#### Article 52

A State Party may denounce the present Convention by written notification to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Denunciation becomes effective one year after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary-General.

#### Article 53

The Secretary-General of the United Nations is designated as the depositary of the present Convention.

#### Article 54

The original of the present Convention, of which the Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

In witness thereof the undersigned plenipotentiaries, being duly authorized thereto by their respective Governments, have signed the present Convention.

### POST WANTED

Twenty-three year old woman, single with no dependants, recently completed the course Care of Children, the Aged and the Handicapped (N1, N2 and N3). Seeks employment.

For further information please contact Miss Gillian Grootboom  
126C Jakkalsvlei Avenue  
Bonteheuvel 7764  
Telephone: (021) 684-5332

## Multiple Family Therapy (MFT)

In this letter, I should like to respond to the recent article in *The Child Care Worker* (Vol.7, No 10, October 1989) entitled "Multiple Family Therapy (MFT) in an Adolescent Inpatient Milieu". My aim will be very briefly to outline some of the potential problems in instituting such a programme in the setting of a children's home. This will be done with an eye on the aforementioned article, in addition to drawing from an experience in which I attended one session at Sonstraal. I wish to stress at the outset that in the context of a children's home the five objectives of the MFT are all relevant and need attention. The question posed will be, given the unique situation of a children's home as opposed to the adolescent in-patient unit at Sonstraal, should such a programme be instituted, and if so how best could it be initiated, structured and monitored.

### Potential Problems

My major reservation has nothing to do with the principles of this programme, but rather involves the potential for contamination amongst group members, a blurring of boundaries and the possibility that unless a form of control is carefully exercised it is not inconceivable that a counterproductive group encounter could result. In this regard, an important question arises – who are to be the facilitators? In the context of a children's home should this role be filled by a care worker, a social worker or a psychologist? In answering this important question I find myself in two minds. Given the very real potential for an unwanted and possibly damaging group encounter my immediate preference would be for a psychologist to facilitate. And yet, realistically in the setting of most children's homes, the psychologist's contact with children is limited – the careworkers and the social workers are the professionals on line. In line with the objectives of MFT, the on-line staff team is an intrinsic element in the programme and it is vital that they are the professionals present. Whether this implies that the psychologist should facilitate, or whether social workers and care workers be given the responsibility, given my aforementioned trepidation, must be addressed. If we accept as given that care workers must be present (imperative if the objectives of bridging the gap between families and staff and of reducing the tendency to idealise the staff as "good parents" are to be met) limits need to be set as to what is admissible and how far it can be pushed. I accept the necessity and benefits for example of children or

parents expressing anger towards the home/staff. This, however, cannot become an absolute or it will develop into a scapegoating free-for-all. It is the care worker after all who has to continue working with the 'index' child, as well as the so-called 'on-lookers'. I do not wish to deny the reality, or argue that it can be wished away, but rather that destructive scapegoating in the context of multiple families may remove power from the professionals and invest it (unrealistically so) in the parents' child.

A second reservation I have, has to do with the fact that the children and their families will often be revealing very private elements of their family life – in many instances to near-strangers. In a residential child care setting once the parents have returned to the relative anonymity of their homes the child remains in the institution with other children who have now been "invited into his/her life". While this is the reality and cannot be denied I question the usefulness (long- or short-term) of the family life being an open book. I recognise that this may occur anyway, in the natural course of events, but given the informal nature of such 'revelations', and the element of control (although often small which the child would then exercise, I would not have the same reservations.

A further note of caution is the setting up of yet another scenario within which children who are often already 'over-therapised' will become even more so. In similar vein we need to be wary (and I am aware of the possible idealism in this) of assigning a 'sick/disturbed' role to children (or parents for that matter) in the setting of a children's home.

As I have already stated, the objectives of MFT are all core issues in a children's home and must be addressed. Family meetings are of paramount importance if reconstruction (or progress) is to become possible. Whether this requires multiple family or single family meetings is the issue at hand. If multiple family meetings are seen to be necessary their nature, duration and potential abuse need thorough articulation.

If the issues I have outlined above are addressed, if the nature and duration of inevitable emotional outbursts are at some level monitored and controlled, if nothing becomes an absolute, if the power invested in all relevant parties (from the children to the facilitators) is carefully scrutinised at all levels and if the desirability of this programme is evaluated independently in each new setting and with each new group, then I believe the programme may offer much.

