

# Die **Kinderversorger**



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Cover Picture: Planet Earth, our environment. New series starts on Page 3. (Photo: NASA)

Journal of the  
National Association of  
Child Care Workers

International Network Affiliate

**CWLA**  
Child Welfare League of America

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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 standaarde vir kinders in residensiële omgewings te verbeter.

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# NACCW/NVK



## The child care worker: an ambassador in a land of troubled children

My Dear Sam,

You seem to have set yourself an awesome task, 'taking on', as you put it, both the children and the system! It is hard enough, as we all know, to attempt to direct your energies 'downward' towards the children, listening to them, trying to understand them, offering them alternative ways of coping, teaching them to master new things, being with them through the agonies of failure and doubt ... that is in the nature of child care work. But to feel that you must also direct your energies 'upwards' towards the senior staff and the management committee, places you at quite a crunch point in your organisation. While I wish you well in your endeavours, I hope you don't have unrealistic hopes of changing the world overnight!

Your problem with senior staff is common enough. Many child care workers feel unheard and misinterpreted by supervisors and principals. You are naturally at the 'coal face' of our profession, and you get to experience deeply the hurts, the fears and the angers of the kids. That's why you're there, of course, because the other important adults in their lives didn't stick around for them when the going got tough.

And this is your first task: that you are there for the children, to help them through the tough times, to help them untangle their feelings and stop getting whipped by them. But there is a danger here. It can happen that you *over-identify* with these feelings, that you join the children in their hype and their anger — then you lose your perspective, and your status as a helping professional, as someone who helps them to make sense of their lives.

Your seniors and management committee are similarly placed. Their task is to represent the ordered community out there, and it is important that they do this or else they will deceive the children by promising them something other than the real world. It can happen that they, too, over-identify with the outside norms, become judgemental and unforgiving towards the children, and in turn lose *their* perspective and their status as a human service organisation.

As a child care worker you are in a unique position between the two, between confusion and order, between the

children's pain and their health — and it is this *transition* that you are there to manage. You are the person who makes it possible for the children to cross from one to the other; you must therefore know and be known by both sides. You are an ambassador from the world of socialised order and reason in a land of troubled children; you are an ambassador from the world of deprived and dispossessed children in a land of often hard-nosed adults who don't understand.

And this is your second task: to represent (in your case to supervisor, senior staff and management committee) the plight — the condition and the feelings of the children — and the more dispassionately, objectively and *diplomatically* you do so, the better you will be heard. You are an ambassador, remember.

Like most ambassadors you are also a translator. Again, as a child care worker you are in the unique position of being able to speak and understand both languages: the vernacular of troubled children and the more polite, technical idiom of your organisation. Speak and *understand*. In your advocacy for the children it is not enough simply to relay what they *say* — you have to relay what they *mean*, and it is here that your special skills as a child care worker are important. You have learned to reflect back to the children what they mean when they express themselves so awkwardly. This ability allows you to convey this same meaning to your seniors and your management committee — and probably this is the best way for you to 'take on' the system: by scrupulously and objectively reporting the children's needs, progress and continuing problems.

A good children's organisation in any case builds the opportunity for such reporting into its procedures; a less aware organisation can only benefit (and hopefully learn) from such feedback, and will want to respond helpfully when the message gets through. And the professional message should be that you are concerned about the kids, not that you are against the system!

So don't think of what you have to do so much as a campaign or a crusade. Think of it rather as simply what all child care workers have to do. And good luck with it!

Sincerely,  
Pat

First in a series on the environment by **Peter Slingsby**, cartographer, author, educator and child care worker at large, who combines his Kleinmond Child Welfare Society child care involvement with that of ECCO (Ecological Clubs for Children Organisation)

## Environmental Education and Children's Homes



When did the children in your Home last abseil down a rockface? Have they ever been to a place where they can dive, head-first, into soft, black mud? How many of them have ever run four hundred metres down a long, sloping sanddune?

What on earth have such things to do with "environmental education" (EE) or even with "children's homes"?

If someone put the "Mona Lisa" through a paper-shredder, most of the world's 6000-million people wouldn't turn a hair. When the last white rhino dies ignominiously in a zoo somewhere, a very small percentage of humanity will reach for the kleenex. When a few thousand baby seals get clubbed to death, fewer thousands of people get very excited, make posters and petitions, and even fewer cranks write passionate letters to the newspapers asking how it is that people can get excited about seals, dogs, horses, rhinos etc. etc. when all around is so much human misery. There are of course reasons for this contrasting total lack of interest or intense passion. The first is that most humans are completely environmentally illiterate, and the second is that the word "environment" is universally misunderstood. Most people think that "environment" means the wonderful world of nature in its pristine state, a sort of primeval Garden of Eden which is unattainable in this life, so why bother. This is a bit like thinking that "humanity" means collective mankind's big toes. Your environment is, in fact, that part of the biosphere of the planet Earth (i.e. the livable and living area) which is not you. It starts where

your clothes meet your skin and goes outwards from there. It includes your toothbrush, your kitchen table and your shoelaces, and somewhere far out there in the world it also includes white rhinos, blue whales, exocet missiles and Saddam Hussein.

This is very important to understand, because most people similarly think that "environmental education" means a sort of glorified nature study, despite the fact that for several decades the environmental education movement has distinctly recognised that "nature study" is but one facet of a movement designed to seek alternatives to a highly unsatisfactory formal education system. At a recent Environmental Education Association workshop at Stellenbosch, the precepts of modern EE were weighed, compared and contrasted with the precepts of "People's Education" as enunciated by the NECC and supported by various extra-parliamentary political groups, and it was found that in essence there was no real reason why EE should not be considered but a part of PE, or vice-versa.

Be that as it may, it is time to return to my topic, "Environmental Education in the Children's Home". Children's homes are primarily established to deal with children who are deprived. Easily-recognised deprivations are food, clothing, shelter, love and affection, spiritual needs, etc., and Homes universally deal with these in a more or less effective fashion. The question, however, arises as to whether Homes deal with another basic but less-obvious deprivation: men-

tal stimulation.

Poverty has been described as the greatest environmental threat to mankind. This is because mass poverty leads to destructive land use, massive pollution and consequent spread of disease, AND massive lack of mental development because the poor lack the means to stimulate and so develop their minds. Without that development they become unable to become effective decision-makers; they lack the conceptual and cognitive ability to address and ameliorate their own condition.

"New experiences are as essential for the development of the mind as food is for the development of the body", Mia Kellner Pringle writes in *The Needs of Children*. Given the limitations of our formal education system and the widespread debilitating effects of poverty in our country, we might look upon the dawning "new" South Africa with some trepidation: how is mass-democracy to be effective when programmes aimed at addressing experience-deprivation in children are so thin on the ground?

Children's homes have a special responsibility in this regard. The average fortunate child will receive some stimulation at home. Programmes such as ECCO attempt to meet this need in poverty-stricken communities, where the parental home lacks the wherewithal to provide for this important need. What do children's homes do now? There needs to be recognition that activities organised for the children such as video's, visiting speakers or even visits to factories, etc. are *passive* activities. They do not demand much from the participant and they really teach very little. In the next article I will discuss possible programmes and approaches which might be of value to those institutions interested in improving the quality of experience and mental stimulation of their children — and which might strike a responsive chord in many of their child care workers. Don't worry, these will not include "How to fix the ozone layer", "How to dispose of toxic wastes" or even "How to feed the world" — all pressing environmental questions, but not of great relevance to the junior generation. All the programmes I'll suggest are easy to implement and some you might think are almost offensively simple (I'm not necessarily talking about diving head-first into soft, black mud) — but they all work. There is a special challenge here, and it is not a difficult one to meet.

*Graphic: Riebeek West children at the seaside for the first time (from a photograph by Michael Maxwell-Hafen)*

A well-known and long-established children's home in Johannesburg, Guild Cottage, has been non-racial for sixteen months. Di Levine interviews for *The Child Care Worker* the home's principal, Jean Wright, on ...

## Child Care after Apartheid

**CCW: Will you tell us how your organisation came to implement this decision.**

JW: It was essentially a moral decision. We felt that within a changing South Africa we owed it to our children to help them to relate to children of other races. Also, the numbers of white children in care are decreasing, and it was clear we could not go on offering our service without changing our policy. Initially the committee was cautious with regard to the legality of the change but after full discussion they agreed it was the right decision.

