

Die *Kinderversorger*



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Cover Photograph: The NACCW's Biennial Conference gets under this month way at ABH in Durban

Journal of the
National Association of
Child Care Workers

NACCW/NVK



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BIENNIAL CONFERENCE / GUEST EDITORIAL

February 2nd 1990 and July 1991: Moving Beyond Apartheid

It is difficult to reflect the whole of the recent National Conference in the space of this single editorial. It is particularly difficult to do justice to the enormous amount of energy and effort put in on the planning and organising level. This year's planning committee appeared more like public relations experts than child and youth practitioners: They remained calm, smiling and helpful throughout three days filled with constant enquires, demands and last-minute choices. Indeed, I gained the impression that everyone associated with Conference helped to set a constructive tone of openness and sharing.

It occurred to me too (in sharp contrast to the difficulties experienced by planners and delegates two years ago) that, in part, the positive tone of this year's conference had been set on a macro political level. 1989 saw all of the evil machinery of apartheid still firmly in place. Debate centred around the role of the NACCW in the struggle against apartheid. We were unable as an association to form a coherent strategy to "fight" the policy of apartheid in so divergent a group, and polarisation developed. Thus the stage for the positive tone in July 1991 was set on February 2nd 1990. The removal of the overwhelming task of fighting against apartheid meant that we could concentrate our energies on dealing with its ef-

fects on both ourselves and on the children whom we serve. As the conference progressed we listened to one another speaking across the former barriers of racial classification about personal hurts, humiliations and prejudices. We listened to the Lakehaven team carefully planning and implementing a policy of racial and cultural integration. We heard how the Border region was carefully researching their clients' attitudes on integration so as to anticipate difficulties and minimise mistakes. We were party as an association to the releasing of enormous amounts of positive energy as a result of political changes in South Africa. There was nevertheless much for which we could take direct credit — many things for which we have our fellow members and leaders to thank. Ashley Theron opened the conference by appealing to members to use this opportunity to work on "the apartheid in our hearts". His use of an interpreter who translated his words into Zulu, and his request for people to come forward and greet the conference in their own languages was a symbol of acknowledgement and respect for the diversity of cultural backgrounds of our members.

Gary Weaver's gentle and thought-provoking input on cross-cultural work added to the atmosphere of openness. He implored us to examine our assumptions about our-

selves in order to minimise misunderstandings. Ethnocentrism, and judging the behaviour of others from our own cultural bias, led to conflict and the *dis*-integration of staff teams. Multicultural work necessitates putting aside more times for meetings!

The presentations from regions dove-tailed neatly with each other, and this helped further our exploration of the theme of reaching across the differences between us. Here the emphasis was optimistic, yet we were reminded of the need to pay attention to differences rather than ignore them.

Some conflict arose at the Biennial General Meeting, showing up holes in our Constitution and the need to develop more sophisticated decision-making procedures and structures — a task sent back to regions for examination. Conference resolutions embodied protest against continuing discriminatory practices by the state, particularly regarding subsidies and the divisions between welfare departments. An all-African conference was proposed for 1993 as was a national gathering in 1992 to explore the issue of AIDS and children. For the first time our Conference was graced by the presence of children. The Youth Presentation included many of the Homes in the area, and most delegates were visibly moved as the children danced and sang joyfully and enthusiastically — a more appreciative audience could not have been found!

Conference closed, too, on a note of unity and warmth, with hugs all round and the singing of the national anthem — God bless Africa and all her children.

— M.A.

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.

NACCW/NVK

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Durban/91 NACCW BIENNIAL CONFERENCE

Over the next two or three months we will be publishing material from the Conference under the 'Durban /91' logo. This month **Lesley du Toit** kicks off with a Stop Press report ...

At the Biennial Conference

The NACCW's Biennial Conference, held from 10 to 12 July in Durban started a little late and on a note of slight confusion because of the amazing number of late registrations. However, once underway, all went reasonably well, the only major complaints at the end being that all were exhausted (mainly due to the wining, dining and dancing of the night before?) — and most delegates had been acculturised to eating curry morning, noon and night through the kind hospitality of the Aryan Benevolent Home which provided the venue for the Conference ... does one suffer withdrawal symptoms if taken off this diet too hastily?!