– Mark Tomlinson  
*Child care worker in the Oranjia Group Home, Cape Town*

## Who to Blame?

I read with great interest your editorial "The Proof of the Pudding" dated January, 1990.

"What are the plans for child care for the 1990's? Who cares? Who is responsible?"

Surely it is the people who bring these poor unwanted children into the world who should be held responsible. They should also care.

Your reference to education is the answer. I wonder if in twenty or thirty years' time, when all has been equal in social distribution, I wonder who will then be responsible? The condition of human selfishness cannot be placed at the door of others.

Human nature does not change. Sweden is a perfect example of Utopia. Yet I do not envy the Swedes. Their problems are no less than ours, yet they started putting their house in order in the 50's. Forty years later they have illegitimate children, drug and drink problems. Who do you suppose they blame?

As you put the blame on Grand Apartheid, have you ever consulted with a Lapp about equality?

Your World File page answers the question: The figures in America, which are on the increase, are exactly what is going to happen in South Africa – no matter who the Government is.

I am not a Nat. I have voted opposition and volunteered my services to assist when and where necessary. I find the attitude of continual whining pathetic.

The Directorate obviously have not travelled enough to recognise that our problems are worldwide. Let's get off the laying blame at the Government track and acknowledge the Human Problem.

We certainly need stacks of support invested in Today's Child as they are Tomorrow's Adult. The powers that be, no matter in which country, seem to place the needs of the children as a low priority.

I love your articles as many are so informative. Keep up the good work.

– Sally Venter-Tollin.

Compared with some people, I was in care for quite a short time, just 2 years in a children's home in Lancashire. However, it didn't make the problems leaving care any easier. I left a week before my 17th birthday even though the approved leaving care age is 18. I was quite lucky because I was placed in a one bedroomed flat on my own near the children's home, receiving £19.40 per week income support. You may say "he could have easily got a job". It's not that easy when you have a speech impediment which takes away the confidence you need to go for job interviews. I was lucky because I was the first person to receive the new leaving care grant from Social Services, £400, but I feel this is unfair when elsewhere they are receiving a lot more.

I can't see why there are different amounts of grants right across the country when leaving care brings the same problems everywhere. Out of the money, I was expected to pay for my gas, electricity, feed and clothe myself and pay so much towards my rent. Within 2 weeks of moving in, I moved out to a hostel for the homeless. Admittedly, the lack of money wasn't the only reason for me giving up my flat, but I realised I was just about to sink because of it.

At the hostel it felt as though a great weight had been lifted from my shoulders. The limit was 12 months and in that time you would work toward a flat of your own. The Department of Health paid my £70 per week rent which provided me with 4 meals a day and a lot of other facilities. I was also given £10.30 per week for my personal expenses. When I moved into the hostel I had

## ON MY OWN

Matthew Kennedy writes about leaving care in *Who Cares?* the British magazine for young people in care



dropped to 8 stone in weight. I was quite depressed and was sniffing glue a lot. I was lucky not to be thrown out.

The staff at the hostel were brilliant. I was able to talk about my problems and started sorting them out. I went to the local drug unit and stopped sniffing. However, even though things seemed to be looking up, I was still losing weight and very depressed. I was finally taken into hospital suffering from anorexia nervosa (the slimmer's disease). When I got

better, I returned to the hostel and, went to college. After more ups and downs I finally got a flat of my own. Only 2 years after leaving care do I feel able to manage. Maybe if the authority had stuck to the official leaving care age none of these problems would have occurred.

In the hostel, one of the things I liked was that there were people around me. In the flat I was so lonely. Staff can teach you about budgeting your money and all the other life skills but they can't prepare you for the loneliness. You have to try and find ways of dealing with it yourself. I couldn't. I shut myself away with only little pixies for company (effect of sniffing glue). You can have friends around, although you're very cautious about this as the staff drum it into you that people will only want to know you so they can have somewhere to "doss" down.

It's hard to distinguish between people who are real friends and those who are only using you. Because of your wariness, true friends soon drift off because you're so uptight and then you're left with no-one. I did attend an Aftercare group but it was only once a fortnight for two hours and was manned by voluntary workers. What happens when a problem occurs at other times?