**CCW: It will help us if you take us along the legal path you followed. Who did you consult? How did government departments react?**

JW: I started the whole process by talking to the Department of Health Services & Welfare (House of Assembly) and they were at that stage very much against the idea. I also brought it up at one of their children's homes liaison meetings, pointing out how numbers in white homes were declining, and also how donors were increasingly unhappy supporting a whites-only service, but the department didn't want to hear this and were clearly locked into the own-affairs structure. I then spoke to the House of Delegates department whose response was entirely different and very positive. This was followed by an open meeting at Guild Cottage of all concerned state departments and agencies who might refer children or participate in their assessment or treatment — and this meeting was very encouraging. Because of their negative response, we had not invited the House of Assembly department, but both House of Representatives and House of Delegates expressed the view that they could manage the capita-tion grants (at the going rates for their respective departments). Hospitals and such services assured us that there would be no difficulty. For schooling we are near enough to schools for all races. On the basis of all these considerations, we went ahead.

**CCW: It seems a courageous decision to have risked the relationship with the state department with which you have been traditionally associated and to whom you have been accountable?**

JW: I think we were most concerned that the House of Assembly would remove the white children. However, that didn't happen, and it has been sixteen months now.

**CCW: Readers will be most interested to know how you handled the staff and the children.**

JW: We were already in the process of redesigning our staff. We had a black domestic staff member who was very much over-qualified, who was asking whether she could enrol for the BQCC, and since she was already on the staff she seemed an obvious appointee to the child care staff. Initially the children did show some anxiety — there were some racist remarks like "I won't take orders from a black child care worker" — but on the whole this was a good opportunity for discussing with them the changes in South Africa. One of our girls, for example, had started work and had a black supervisor. We were able to field and accept their feelings and their fears, but the fact was that we, the committee and the staff, were committed to a new direction on moral and Christian grounds, and they came to accept this.

**CCW: It is interesting that you decided to begin with integrating the staff team.**

JW: Much of the initial tension was located around the new black child care worker, and of course there were incidents of name-calling and indiscipline which we simply handled as they arose. We were to allow eight months with this new staff member before introducing black children. It helped us to work on some of the obvious difficulties such as culture and language barriers. It set a tone in the organisation, for example, that racism was not tolerated. And we were handling the issues for all to see at the adult level before exposing the

children to the same new experiences.

**CCW: The parents?**

JW: We organised a tea for parents, went out and collected all those who were unable to get to the home on their own, and the Chairman of the management committee explained to them all what was intended. And this was interesting, for they accepted this readily. Some congratulated the new black child care worker on her promotion, others expressed the view that this was in line with what was happening in South Africa.

**CCW: Tell us about the arrival of the first black children.**

JW: The first youngster was a boy of 14 with whom I had worked previously. Suddenly orphaned he needed a place in a children's home and Guild Cottage was suggested. We spent some time preparing the children, as we usually do, for the new child, and we were thrilled that the fact he was black proved to be no problem with them. There had been so much change: everybody was quite amenable and I didn't get any of the expected flack. We then had him to visit for lunch and the afternoon — and there was almost an over-reaction! Where we had had racist remarks with the child care worker, we now had these 14 and 15 year old kids, quite inappropriately really, walking around holding hands! Of course, he loved all this attention, but now it has calmed down. When we discuss a new child now, the others ask in a very matter-of-fact way "Is it a boy or a girl? Is he black or white?"

**CCW: What arrangements did you make about schooling?**

JW: We sent the first child to a private school, where they tested him, and moved him back to a lower class. This has been disturbing generally, the differences in standards and the sense of inadequacy when the youngsters hit another education system. I read in a school report that one boy had been in a class with 130 other children, he had never failed, but now was not accepted in his previous level — and has in fact been put back *three years*. This has taken a lot of working through on our part, and also at the school where bridging classes are having to be developed. We have schooling difficulties with a number of children. Remember that our white children are most often educationally disadvantaged, and we have similar problems getting coloured and black pupils into appropriate classes and schools. There is also the whole matter of travel and transport to distant schools.

**CCW: Do you undertake additional**

**educational and supplementary tasks in the children's home?**

JW: We have come to realise that we need an educator on our staff team. In the past we have, like most children's homes, had well-structured homework and study periods, and other 'education' has been at the informal level of life skills training, but these are not helping the children where they need help now. We experience all the frustrations of education crisis, the 'chalk-downs' and such difficulties in the schools — and also the selection of private colleges which seem to proliferate, but many of them not living up to their claims.

**CCW: I hear the possibility of additional expenses and also lower capitation grants from different state departments. What has this change done for your finances?**

JW: Our funding has in fact improved dramatically. We receive more funding from business, who previously were saying they were unprepared to fund whites-only services. We have had to work for additional funds. Where we have admitted children privately at this stage, we have managed to raise sponsorships at the capitation grant level. We have had to raise money for those extra educational costs. But we are a small children's home, and these considerations have not been as frightening as they might have been in a larger home.

**CCW: How do the children differ in terms of needs?**

JW: We are having to do some careful thinking and planning around this. We find that the black children present with needs similar to those of the white children ten or fifteen years ago, namely arising from basic deprivation. The whites today are the more seriously disturbed and abused children and we have been afraid of exposing the the black newcomers to a more troubled group, or even perhaps offering an over-sophisticated treatment service. But our management of the children and the groups is good, and we are coping with this.

**CCW: What have been the hard parts and the challenges?**

JW: The education. Both from the point of view of the children and from the point of view of finding appropriate facilities. The cultural differences have sometimes been hard to understand, and some staff have questioned the rightness of what we are doing in terms of tribal and/or cultural backgrounds. But the black children we get are very westernised, city children. In many ways it is we whites who are learning to change. We are a very "white" organisation, and we

have to look at everything from the menus to the pictures on the wall in making this a home for all races. Relating to each other across language differences has been a challenge. Black and white stereotypes have sometimes surfaced: these are things we can work with, but they are new things and we are having to learn as we go along. When I talk about the stereotypes, I include youngsters' self-images: black children doing a life skills course, for example, must deal with the fact that they were put back three years at school ... they can get to feel "black kids aren't as good as white kids". Also, with the various school systems, white children are on holiday at one time, then coloured children are on holiday, then the black children ... the old tidy timetables go by the board. We used to use our school holiday times for staff training, for catching up on

home visits, and so on. This is very hard for the staff, never having school holiday times. Then you have the black kids wanting to watch a certain programme on TV and the white kids wanting something else! You can't deal with this democratically since the black kids are still in the minority — we'll end up with another TV set!

On the whole this has been a very positive experience for all of us. The children accept each other, they do things together, they dance together and play together. We have watched attitudes change very rapidly and very encouragingly. In going along with what seemed to be the right thing to do in the new South Africa, we have had the opportunity to see the challenges and the realities, and the privilege of working at them. Hopefully this will be of some use to our colleagues in child care.



## ON THE MOVE ...

The NACCW's National Office, which shares office space with the Natal Region, has had to find new premises as from November 1st.

*The new street address is:*  
**NACCW,  
 18 Malvern Heights,  
 Coronation Road  
 Malvern, Natal**

*The postal address remains:*  
**NACCW  
 P.O. Box 28323  
 Malvern, Natal  
 4055**

*The telephone numbers remain:*  
**031-463-1033 or 031-463-1099.**

*The fax number remains:*  
**031-44-1106.**

The new accommodation in a newly-developed office complex has adequate offices for the National and Regional organisations, and includes a meeting/training room. There is also ample convenient parking. However, curtains and other domestic accoutrements are lacking, and nearby members might be inspired to contribute something suitable.

(A strictly unofficial source suggests that the new offices were specially chosen because of the proximity of a home-bake shoppe within hunger-pang distance. Of course we regard such a mischievous suggestion as entirely credible.)

Carol Eger of the Association for Retarded Citizens Broward Inc. Fort Lauderdale, Florida, writes in the Nova University journal *The Child and Youth Care Administrator*

# Bosses: Emperors of the Workplace



A colleague of mine supervises a treatment program for behaviourally disordered children. He frequently is asked how he is able to work with such a problematic group. "Oh the kids are great," he says with a smile, "it's the staff who drive me crazy." Interestingly enough, I recently ran into one of his employees. "How's it going?" I asked. "Oh the kids are great," she replied, "but the boss is driving us crazy." After musing over the irony of the situation, a few disconcerting questions came to mind: Which bosses drive their employees crazy and do these bosses know that their employees consider them to be problems?