Ashley Theron and Lesley du Toit with Keynote Speaker Gary Weaver from the

This conference was somewhat different from those held in recent years in that it was focused entirely on one theme. Between 300 and 400 delegates gathered to consider issues of cross cultural child and youth care. One might have expected considerable duplication in presentations, but in fact this did not prove to be the case. Presentations from the regions were of an extremely high standard and left us all with some intelligent questions rather than clever answers, but deeply challenged and encouraged. Quite consistent

through all the workshops was the sense of togetherness in a process of struggle, of *talking with* each other rather than *talking at* each other. No one is under any illusion that Conference provided solutions — and indeed it was never intended to do so — but it certainly created awareness. Also, without doubt, one of the highlights was the fact that presentations were mainly given by child care workers.



Jacqui Michael (rear) with the delegation from The Children's Foundation

Gary Weaver's workshop and keynote addresses kept the conference focused and challenged. Not only was he easy to listen to, but he taught in such a way as to open doors and windows in our hearts and minds, without once prescribing for South African practice. As we laughed and sighed with him and listened to his experiences in countries all across the world, we were left with the choice between learning from his obvious knowledge and skill as well as the mistakes and successes of others, or blundering along wanting to learn our own lessons and hurting numbers of children and child care workers in the process. His incredibly sensitive, respectful and warm manner of communicating was in many ways a powerful lesson in cross-cultural communication in itself — and a particularly relevant model for those in the child and youth care field who teach.



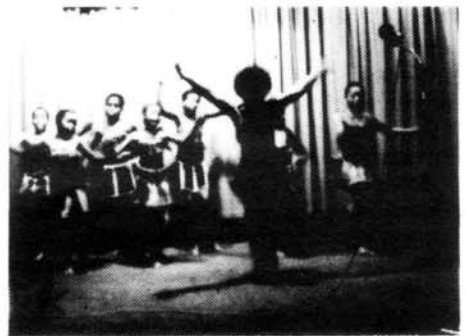
Lyris Rielly, Kathy Scott and Ernie Nightingale from Ethelbert Children's Home

The scheduled panel of present and future policy-makers was a disappointment. State department officials arrived, and we certainly appreciated their wholehearted participation in the conference, but we gained little of substance. Perhaps the most crushing blow was the statement that the formation of a single welfare department would have to wait for a change in the constitution which could



Lesley, Gary and Ashley with members of the conference planning committee

take at least until 1994. We were nevertheless encouraged to begin the process of integration, but given little hope that barriers to such practice could be overcome in the next few years. We are still trying to unravel the statements regarding subsidies. The invited ANC, IFP and PAC panel speakers simply never arrived! The AZAPO representative arrived 45 minutes late and proceeded to define the concept of culture. While this was most informative, there were no guidelines on child care policy.



Part of the song and dance presentation by young people of nearby institutions



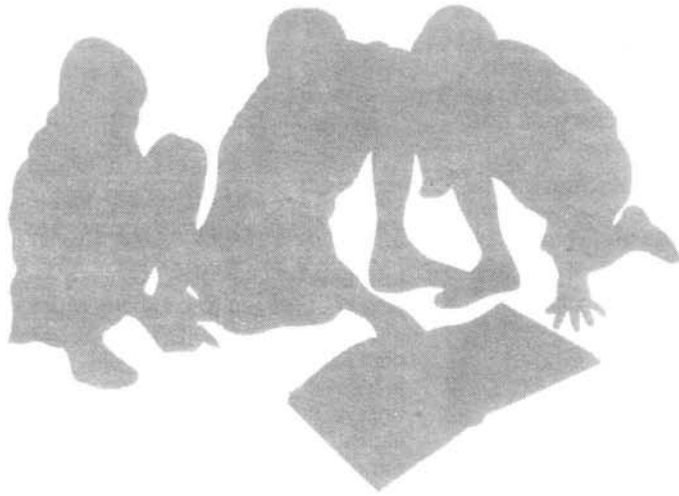
Three of the youngsters involved

As is appropriate in our field of child and youth Care, the children and youth in care saved the day! Their polished and heartwarming presentation brought the entire conference to its feet and centred us once again on our purpose for being there in the first place.