You could go back to the Home but you must remember that when you leave, there is always someone to replace you who needs just as much or even more support than you. Therefore, though they'd like to, staff in children's homes just don't have the time to help you in moments of crisis. I'm not trying to criticise social services staff. In my experience they have done an excellent job in what are sometimes impossible circumstances but we just need that little bit more effort to get things right.

The things we need are:

1. The setting up of a national full-time aftercare service funded by local authorities, run as a drop-in-centre, where people could call anytime throughout the day and up to a certain time at night. It would take a lot of pressure off children's homes and Social Services officers when ex-residents go back for support in times of crisis.
2. A review of the leaving care grants and for a set figure for the whole country. By having this, no-one would be losing out.
3. For local authorities to stick to the official leaving care age and give independence training beginning at 16 and finishing at 18.
4. For there to be an agreement between Social Services and Housing giving people leaving care priority for council accommodation.

Founded in 1909, our Society is the largest private non-racial welfare organisation in South Africa. We currently require

### Child Care Workers

in our homes in Johannesburg.

Duties include:

- Responsibility for the Care of children
- Supervision of staff
- Liaison with Committee
- Staff training
- Administrative work.

We are seeking caring and patient individuals who possess good housekeeping, organisational, interpersonal skills as the successful applicants will also be required to liaise with volunteers, domestic staff and social workers.

Candidates should preferably be in possession of matric, a valid drivers licence and

must be prepared to work shifts or alternate weekends. A qualification in child care work through the NACCW would be an advantage although training will be provided. A competitive salary is offered along with generous leave, medical aid and pension fund.

Call Mrs. Fiona Plani on (011)331-0171 or send a curriculum vitae to The Director P O Box 2539 Johannesburg. 2000.





## WORLD FILE

A digest of news and child care information

### Chemical Dependency Symposium Focuses on Children

In many communities in the USA up to 90% of the families and children served by the child welfare system are dependent on drugs or alcohol. On March 10 and 11 the Child Welfare League of America organised a two-day symposium entitled *Crack and Other Addictions: Old Realities and New Challenges*. Participants had the opportunity to interact with nationally renowned experts in the field. Young people from *Teens Kick Off* (TKO), an intervention programme for teenagers recovering from alcohol or drug addiction, shared their experienced in dramatic presentations and interactions with the audience. — CWLA

### Proposals for Child Witnesses

New measures are being considered to protect child witnesses who are victims of crimes of a sexual nature, the South African Law Commission has said. Among the provisions the commission is examining is a proposal "that the child

should not be confronted in open court with his assailant, but that use should be made of one-way glass to separate the witness and his assailant". The commission said in its 1989 report, tabled in Parliament this month, that it was considering the possibility that the child should be assisted by a legal adviser. Also under consideration was that the child's testimony should be heard in an informal atmosphere, that the pre-trial questioning of the child should take place by trained people and that video recordings of interviews should be admissible as evidence. The commission said it had been asked by the Minister of Justice to investigate the possibility of better protection for young children who had to give evidence.

### Death of Bruno Bettelheim

Washington. — Bruno Bettelheim, one of the century's best-known psychologists who pioneered studies of children, has committed suicide by asphyxiating himself with a plastic bag.

Mr Bettelheim, 86, was being treated at a nursing home after a stroke.

A nurse found him lying on the floor with a plastic bag over his head. Police said he had drunk alcohol and taken prescription pills.

Mr. Bettelheim moved here from California to be close to a daughter. He is also survived by a daughter in California and a son in London.

The Vienna-born psychologist was arrested by the nazis in 1938 and spent a year in concentration camps at Dachau and Buchenwald. Released in 1939, he moved to Illinois where for 29 years he ran the Orthogenic School at the University of Chicago. His ideas, developed in a series of books including "Love is Not Enough", "The Uses of Enchantment" and "Truants from Life", attracted a wide following outside academia, especially among parents.

With his thick German accent, Bettelheim was a fixture on the lecture circuits for decades, preaching that "there are no perfect parents and no perfect children, but everyone can be good enough". This was a comforting view for distressed parents. — Reuters

### Aids Growing Generation of Orphans

The rapid spread of HIV infection is creating a new generation of orphans according to a recent report in *The New York Times*. Thousands of children, while not infected themselves, are losing their mothers and/or fathers to the epidemic. In New York City it is estimated that 20 000 orphans will need either adoption of foster care by 1995 as a

result of the AIDS epidemic. — *Child Care in New England*

### CWLA Salary Study

A comprehensive salary study released by CWLA in January reveals that the average salary for child welfare workers lags as much as 50% behind salaries of comparable positions. "Our study clearly indicates the need to place a higher value on the important work performed by the dedicated individuals who serve children and families in need," said CWLA Executive Director David Liederman. The study of 22 child welfare positions shows that compensation for some positions such as social work assistants and case aides has increased only 2,9% since 1987 when the salary study was last conducted.