Dr. Mardy Grothe and Dr. Peter Wylie address these questions in their book, *Problem Bosses*. After researching the literature they discovered some common profiles for bosses who are considered to be problems for their staff. Included in their findings are:

1. *The "nice guy, but" bosses.* They are overly agreeable, afraid of conflict, unassertive, and can't find it in their hearts to fire poor performers.
2. *The panic button bosses.* They are frantic, excitable, disorganised, and always act as if they are confronting a crisis.
3. *The commandants.* They are autocratic, authoritarian, and tyrannical. They have sharp tongues and bully their employees.
4. *The petty bureaucrats.* They worship the organisation and its policies, love detail and paperwork, have a tendency towards rigidity and caution, and do everything by the book.
5. *The passed over, put on the shelf bosses.* They are preoccupied with the unfairness of their lot in life. They know they are going nowhere and their employees know it too. They end up having a deadening influence on everybody who reports to them.
6. *Deviant bosses.* They are the alcoholics, drug abusers, sexual exploiters, pathological liars, and AWOL executives who mostly do personal business on company time.
7. *Egotists.* They are the pompous know-it-alls who perfect the game of upmanship.

8. *Incompetents* They don't know what's going on but act as if they do. Employees resent them for their posturing and the extra work their ineffectiveness creates.
9. *Depressive bosses* They have poor self concepts, a pessimistic and negative outlook, and are thoroughly uninspiring to work for.
10. *Paranoid bosses* They mistrust their employees and can easily misconstrue innocent remarks as unfair criticism or signs of disloyalty. They are constantly suspicious of other people's motives.
11. *Schizoid bosses* They are aloof, detached, and always keep employees at arm's length.

Grothe and Wylie discovered that most bosses do not know that they are problems for their employees. The authors use the fairytale, *The Emperor's New Clothes* as an analogy to what they believe perpetuates the myth of effective leadership. Like the emperor who deceived himself into believing he was wearing the most stunning clothes, bosses tend to deceive themselves into believing they are effective leaders. And like the emperor's subjects who praised the beauty of a wardrobe they failed to see, employees will exclaim "the boss is great". They will tell the bosses what they want to hear, when in fact they believe otherwise. Thus, bosses fail to receive the honest, candid feedback that will counter their tendency towards self-deception.

Although most of Grothe and Wylie's book is devoted to teaching employees how to handle their problem bosses, they do take time to explain to the reader the basic facts of life surrounding boss-hood:

*Bosses are ordinary people.* Most are not the larger than life caricatures we see portrayed on the cover of *Fortune Magazine*. They are people like everyone else, with a set of personality quirks and problems that come into the office with them.

*Being a boss is a tough job.* Bosses must manage groups of people with diverse needs and personalities. They must handle emergencies and make important decisions quickly, even when they feel ill-equipped to do so. And they, too, must cope with their own problem bosses.

*Bosses have poor role models.* Most of us learn from the example of others. However, most bosses have few models to emulate. More often they have learned what not to do. Rarely, have they learned what to do.

*Bosses don't become bosses because of their ability to manage people.* In most fields there is a relationship between ability and the capacity to handle a job. Sadly supervision is an exception.

Most people become bosses because they are loyal employees with good attitudes, hard workers, skilled technicians, savvy politicians, holders of advanced degrees, corporate founders, or relatives of the big boss. Unfortunately, none of these factors has anything to do with the ability to manage people.

Grothe and Wylie seem to be telling us that, unlike the emperor, we should protect ourselves from the cloak of self-deceit.

One way to do this is to encourage our employees to provide us with feedback. However, we must not expect that they will be eager and forthright. Employees have learned that it is risky to offer feedback, even when it is solicited. They have heard of those who, like the ancient Greek messengers, were sacrificed for being the bearer of bad news. Therefore, we must consider our choices. Is it more tolerable to face our faults in private? Or must we, like the emperor, one day discover that we are walking around naked in front of the crowd?

#### Source

Grothe M., & Wylie P. (1987). *Problem Bosses*. New York: Facts on File Publications.

# My Oedipus Complex

Told better than Freud could ever have told it, by Irish writer  
**Frank O'Connor**



Father was in the army all through the war — the first war, I mean — so, up to the age of five, I never saw much of him, and what I saw did not worry me. Sometimes I woke and there was a big figure in khaki peering down at me in the candlelight. Sometimes in the early morning I heard the slamming of the front door and the clatter of nailed boots down the cobbles of the lane. These were Father's entrances and exits. Like Santa Claus he came and went mysteriously. In fact, I rather liked his visits, though it was an uncomfortable squeeze between Mother and him when I got into the big bed in the early morning. He smoked, which gave him a pleasant musty smell, and shaved, an operation of astounding interest. Each time he left a trail of souvenirs — model tanks and Gurkha knives with handles made of bullet cases, and German helmets and cap badges and button sticks, and all sorts of military equipment — carefully stowed away in a long box on top of the wardrobe, in case they ever came in handy. There was a bit of the magpie about Father; he expected everything to come in handy. When his back was turned, Mother let me get a chair and rummage through his treasures. She didn't seem to think so highly of them as he did. The war was the most peaceful period of my life. The window of my attic faced

southeast. My mother had curtained it, but that had small effect. I always woke with the first light and, with all the responsibilities of the previous day melted, feeling myself rather like the sun, ready to illumine and rejoice. Life never seemed so simple and clear and full of possibilities as then. I put my feet out from under the clothes — I called them Mrs. Left and Mrs. Right — and invented dramatic situations for them in which they discussed the problems of the day. At least Mrs. Right did; she was very demonstrative, but I hadn't the same control of Mrs. Left, so she mostly contented herself with nodding agreement.

They discussed what Mother and I should do during the day, what Santa Claus should give a fellow for Christmas, and what steps should be taken to brighten the home. There was that little matter of the baby for instance. Mother and I could never agree about that. Ours was the only house in the terrace without a new baby, and Mother said we couldn't afford one till Father came back from the war because they cost seventeen shillings and sixpence. That showed how simple she was. The Geneys up the road had a baby, and everyone knew they couldn't afford seventeen and six. It was probably a cheap baby, and Mother wanted something really good, but I felt she was too exclusive. The Geneys' baby would have done us fine.

Having settled my plans for the day, I got up, put a chair under the attic window, and lifted the frame high enough to stick out my head. The window overlooked the front gardens of the terrace behind ours, and beyond these it looked over a deep valley to the tall, red brick houses terraced up the opposite hillside, which were all still in shadow, while those at our side of the valley were all lit up, though with long strange shadows that made them seem unfamiliar, rigid and painted. After that I went into Mother's room and climbed into the big bed. She woke and I began to tell her of my schemes. By this time, though I never seemed to have noticed it, I was petrified in my nightshirt, and I thawed as I talked until, the last frost melted, I fell asleep beside her and woke again only when I heard her below in the kitchen, making the breakfast.

After breakfast we went into town; heard mass at St. Augustine's and said a prayer for Father, and did the shopping. If the afternoon was fine we either went for a walk in the country or a visit to Mother's great friend in the convent, Mother Saint Dominic. Mother had them all praying for Father, and every night, going to bed, I asked God to send him back safe from the war to us. Little, indeed, did I know what I was praying for!

One morning, I got into the big bed, and there, sure enough, was Father in his usual Santa Claus manner, but later, instead of uniform, he put on his best blue suit, and Mother was as pleased as anything. I saw nothing to be pleased about, because, out of uniform, Father was altogether less interesting, but she only beamed, and explained that our prayers had been answered, and off we went to Mass to thank God for having brought Father safely home.

The irony of it! That very day when he came in to dinner he took off his boots and put on his slippers, donned the dirty old cap he wore about the house to save him from colds, crossed his legs, and began to talk gravely to mother, who looked anxious. Naturally, I disliked her looking anxious, because it destroyed her good looks, so I interrupted him.

"Just a moment, Larry!" she said gently. This was only what she said when we had boring visitors, so I attached no importance to it and went on talking. "Do be quiet, Larry!" she said impatiently. "Don't you hear me talking to Daddy?"

This was the first time I had heard those ominous words, "talking to Daddy," and I couldn't help feeling that if this was how God answered prayers, he couldn't listen to them very attentively.

"Why are you talking to Daddy?" I asked with as great a show of indifference as I could muster.

"Because Daddy and I have business to discuss. Now, don't interrupt again!" In the afternoon, at Mother's request, Father took me for a walk. This time we went into town instead of out in the country, and I thought at first, in my usual optimistic way, that it might be an improvement. It was nothing of the sort. Father and I had quite different notions of a walk in town. He had no proper interest in trams, ships, and horses, and the only thing that seemed to divert him was talking to fellows as old as himself. When I wanted to stop he simply went on, dragging me behind him by the hand; when he wanted to stop I had no alternative but to do the same. I noticed that it seemed to be a sign that he wanted to stop for a long time whenever he leaned against a wall. The second time I saw him do it I got wild. He seemed to be settling himself forever. I pulled him by the coat and trousers, but, unlike Mother who, if you were too persistent, got into a wax and said: "Larry, if you don't behave yourself, I'll give you a good slap," Father had an extraordinary capacity for amiable inattention. I sized him up and wondered would I cry, but he seemed to be too remote to be annoyed even by that. Really, it was like going for a walk with a mountain! He either ignored the wrench-

ing and pummeling entirely, or else glanced down with a grin of amusement from his peak. I had never met anyone so absorbed in himself as he seemed.

At teatime, "talking to Daddy" began again, complicated this time by the fact that he had an evening paper, and every few minutes he put it down and told Mother something new out of it. I felt this was foul play. Man for man, I was prepared to compete with him any time for Mother's attention, but when he had it all made up for him by other people it left me no chance. Several times I tried to change the subject without success.

"You must be quiet while Daddy is reading, Larry," Mother said impatiently. It was clear that she either genuinely liked talking to Father better than talking to me, or else that he had some terrible hold on her which made her afraid to admit the truth.

"Mummy," I said that night when she was tucking me up, "do you think if I prayed hard God would send daddy back to the war?"

She seemed to think about that for a moment.

"No, dear," she said with a smile. "I don't think He would."

"Why would't He, Mummy?"

"Because there isn't a war any longer, dear."

"But, Mummy, couldn't God make another war, if He liked?"

"He wouldn't like to, dear. It's not God who makes wars, but bad people."

"Oh!" I said.

I was disappointed about that. I began to think that God wasn't quite what He was cracked up to be.

Next morning I woke at my usual hour, feeling like a bottle of champagne. I put out my feet and invented a long conversation in which Mrs. Right talked of the trouble she had with her own father till she put him in the Home. I didn't quite know what the Home was but it sounded the right place for Father. Then I got my chair and stuck my head out of the attic window. Dawn was just breaking, with a guilty air that made me feel I had caught it in the act. My head bursting with stories and schemes, I stumbled in next door, and in the half-darkness scrambled into the big bed. There was no room at Mother's side so I had to get between her and Father. For the time being I had forgotten about him, and for several minutes I sat bolt upright, racking my brains to know what I could do with him. He was taking up more than his fair share of the bed, and I couldn't get comfortable, so I gave him several kicks that made him grunt and stretch. He made room all right, though. Mother waked and felt for me. I settled back comfortab-

ly in the warmth of the bed with my thumb in my mouth.

"Mummy!" I hummed, loudly and contentedly.

"Sssh! dear," she whispered. "Don't wake Daddy!"

This was a new development, which threatened to be even more serious than "talking to Daddy." Life without my early morning conferences was unthinkable.

"Why?" I asked severely.

"Because poor Daddy is tired."

This seemed to me a quite inadequate

**It was clear that she either genuinely liked talking to Father better than talking to me, or else that he had some terrible hold on her which made her afraid to admit the truth.**

reason, and I was sickened by the sentimentality of her "poor Daddy." I never liked that sort of gush; it always struck me as insincere.

"Oh!" I said lightly. Then in my most winning tone: "Do you know where I want to go with you today, Mummy?"

"No, dear," she sighed.

"I want to go down the glen and fish for thornybacks with my new net, and then I want to go out to the Fox and Hounds, and —"

"Don't-wake-daddy!" she hissed angrily, clapping her hand across my mouth.

But it was too late. He was awake, or nearly so. He grunted and reached for the matches. Then he stared incredulously at his watch.

"Like a cup of tea, dear?" asked Mother in a meek, hushed voice I had never heard her use before. It sounded almost as though she were afraid.

"Tea?" he exclaimed indignantly. "Do you know what the time is?"

"And after that I want to go up the Rathcooney Road," I said loudly, afraid I'd forget something in all those interruptions.

"Go to sleep at once, Larry!" she said sharply.

I began to snivel. I couldn't concentrate, the way the pair went on, and smothering my early morning schemes was like burying a family from the cradle.

Father said nothing, but lit his pipe and sucked it, looking out into the shadows

without minding Mother or me. I knew he was mad. Every time I made a remark Mother hushed me irritably. I was mortified. I felt it wasn't fair; there was even something sinister in it. Every time I had pointed out to her the waste of making two beds when we could both sleep in one, she had told me it was healthier like that, and now here was this man, this stranger, sleeping with her without the least regard for her health!

He got up early and made tea, but though he brought Mother a cup he brought none for me.

"Mummy," I shouted, "I want a cup of tea, too."

"Yes, dear," she said patiently. "You can drink from Mummy's saucer."

That settled it. Either Father or I would have to leave the house. I didn't want to drink from Mother's saucer; I wanted to be treated as an equal in my own home, so, just to spite her, I drank it all and left none for her. She took that quietly, too. But that night when she was putting me to bed she said gently:

"Larry, I want you to promise me something"

"What is it?" I asked.

"Not to come in and disturb poor Daddy in the morning. Promise?"

"Poor Daddy" again! I was becoming suspicious of everything involving that quite impossible man.

"Why?" I asked.

"Because poor Daddy is worried and tired and he doesn't sleep well."

"Why doesn't he, Mummy?"

"Well, you know, don't you, that while he was at the war Mummy got the pennies from the post office?"

"From Miss MacCarthy?"

"That's right. But now, you see, Miss MacCarthy hasn't any more pennies, so Daddy must go out and find us some. You know what would happen if he couldn't?"

"No," I said, "tell us."

"Well, I think we might have to go out and beg for them like the poor old woman on Fridays. We wouldn't like that, would we?"

"No," I agreed. "We wouldn't."

"So you'll promise not to come in and wake him?"

"Promise."

Mind you, I meant that. I knew pennies were a serious matter, and I was all against having to go out and beg like the old woman on Fridays. Mother laid out all my toys in a complete ring round the bed so that, whatever way I got out, I was bound to fall over one of them.

When I woke I remembered my promise all right. I got up and sat on the floor and played — for hours, it seemed to me.

Then I got my chair and looked out the attic window for more hours. I wished it



Father's hold on her would be broken. "Won't that be nice?" she said with a smile.

"It'll be very nice," I said confidently. "Because we're going to have lots and lots of babies."

"That's right, dear," she said placidly. "I think we'll have one soon, and then you'll have plenty of company."

I was no end pleased about that because it showed that in spite of the way she gave in to Father she still considered my wishes. Besides, it would put the Geney's in their place.

It didn't turn out like that, though. To begin with, she was very preoccupied — I supposed about where she would get the seventeen and six — and though Father took to staying out late in the evenings it did me no particular good. She stopped taking me for walks, became as touchy as blazes, and smacked me for nothing at all. Sometimes I wished I'd never mentioned the confounded baby — I seemed to have a genius for bringing calamity on myself.

And calamity it was! Sonny arrived in the most appalling hullabaloo — even that much he couldn't do without a fuss — and from the first moment I disliked him. He was a difficult child — so far as I was concerned he was always difficult — and demanded far too much attention.

Mother was simply silly about him, and couldn't see when he was only showing off. As company he was worse than useless. He slept all day, and I had to go round the house on tiptoe to avoid waking him. It wasn't any longer a question of not waking Father. The slogan now was "Don't-wake-Sonny!" I couldn't understand why the child wouldn't sleep at the proper time, so whenever Mother's back was turned I woke him. Sometimes to keep him awake I pinched him as well. Mother caught me at it one day and gave me a most unmerciful flaking.

One evening, when Father was coming in from work, I was playing trains in the front garden.

I let on not to notice him; instead, I pretended to be talking to myself, and said in a loud voice: "If another bloody baby comes into this house, I'm going out."

Father stopped dead and looked at me over his shoulder.

"What's that you said?" he asked sternly. "I was only talking to myself," I replied, trying to conceal my panic. "It's private." He turned and went in without a word.

Mind you, I intended it as a solemn warning, but its effect was quite different.

Father started being quite nice to me. I could understand that, of course. Mother was quite sickening about Sonny. Even at mealtimes she'd get up and gawk at him

in the cradle with an idiotic smile, and tell Father to do the same. He was always polite about it, but he looked so puzzled you could see he didn't know what she was talking about. He complained of the way Sonny cried at night, but she only got cross and said that Sonny never cried except when there was something up with him — which was a flaming lie, because Sonny never had anything up with him, and only cried for attention. It was really painful to see how simpleminded she was. Father wasn't attractive, but he had a fine intelligence. He saw through Sonny, and now he knew that I saw through him as well.