#### Social Worker

The Louis Botha Home for Children invites applications from registered, experienced, mature persons to fill the above vacancy. Applicants should be fully bilingual and preferably have had previous experience working in a children's home as well as in group work with both children and house parents. Duties will include:

- counselling children and biological parents
- supervising house parents
- placement of children with due regard to the legal aspects
- screening prospective holiday parents.

Salary in accordance with departmental scales. Medical aid and pension scheme available. Further information on application. Please apply in writing giving details of qualifications and experience to: The Principal, 5 Briscoe Lane, Queenswood, Pretoria 0186. Tel.: (012)736184

WYNBERG: TENTERDEN PLACE OF SAFETY  
(House of Assembly)

#### Senior Child Care Worker

Female child care worker with at least Std 8 and 5 years' experience or relevant academic training required. Please contact Mr Odendaal on 021-761-2554.

#### ST JOSEPHS HOME — JOHANNESBURG

##### Child Care Worker

Two posts; preferably experienced and trained child care workers. Applications welcome from all centres. Relocation costs, where necessary, will be considered.

For further information contact: Malcolm Montgomery, P O Box 20, Westhoven 2142. Tel.: (011)673-5126/7

Lady of 30 seeks employment. Currently completing National Certificate in Care of Children, the Aged and Handicapped by correspondence. Please contact: Lindiwe Mnisi 5 Nhlengethwa Street, Kwa-Themba 1563

## NATIONAL

**New National Director for NACCW Appointed**

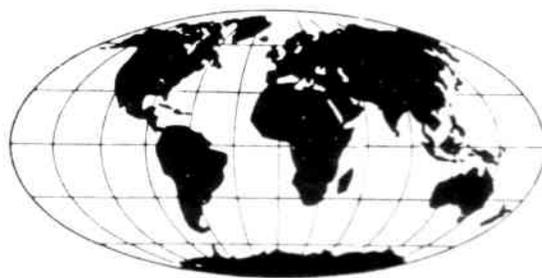
At its meeting in Cape Town on March 2 and 3, the National Executive Committee appointed Lesley du Toit, until now Regional Director for Natal and Eastern Cape, as the new National Director of the organisation. Lesley has worked for the NACCW since August 1987, and before that was Social Worker and then Programme Director at King Williams Town Children's Home. Lesley will continue to be based in Durban, and it has been accepted that national functions of the Association will be distributed over several centres in the Republic. Lesley will assume her new duties over the next months as she hands over her Natal and Eastern Cape responsibilities to a new staff member.

**New NACCW Region Established**

In February 1990, following on the approval of the National Executive in November, a sixth Region of the NACCW was established in George, to be known as the Southern Cape Region. This new Region will serve a number of institutions in George, Oudtshoorn and Pacaltsdorp, and the BQCC course will be offered there immediately. This brings to four the number of Regions in the Cape Province! These are the Western Cape, Border, Eastern Province and George.

**National Executive Committee Meets**

A two-day meeting of the NACCW's National Executive took place in Cape Town at the beginning of March, four months after the previous meeting in Johannesburg. Two new members of the Executive were welcomed: Livia Steenveldt, chairman of the reconstituted Eastern Province Region (after the Border Region was separately established last year); and Lynette Rossouw, a recent ILEX fellow and principal of the Môreson Kinderhuis



## Newsbriefs

in George where the new Southern Cape Region was established in February.

**Policy Directions and Mission Statement**

The Executive met primarily to discuss feedback from the Regional Meetings which had taken place to consider the NACCW's policy directions following on discussions at the 1989 National Conference. Meetings had been held in all of the Regions. In two of these, members had expressed satisfaction with the Association's Mission Statement and current functioning. Three Regions had expressed general acceptance of the NACCW's current policy directions, but had asked for a less 'luke-warm' approach when representations were made to state, and also for the NACCW's wider involvement with children's issues in South Africa. A major point of debate, unresolved at this stage, was the Association's resources which were already fully extended in its work with residential child care. The debate will be fully reported in the April issue.

**New Course Starts in July**

The Diploma in Child Care Administration has drawn considerable interest from senior management staff in children's institutions around South Africa. This two-year distance teaching course will include residential mid-term seminars each year, and makes use of telephone tutoring in addition to the written lectures and reading material. The course

co-ordinator is Marcelle Biderman-Pam whose address is 7 Fiskaal Street, Camps Bay 8001. Telephone 438-4006.

## NATAL

**Problem Profile Approach**

This course began on the 22nd of February in Durban with 5 teams participating. Teams will meet on a monthly basis. This year's course will be run by the Children's Foundation.

**Special Regional Meeting**

The Special Regional Meeting was held on the 23rd of February to discuss the mission statement of NACCW. Prior to this a Pietermaritzburg and Durban group had to workshop the ideas. Their combined view was presented at the special meeting and discussed in preparation for the National Executive meeting.

## TRANSVAAL

**Major Fund-raising Event for NACCW**

The NACCW is one of three charities which will benefit from a 'Key Car Competition' to be held in April at the Rand Show. This is a car raffle with a difference: instead of tickets, keys will be sold. Drawing one of 20 specially marked keys will make the lucky person eligible to win a Kadett Cub 1.4 litre worth R23 000. Many spot prizes will also be awarded daily. Child care workers from several organisations

have volunteered to man the stall — many thanks to them. The other beneficiaries of the competition are Hospice and the Alan Isaacs Camps for underprivileged children.

**Problem Profile Approach**

Training in the Problem Profile Approach (PPA) was started by NACCW and the Children's Foundation. A total of nine organisations have registered teams for the course.

**Non-Injurious Physical Restraint Workshop**

A four-session course on non-injurious restraint of children was completed last month. Even though provision was made for a large group (50 students), the course was oversubscribed and we had to turn people away. The level of interest was thus high. The group was led by two people, each representing very different perspectives. Michael Niss, a psychologist, demonstrated 'the pretzel', the American method of 'aeroplaning' an out-of-control youth and 'folding' the youth. He also carefully elaborated on the importance of verbal contact, and repeatedly emphasised that the goal of the intervention was to be therapeutic. Jeanette Schoultz, our other group leader, is an expert in self-defence and demonstrated the 'basket technique' and other methods of self-defence in dangerous situations. In the last session senior staff members were taught how to 'process' the event, and the NACCW Regional Director worked with the child care workers on writing log reports on physical restraint incidents. Some senior staff expressed ambivalence and uncertainty about the use of physical intervention, and emphasised that these techniques were appropriate under supervision in a non-punitive therapeutic context. Child care workers evaluated the course positively. For many of us it was a way of working was alarming. Staff members from agencies for hard-to-serve youngsters found the workshop particularly useful.

## APRIL 1990 DIARY

**Western Cape**

03 08:30 Regional Executive Meeting. *Marsh Memorial Home*  
 04 09:00 BQCC 3. *Annie Starck Village*  
 10 09:00 Forum. *St Georges Home*  
 11 09:00 BQCC 3. *Annie Starck Village*  
 12 08:30 PPA Training Course. *St Michaels*  
 18 09:00 BQCC 3. *Annie Starck Village*  
 25 09:00 Social Workers' Group meets. *Friedrich Schweizer*.  
 25 09:00 BQCC 3. *Annie Starck Village*

**Natal**

18 09:00 BQCC 4. *St Philomenas*  
 20 09:00 Social Workers meeting.  
 20 09:00 Child Care Worker Forum.  
*St Philomenas* Guest speaker  
 Mr Ernie Nightingale  
 24 09:00 BQCC 1. *St Philomenas*  
 Resume after school holiday  
 25 09:00 BQCC 4. *St Philomenas*  
 26 08:30 PPA Training Course *St Philomenas*  
 27 09:00 NACCW Regional meeting (to be advised)

**Transvaal**

02 09:00 BQCC 1. *Pretoria Louis Botha Children's Home*  
 25 09:00 BQCC 1. *Johannesburg Jubileum Place of Safety*  
 26 09:30 Child Care Worker Support Group *Epworth Home*  
 30 09:00 BQCC 1. *Pretoria Louis Botha Children's Home*