One night I woke with a start. There was someone beside me in the bed. For one wild moment I felt sure it must be Mother, having come to her senses and left Father for good, but then I heard Sonny in convulsions in the next room, and Mother saying: "There! There!

There!" and I knew it wasn't she. It was Father. He was lying beside me, wide-awake, breathing hard and apparently as mad as hell.

After a while it came to me what he was mad about. It was his turn now. After turning me out of the big bed, he had been turned out himself. Mother had no consideration now for anyone but that poisonous pup, Sonny. I couldn't help feeling sorry for Father. I had been through it all myself, and even at that age I was magnanimous. I began to stroke him down and say: "There! There!" He wasn't exactly responsive.

"Aren't you asleep either?" he snarled. "Ah, come on and put your arm around us, can't you?" I said, and he did, in a sort of way. Gingerly, I suppose, is how you'd describe it. He was very bony but better than nothing.

At Christmas he went out of his way to buy me a really nice model railway.

The new year will soon be upon us, and child care workers, both individually and as members of teams, are considering new growth points to tackle, new directions to take, new challenges to conquer. If we are thinking of following a new course of study, we have to 'psych' ourselves up for the extra time and commitment we know this will involve. It will mean some harder work, some later nights, missing a few episodes of *Loving* or a few rugby matches on TV! It also means preparing our budget for the coming year to accommodate, on the financial level, the cost of courses and registration fees and other changes to our routine.

Organisations need to be planning for education and training in their budgets too — and this includes not only finance but also time allocation for staff members. 1991 brings a national conference as well as probably another national workshop. It certainly brings courses for child care workers. The Basic Qualification in Child Care (BQCC) is now the largest child care course in South Africa, is itself constantly growing and changing in content and format, and will be starting in George and Kimberley in addition to the other eleven centres where it is run. The Problem Profile Approach (PPA) is a course for teams from children's institu-

tions. The course on Supervision for senior child care staff is becoming formalised as it is offered in different centres. The exciting new Diploma in Child Care Administration for principals and other senior administrators begins in January 1991. An important course on

Working with Sexually Abused Children is in the final stages of preparation. And there will be another dozen shorter courses on a variety of practice areas.

All of these courses have price-tags: the BQCC will cost R100.00 per module (R75.00 for NACCW members) as from 1991. The PPA has been costing R700.00 per team (R500.00 for members) for the full fourteen-month course. The Diploma in Child Care Administration, which is essentially a university-level course, will cost R1000.00 per semester (R750.00 for members). These prices may sound high until we compare them with private sector courses — a two-day business, public relations or communication course can cost over R500.00!



## Budgeting for Growth



So when we budget for 1991, remember that we could invest this money in the building society where it will earn us interest. But if we invest it in our learning it will earn more: it will make us *interested*, and it will make us *interesting* — and thus certainly better at child care work.

I know that we live in the land of dreams. We talk about the Great American Dream and it is part of our history and mythology. We say that people must have dreams. And is not Heaven for some of us the great dream that allows many of us to die in peace?

The problem, as I see it, is not that we have dreams, but that we are too passive about the dreams that we have. They tend to be vaguely formed ideas about the future, with no clarity, no structure and no pathway to reach them. And when we are passive about the dreams we hold, and when they are not clearly formed, they do *not* come true. They are, however, frequently romantic in nature and they can give us moments of feeling good in the present, and they can give us hope for the future. But dreams, poorly formed, can lead us to inaction and future sorrow.

*ut dreams which become visions*, can lead us into a future that we have participated in creating. If, instead of creating a world of fairytales into which we can escape forever, or a world of fantasy into which we escape from times or moments of stress, or instead of creating a future world of dreams and being passive about them, we allow ourselves to have visions, we can act upon the world according to our vision and participate in creating it *as we know it can be*.

For the difference between a dream and a vision is that a dream is a picture of the future as we would *like* it to be but a vision is a picture of the future as we know it *can* be.

Visions are pictures of the future as we can help to create it. Visions give us not only hope for the future, but a pathway to reach it. They allow us to see our role in how things can be. They are perhaps more realistic than dreams because in order to have a vision we must have a pathway of how to reach it, and pathways can only be created if they are possible.

Each and everyone of you has a choice to make. For we cannot pretend that we live our life without making choices. You can choose to live blissfully, and ignorantly, in the world of fairytales. You can pretend that the world is something other than what it is.

You can choose to indulge in fantasies as a way of escaping from parts of the world you do not like. You can involve yourself passively in dreams about how you hope the future will be.

Or you can decide to be a visionary and act upon the world to create it the way you *know it can be*.

It is your life, you are adults, it is your choice. But which ever you choose, it will have implications on your personal as well as your professional life and it will

have dramatic implications for the troubled young people with whom you work.

But if you are visionary, then you will believe in the possibility of creating a different life for yourself and for others in the future. And if you believe in this possibility, the troubled young people with



## Dreams, Visions, Fantasies, Fairytales

Child care workers are people who build the future: the future of our children, the future of our world, the future of our profession

Some reflections by  
**THOM GARFAT**

Acknowledgements to the California Association of Child Care Workers

whom you work will also believe in it. And if they believe there is hope for the future; if they believe they can actively do something to make their own future life a better place then they, too, will be motivated to be active participants in

creating the world as it *can* be. And if, after their time in treatment, they emerge as young people who have an action orientation towards the future, and if they emerge as young people able to take some responsibility for how the world is, then you will have more than succeeded in your goal. For surely it is our goal as child and youth care professionals to help young people become more active and responsible participants in their own future life drama.

Before closing, I would like to make a comment about the development of professional child care in your part of the world. I know that there are people here, involved in child care and its development, who indulge in everything of which I have spoken.

There are those here, who as professional child and youth care workers, live in the world of fairytales. There are also those who indulge in the world of fantasy. And there are those who live in the world of dreams about the professional future. I know, too, that there are those among you who are truly visionaries about the future of child care. They have a vision of the future of our profession and how it can be, and they are actively involved, on a regular basis, in creating that future. They are people who see the way our professional life is, have a vision about how it *can* be, and are acting upon the professional world to create a future for child and youth care *as it can be*.

If you believe in the professional future of child and youth care you will seek them out and ask them to share their vision with you and if you truly care, you will, together with them, work towards your common vision of the professional future. For, as our profession develops, so will the quality of our services to the troubled young people with whom we work.

I have a vision of how the world can be. It is a world in which *all* children, troubled or not, are well cared for — and I don't mean "adequately" cared for, I mean *well* cared for.

And it is a world where the troubled children and youth are well cared for by qualified, highly trained child and youth care professionals, who are seen as leaders of the child's treatment — it is a world in which other professionals truly support the interventions of child and youth care workers. It is a world that *can* be. It is a world that is possible. It only requires *our* commitment to a shared vision. And the commitment will come when you share the vision. For, unlike dreams, once you have your vision, it will haunt you forever until you commit yourself to work towards it.

**FOSTER CARE AND ADOPTION LAWS:****Do they work for the children  
— or against them?**

Kaye Voges

In South Africa during 1988, for every newborn European baby available, there were three hundred childless couples wanting to adopt. Since then the latter have increased while the former have decreased. These numbers pertain only to those couples who have made formal application for babies placed with adoption agencies. Many more couples, ignorant of the procedure for adoption or too afraid to try, long for a child. There are also a great many who, although they have a child or children of their own, would still like to extend their family by adoption.

I am an adoptive parent and in the four years it took to find my son I conducted some research into this issue. During that time I spoke to childless couples, adopted teenagers and adults, couples who have adopted, foster parents and the welfare and social workers involved. One fact remained constant: there are a great many children from, say, one month old and upward, who could and should be available for adoption at the same time as there are so many couples desperate to adopt. Why is this the case? The reason is both simple and complex. Simple because our laws governing the fate of these children have tried to 'protect' both child and biological parent. But the question remains as to whether the laws are doing that, or is it a case of one party having to suffer?

The reason is complex because there is an unavoidable emotional issue here which the laws have tried to override, and in so doing the true welfare of the child is lost.

**Children in homes**

Put aside for a moment the sadness of the childless couple and let us look at the unwanted and/or abused child placed in a welfare home. There seem to be a thousand and one reasons why the child is initially placed in such a home, ranging from the parent cannot cope, financial difficulties, etc., to violence and neglect. As things stand at present, custody and the parental rights over the child can be legally removed from the parents if after two years they have shown no interest in the child or have not tried to provide a settled home. However, this law is rarely

enforced and many children remain in Welfare care for longer periods than two years.

Meanwhile the social worker tries to help the parent towards responsibility and respectability, the belief being that a child is ultimately better off with his biological parents. In the meantime the child continues to live in the institution, is no doubt fed, clothed and cared for in the best possible manner, but rarely able to attain individual attention or love, the one thing that is surely paramount to a child's life. That time also means the child is in the company of other 'sheltered' children, all of whom come from problem homes. This can have a detrimental effect on the child. Most important, he is often in a non-attachment situation which could also be described as a free-floating emotional limbo. There is no one person to identify with or attach to. From children I have seen in such situations this has a very frightening and often permanent effect.

**Emotional security**

This is where the law fails. It states on the one hand that the child's welfare is paramount, and provides shelter and protection; but on the other hand it fails to provide emotional security. Is it possible to do this? Yes, I believe it is, but to do so the laws may have to be harsher toward the parents.

When many of these children are born to parents who never planned them or wanted them, who cannot be responsible for their own lives let alone for a child's, why do we spend so much time, so much of the child's time, trying to rehabilitate the parent? And why, when we say the child's welfare is the most important factor, do we place him second? Just wait for a few years while we try to sort out your parent! "Ah, but" the people say, "that child 'belongs' with his real parents, the mother who carried him for nine months and gave birth to him. She has a 'right' to her child". I would answer that none of us has a right to our children, that we only earn that right by caring for and loving them in the best way we can. The psychologists say a child undergoes terrible stress and possibly permanent

damage if taken from a parent. What of the child who is placed in a children's institution for an extended period? Perhaps with the threat of permanently losing their children parents would make more effort to provide an acceptable home.

□ □ □

In an effort to determine what is really better for the child, I have interviewed several people who were brought up in institutions. It must, of course, be borne in mind that they are now adults and that conditions in welfare homes have changed in recent years. However, many of their comments remain relevant to today's situation.

**JANET (28), MARRIED, WITH NO CHILDREN**

Janet was born in Johannesburg to an unmarried mother of eighteen. Three months later the mother moved in with a boyfriend, but neither was prepared for or wanted parenthood, so Janet was placed in a welfare home. At three years of age Janet was moved to another institution and lived there until she was nearly eighteen. Her mother would phone the home occasionally, and went to visit Janet several times up until she was nine. After that there was no contact.

*Janet, do you remember your life in the Welfare home?*

Yes, I can remember quite far back to when I was very small.

*Are they good memories?*

In the main. The people there were very good to me, but as I became older I became very unsettled and bewildered about it. I think children in that situation realise, even when they are very young, that they are different.

I went to a normal home once for the Christmas holidays, with a couple who had no children of their own. They were very nice and gave me a lot of lovely things, but I still felt very strange there. I think I was about four. Their house seemed enormous, and I missed the other kids. This holiday made me feel very different because we went to visit some of their friends and they all had their own kids. I knew I did not have a proper mother or father or home.

*What happened after that holiday?*

It is not easy to describe the feeling, but afterwards I suppose I had seen the other side of life, sort of. The welfare ladies looked after our basic needs, but there was no 'special' person to kiss me good-night, read a bed-time story or any of the little things a parent does.

*So you remember your mother?*

Yes. Sometimes she would come and see

me; sometimes she took me out for the day.

*What did you feel about her?*

I didn't like her very much. She was very quick to smack and often slapped my face. I was rather frightened of her and she certainly didn't feel like my mother, or how I thought a mother should be. She was really just a person who turned up now and then.

*If you had been able to go and live with her, do you think you would have liked that?*

No, definitely not. I longed for a mother and father, but she wouldn't have been my choice of a mother. I used to have an 'imagine' game where I would pretend I had a real mother and father who, one day, would come and fetch me. That imagined mother had nothing in common with my real one. I never knew my father.

*Did you ever think of being adopted?*

Yes. Once when I was about six a couple came to see us kids. They wanted to adopt a child and stayed almost all day talking to us. I kept hoping they would choose me, but they eventually adopted another girl. I cried for a long time when they left. Many years later I found out that they wanted me but my mother refused to sign the papers. It seemed she didn't really want me, but didn't want to give me up either. I've never been able to understand that attitude.

*Do you think it was wrong then that your childhood was spent in a welfare home?*

Yes. I think the law should have made my mother sign those papers, but preferably when I was still young. I would then have had the chance to have adoptive parents who really loved me and wanted me. Being an unwanted child living in an institution is a stigma one carries for life. You can come to terms with it but you always mourn for the loving parents you never had.

## **ALBERT (61), MARRIED, ONE SON**

Albert was placed in a welfare home almost from birth. He had two older brothers also in the home. His mother frequently claimed him back and on several occasions he lived with her for up to six months at a time. His parents were divorced when he was seven and his mother served a prison sentence for theft when he was eight. She also had a drinking problem.

*Albert, do you remember much of your childhood?*

Yes, quite a bit.

*Were you a happy child?*

No, not at all. I hated my childhood.

*Did they treat you well at the welfare home?*

Well, they looked after us kids as best they could. In those days they were called

Orphanages, although I don't remember ever knowing a real orphan. We were clothed, fed, housed and cared for and most of the people were nice to us and liked kids. However, there were a lot of different age groups amongst us. Some were admitted when very young and some were much older. Some of the older ones were real hard cases with very bad backgrounds. They were always causing trouble. I don't think this hodgepodge of ages in one home happens much today. It certainly didn't work well then.

*Why do you think that?*

Well, because it exposed the younger ones to a lot of bad behaviour, violence, stealing, bad language and so on. We grew up thinking it was the norm.

*Did you see much of your brothers?*

No. It was an enormous home and they were housed in a different section. It was sometime before I even knew I had brothers.

*On the occasions when you lived with your mother, were you happy?*

No. They were terrible times. I hated the home but I hated being with my mother even more. While she was with my father they both drank a lot and had fights. Most nights they would go out and leave me locked in the flat. Most of my earliest memories are of their fights, things being smashed up, screaming and yelling. I would start to cry and they would then turn on me. Most of the time I was covered in bruises from these beatings.

*Didn't the social workers try to stop this?*

Most of the time they didn't know it was happening and I was too scared to tell them. And apart from talking to my parents, there wasn't much they could do. When my mother was sent to prison for shoplifting I was sent back to the home.

*Did you live with your mother again?*

Yes, after her release she agreed to have regular counselling and for a while stayed off the bottle. She was divorced then and moved to Durban. I was sent to her, but my brothers stayed in the home.

*Why was it that only you were sent?*

I don't really know. I think because she couldn't afford to look after all of us.

*Were things better then?*

Not for long. She lost her job within a few months and had different men living with her at various times. I did not like any of them and I don't think they liked me.

*Do you think it was a good thing to be able to go to your mother or would it have been better if you had remained in the welfare home?*

Neither. Going to and fro did no good at all. Both my mother and father were useless as parents and that should have been accepted from the beginning. My brothers and I were never really wanted

or loved. Living in an institution was no consolation for that.

*What do you think of the situation with children in welfare homes today?*

Well it's difficult to say really. There are some parents who need help and can respond favourably to it, that is when they want their kid in the first place. Then I think welfare homes should provide a temporary shelter for children, but only temporary. The parent could be given, say, a year to sort themselves out, but even a year is a very long time in a child's mind. Then there are those parents who don't have a hope of ever coming right and those who obviously don't want their kids. In these cases I think the child should be taken away permanently and adopted.

*Do you think you would have been happier if you had been adopted or fostered?*

I can't say. It depends on the adoptive parents. I suppose if a couple adopt a child they really do want it and will love it. If I'd had loving parents and a secure home I probably would have been much happier. You can put up with most problems in life as long as you're loved and wanted. I don't know if fostering is such a good thing.

There again it depends so much on the foster parents. I am very much against shunting kids back and forth between real parents and homes. I think this is very bad.

That's just using the kid in an experiment to see if the parents can cope. The child is the one who really suffers from that.

## **ANNE (37), TWICE MARRIED, TWO FOSTER CHILDREN**

Anne comes from a normal background. Her father died when she was thirteen and her mother remarried a year later. She has three sisters and a brother. Anne is the youngest. Her mother has fostered several children.

*Anne, did you have a happy childhood?*

Yes, very much so. My parents love kids and we all get on very well. I've been very lucky because both my father and stepfather were wonderful people and there was always love and happiness in my family.

*You have two foster children. How long have you had them?*

Shelly is the eldest, she's twelve and she was placed with me when she was two-and-a-half. Susan is one month old and I've had her since birth.

*Are these the only children you have fostered?*

No, I have had several, but only for short periods except for Shelly. She is here for long-term if not permanent fostering.

*Do you know Shelly or Susan's parents.*

I have met Shelly's mother on several occasions, but not Susan's.

*It must be very hard to part with a child when it is returned to the parents?*

Well the whole aim of fostering, of course, is to provide a temporary home for the child. Only if you are prepared for this can you be a foster parent. But yes, it is often very hard to part with the child. I've had Shelly so long now that she feels like a daughter of my own and should her mother come to claim her I would be heartbroken.

*Why has Shelly been with you for so long?*

Her mother is European, her father Malay. Her mother could not face the racial prejudice and as she comes from an affluent family, Shelly's birth was an embarrassment. (Shelly's 'coloured' ancestry is very apparent, as she took after her father). She was placed in a welfare home soon after birth.

The problem here is her mother openly admits that she cannot cope with the child, but on the other hand does not want to give her up completely. She does come and see her sometimes and always brings her presents. I do not think there is any chance that she would remove her from my care. Well in Shelly's case it is very complex, because her 'coloured' background is obvious. If she had been adopted, it may have been better if she had gone to coloured parents. As it is she has a secure and loving home with me, but we all have a lot of explaining to do when she is old enough to understand. She will have to live with the fact that she could not live with her mother because she is not 100% white.

Adopted children have enough adjustments to make and they soon realise they are not the same as other children. They normally accept this quite well, but having a race difference to explain in the South African situation as well is very difficult.

Shelly knows her mother and she also knows I am her foster mother. How much she understands of the situation I do not know.

I think it is wrong for a child to have nowhere to really 'belong'. There is a need for foster homes, but I think they should be used only for temporary periods.

The authorities must decide whether a child should be taken out of parental custody and placed in a permanent and secure home or not.

Of course, every case is different. Susan's mother is a young varsity student. She loves her baby and wants her very much, but needs help to care for her while she finishes her studies. As soon as she leaves varsity and has a job she will take Susan and I have no doubt that she will care for her very well. In this instance I am sure Susan will be better off being with her real mother.

## Five Years Ago

For readers who weren't around then, this regular feature remembers features from the pages of this journal this month five years ago

October 1985

Institutional abuse was the subject of the Editorial and the leading article. D.L. Peters (originally writing in *Child Care Quarterly*) argued for the child care profession to police itself rather than relying on external regulation: "We need to take responsibility for our own profession and to convince the public that we are worthy of its trust." Dr Jeannie Roberts in her article reminded us that abuse also includes our *failure* to provide the opportunities, respect and protection which are the right of children. The standard answers to child abuse (smaller homes, better training, etc.) were powerless if there was not also a willingness on the part of everyone involved in child care to examine their own values and practice. "Having the best food in town, the smartest clothes and the most modern buildings are meaningless if there is no real love, concern and security for the children."

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There was a preview of the forthcoming First International Child Care Workers' Conference to be held in Vancouver, of which the theme was *The Empowerment of Youth*. It was to be through this Conference that the NACCW made contact with Thom Garfat of Canada, keynote speaker at our 1987 Biennial Conference.

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Brian Gannon het 'n filosofie van ons beroep geskets, en het ons daaraan herinner dat kinderversorging 'n agtenswaardige beroep is wat sy man kan staan as gebied van die sosiale wetenskap: "Ons behoort kinderversorging as 'n dissipline op sigself te beskou met sy eie geskiedenis, afskeidpunt, literatuur, kliënt-groep en metodologie". 'n Opsomming van die kinderversorger se taak: "Beide *ontwikkeling en funksionering* word in die versteurde kind belemmer, en deur ons versorging en behandeling word dié nadele reggestel sodat ontwikkeling normaal kan voortgaan."

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In the *Home Visit* pages we featured the King William's Town Children's Home. This organisation had pioneered the

group home concept by buying two residential houses in the town to complement the cottage system operating on the campus. It also boasted a well differentiated staff team and, in support of this, a good staff programme of training, meetings and supervision. The professional staff were also involved in local child abuse and family counselling services so that the children's home offered a wide range of services, both preventative and therapeutic, to the town.

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Di Levine, then newly-appointed NACCW Transvaal Regional Director, wrote on *Understanding Child Neglect*, emphasising the need for us to respond to this phenomenon not only with feelings of anger and dismay, but also with understanding. She highlighted the economic, social, political and cultural perspectives of neglect. Definitions of child neglect tended to be based on community norms, such as "when the expectations of parenthood dominant in our culture are not met" or "failure to provide for the child's needs as defined by the preferred values of the community".

What had emerged in research studies was that parents who neglect and abuse their children had most often themselves experienced abuse, neglect and separation themselves, and their own background of hurt and mistrust left them unable to maintain personal relationships. Their own lives were often characterised by divorce, depression and illness.

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Dina Hatchuel had just arrived in America on an ILEX exchange and wrote of her first impressions. Recent legislation (1980) had focused on the damaging effects of the 'drift' phenomenon whereby children got lost in the welfare system, experienced multiple placements, and lost the sense of continuity and permanence in their lives. This had led to a concentration on *permanency planning* which was to become the watchword of the 1980's. The legislation aimed at a maximum two-year period in care, and emphasised getting children *out of* the welfare system as quickly as possible, rather than getting them into the system.

# Crafts at Camphill Village

CAMPBILL VILLAGE is a rural working community of about 150 people of all ages who live, study, relax and freely worship together ... remarkable for the fact that 85 percent of them are mentally handicapped. And even more remarkable is the quality and variety of goods created and produced for outside markets. Goods such as hand-spun wool, pottery, clothing, baked delights and fresh vegetables, honey and dairy products.

Camphill is not an institution nor are it's residents patients. It is a working example of productive and harmonious community life based on the philosophies and pioneering work of Karl Konig. A follower of Rudolph Steiner, who was instrumental in bringing about insightful changes in medicine, education and agricultural practices, Konig took his holistic ideas to Scotland in the 1940's where he established the original Camphill School for mentally handicapped.

Today there are 60 Camphills around the world, all run autonomously and administered by a Board of Directors on non-profit lines. The staff do not work for set salaries and aim to provide a rewarding existence for the mentally handicapped who are unable to find this elsewhere. The 16 village homes, workshops and farm buildings spread outward on the 325 ha of land from the chapel and community hall, the latter being the venue for many celebrations involving singing, dancing and drama. Between 4 and 14 villagers live in each home which is run by houseparents who share their lives and day-to-day chores with their extended families.

In addition to crafts, Camphill provides agricultural work such as vegetable and fruit growing and dairy farming with it's variety of products. The bakery uses wheat milled on the premises and all farming follows strict ecological principles which means no poisons or artificial fertilizers. Wholesome stuff and all part of the Steiner philosophy.

Although quite capable of doing so, Camphill is not aimed at becoming self-sufficient to the exclusion of society. In fact, while it is financed through Government funds and charity, outside markets are vital for selling their products. Being able to sell their goods

not only brings in much needed money but also gives residents a sense of purpose and self-worth.

The workshop, run by Will van der Schaaf, was originally established for general farm maintenance. However, realising the therapy wood-work could provide — in that it demands creativity and concentration — and taking note of villagers' increasing skills, it was soon decided to transform it into a craft hall.

Now, villagers, using specially adapted tools, tackle many complex projects under the watchful and patient guidance of Will. The many faceted functions of the workroom blend harmoniously to result in outstanding end-products. Watching these people in the workshop, one is struck by their enthusiasm, pride in their work and humour.

One also cannot ignore the quality and skill of the merchandise. Wildlife plays an important part in their lives. Toy camels, giraffes, elephants, zebras, crocodiles and rhinos abound in varying stages of creation. There is also a farm set, with sheep, dogs, cats, chickens, pigs, cows, horses, trees, fences, a farm house and even a shepherd. Other toys include a fairy tale set of the Bremen Toy Musician, four types of puzzles, a snail, rocking donkey, pulley toy, baby rattle and marionet bird. Camphill supplies a number of outlets around the country and can usually be seen represented at major trade fairs and craft markets. However, visitors are welcomed in the village where they will be shown around and given the chance to take their pick of the products right at the source of their creation. To make arrangements for visits and for more information about the toys and their prices, contact Will van der Schaaf, Camphill Village, Kalbaskraal, 7302, or telephone him on (0226) 22345.

*This feature is reprinted from "Arts & Crafts". Camphill Village can be reached from Cape Town by taking the N7 to Malmesbury. Take the Klein Dassenberg Road turn-off to the left to Darling and Mamre. After 4,4 km take another left turn through the village gates ... and enjoy the experience.*

The Port Elizabeth SOS Children's Village is looking for:

## MOTHERS/AUNTS

The SOS Children's Villages Association is a private, non-political, non-racial organization that cares for orphaned and abandoned children.

If you are interested in being a "Mother" or an "Aunt" and you are prepared to make a long and full-time commitment to these children, we would like to hear from you if you have the following qualifications:

- Single (widowed or divorced) with no financial dependants
- Over 35 years of age
- In good health
- A minimum of Std 8
- A mature and well balanced personality
- Tons of love and affection

Being an SOS Mother/Aunt can give you a secure, happy and fulfilling life. This position must be given very serious thought. If you are interested, please contact the Village Director, Mr Cecil Wood at Telephone: (041) 41-2 812 for further information and the necessary forms.



Children's Villages  
Association of S. A.



*"I'd have left home years ago, but my parents need me around to hold the marriage together." — Heath, in "PUNCH"*

EASTERN CAPE

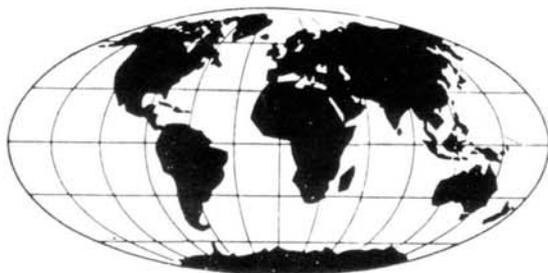
**SOS Village**

The Port Elizabeth SOS Village, in Schauderville, currently has 4 cottages operational. A further 4 Mothers and 2 Aunts will be required for the cottages nearing completion. All SOS Mothers and Aunts must undergo a training course prior to taking charge of a home. Each cottage accommodated 8 children and a "Mother". The Aunt's role is that of "Assistant Mother", but she does not have the full charge at all times of a house.

TRANSVAAL

**AGM with a Difference**

Our AGM took the form of a morning of entertainment provided by the Child Care Workers. Each Home took turns to hold the floor, and entertain us they certainly did! St George's started with a musical band, and this was followed by presentations of poetry, dance and song that was simply delightful. The St Mary's ladies did an aerobics display that kept us in stitches, Epworth presented a modified version of "Got to Pick a Pocket or Two", Nazareth House offered a funny song and dance routine, Johannesburg Children's Home a short drama on a more serious note, and a stunning poetry presentation by the St Joseph's



**Newsbriefs**

team left a deep impression. Terry Langley from St George's read a monologue: "Ode to a Child Care Worker" which he prepared especially for the AGM, and the singing from the ladies from Othandweni and Bethany added a lovely feeling of harmony to our special morning together. We ended up with the whole group singing and dancing together. It was so nice to see everyone relax and let their hair down. Perhaps it was the scrumptious tea prepared by the Strathyre Children's Home that did the trick.

The following people were elected to the Regional Executive Committee: Barrie Lodge, Jean Wright, Dudu Mofokeng, Prof Wilma Hofman, Lynne Whitaker, Hazel Tyler, Shirley Mabusela, Marie Skuy, Joy Jooste, Lisa Williams, Lena Jwill, Debbie King, Anne Parkes.

**Graduation Party**

Prepare yourselves for another fun morning! We will be celebrating the Graduation of our Child Care Workers at a brunch to be held at the Johannesburg Hotel. Please ensure that you reserve a place by Monday 5 November — cost is R20.00 per person — send the amount through to NACCW, P O Box 95129, Grant Park, 2051. The party is not only for those who are to receive certificates — all organisations who are affiliated are welcome to join our get-together.

NATAL

**Moves**

The National office and the Natal Regional office will be relocated by the time this month's Journal is printed.

Please make a note that both offices will be closed for the whole of December and will open again at the beginning of January 1991.

**Welcome**

A special welcome to the world to little Ruth Keith, the new daughter of Jenny and Martin Keith. Jenny was the social worker at St. Theresa's Home before taking the mammoth leap into motherhood. We miss her calm presence at meetings. Good luck to the new family; rather belatedly — Ruth is 3 months old!

**Graduation Ceremony — BQCC**

This will take place on the 16th November at 6.00pm. Graduates are welcome to bring guests. The cost will be R10.00 per head for Cheese and Wine. Child Care Workers wishing to support their colleagues may do so. Please phone Ros Halkett at the Regional Office if you are to attend. This will facilitate catering arrangement. The Graduation will give a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment to all.

**BQCC 2 results**

The evaluation for this Module takes place on the 6th November. It is hoped to have results out and posted by the end of that month. Please be patient there are 80 papers and assignments to mark.

**November Diary**

- TRANSVAAL
- 01 09:00 NACCW Executive Committee Meeting
- 05 09:00 BQCC Evaluation Pretoria
- 07 09:00 BQCC Evaluation Johannesburg & East Rand
- 08 09:00 Seminar: Participative Management and Industrial Democracy Guild Cottage
- 16 09:00 Moderating Committee NACCW Offices
- 28 09:30 Graduation Party Johannesburg Hotel
  
- NATAL
- 05-11 National Staff Meeting Johannesburg
- 06 BQCC Evaluation St Philomenas
- 09 09:00 Institute of Child Care William Clarke Gardens
- 16 09:00 Social Workers Group St. Monica's Home
- 16 18:00 Graduation Ceremony Function. Cheese and Wine. R10 per person.
- 22 PPA Course at ABH
  
- WESTERN CAPE
- 06 08:30 Regional Executive Meeting Regional office
- 13 09:30 Forum (Venue later)
- 15 08:30 PPA Teen Centre
- 29 09:30 Social Function at Holiday Inn Woodstock



**WORLD FILE**  
A digest of news and child care information

**World Summit on Children**

More than eighty heads of state were expected to attend the world summit on children at the United Nations to address education and food issues. The summit was the culmination of years of effort by the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) to make children's welfare a world priority. Because of war, hunger and other problems such as declining school enrollments, Africa is UNICEF's number 1 priority. The continent now accounts for one-third of the UN agency's global annual budget

of around \$775 million, says Mary Racelis, regional director in Nairobi. UNICEF officials report these signs of progress in Africa:

- In the past few years, programmes have been launched in southern Africa to help children who have been uprooted by war. Many of these children are separated from their families.
- Some 32 African nations have either signed or ratified the 1989 UN Convention on children's rights.
- Agency representatives say that child immunisation and oral rehydration programmes are expanding and saving many lives. But UNICEF officials also cite Africa's growing problems:
- AIDS orphans. In the next ten years, the World Health Organisation and UNICEF estimate that there will be some ten million AIDS orphans in Africa alone. AIDS orphans are children who may or may not be diagnosed as having AIDS, but whose parent or parents have died of AIDS. Few programmes are dedicated to helping them.
- Street children. Still a relatively new phenomenon in Africa, their numbers are increasing. Thus far, Kenya and Sudan are among the few African countries with programmes to assist them.
- Child abuse and neglect. Although the increase in street children is linked to a rise in poverty, an increase in neglect in a country like Mauritius is linked to a growth in the number of women in

the workplace, says Mr Issac Gomez, UNICEF representative for Madagascar, the Comoros and Mauritius. "A lot of the women ... are now working in the factories, and they have left the children behind. But there was no structure to take care of those children. So you have a new problem of abandoned children — not abandoned in the street, but abandoned because they have no care." (Source: Christian Science Monitor)

**Sobering statistics**

- Worldwide, each day 40 000 youngsters under five die from malnutrition and disease. Nearly 100 million school aged children have never stepped inside a classroom.
- In the developing world only 50% of the children now have access to clean drinking water. 40% of the children are malnourished.
- In the developed world: in the USA, one of every five children live in households below the poverty line. In New York city, two of every five youngsters grow up poor. The US ranks only twentieth (Finland is first) among nations with the lowest infant mortality rate. The US and Great Britain now have double the number of homeless they had a decade ago: one in four is a child. In Canada, one of every six youngsters goes to bed hungry every night. (Source: UNICEF)