It would be good to think of Conference as the launch of an important dialogue in our Association and our field — and as papers from Conference are published under the 'Durban/91' logo over the coming months in *The Child Care Worker*, members are encouraged to respond with comments, criticisms and affirmation.

● Photographs were taken by Vivien Lewis

A first report on a groupwork assignment **Doreen Langley** undertook as part of a recent NACCW course in social skills training



A social skills group

My group for the sessions in this course was comprised of ten teenage boys, ages ranging from 14 years to 18 years, who live together in a group home in the community. Most of the boys have lived together as a group in our care for 18 months to two-and-a-half years. We have all "really lived together" however for the past eight months since we all moved into the group home. This is a report on the first six sessions, which have been fun and well worth the effort. The boys have enjoyed them and have learnt from them.

I found that with this age group the only possible time to gather them all together was during the evening. They are very 'busy people' in the afternoons, either playing sports, out with friends or sleeping! Unfortunately by 7 pm, after a 5 am start to the day, one is not really wide awake, enthusiastic and raring to go. The need to be well prepared for each session is therefore imperative, as are clear objectives, otherwise the sessions lose their impact. I learnt this particularly in the session on "A new world" which could have been far more constructive and dynamic had I been better prepared.

The material was appropriate to the needs of the age group I work with. I felt stimulated after each session to the point of wanting to repeat them. It's just a pity that "work" gets in the way so often!

Session 1: Filling in a Questionnaire

Objectives of Session: I used the questionnaire (see below) to discover where the boys "were at" in certain social skill areas. It was a non-threatening introduction to participation in the course. I hoped that from

their responses to the questions I would be enabled to prepare assignments around areas that would answer the needs they expressed.

Brief overview of the session: I chose 7pm as this is when we start our Study Time in the house. I had "pre-warned" the boys that I was attending a social skills course and that I would like their help in completing various assignments. I explained the aim of the questionnaire and asked each to fill it in during the study period. I emphasised that I

wanted their own personal views and that there was no question of right or wrong or "who's the best". I remained available to answer questions.

Responses from the children: All of the boys were very eager to receive a form and to participate. I was called by most of them to explain the meaning of several of the questions. I did not ask them to put their names on the paper although most of them were prepared to do so.

My feelings and perceptions

I was encouraged by the positive attitude of the boys towards participating. I thought afterwards that perhaps I should have asked them to put their names on their papers, as most of them wanted me to know which was theirs when I collected them in. Some of the boys needed a lot of help in understanding exactly what was expected of them. I was amazed at some of the answers and the rankings they gave themselves.

General Comments: The questionnaire helped me to formulate topics for the working sessions with the boys. I felt it was a good introductory method as they were not at any time "put on the spot" and I felt this would give them the confidence to join in future group sessions. They realised the questionnaire was not to see if one person was better than another, that it sought only their own personal views about themselves. All of them were eager to know what we were going to do next.

Session 2: How do I read my Wage Envelope

Objectives A life skill session to explain the difference between Gross Pay and Nett Pay.

The Initial Questionnaire

There are no right or wrong answers to this questionnaire. The more truthful you are the more helpful it will be. Read through the list of skills below and place a tick in the box which describes how good or bad you are at that skill.

	VERY BAD	BAD	AVERAGE	GOOD	VERY GOOD
1. Voicing your opinion in front of a group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Standing up for what you believe is right	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Saying No	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Listening to others' opinions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Making friends	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Maintaining relationships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Speaking to adults you don't know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Speaking to someone of the opposite sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Saying what you feel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Saying you're sorry	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Keeping your temper	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Respecting other people's property	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Using public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Filling in forms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Making decisions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Asking directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Giving directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Knowledge of your local area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Using the Telephone correctly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Using a Telephone Directory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What deductions are made from "pay" and why.

Brief overview of session: One of our boys had recently started work and at this point was still living in the Group Home. On the previous Friday he had received his first full wage packet and had not understood why certain monies had been deducted. We decided to use this experience of one member of the group to benefit the group as a whole. It was an "around the dining room table" discussion and the Flip Chart was used as a visual aid. A typical computerised wage packet was drawn, using fictitious figures for Wages, Tax, Medical Aid, UIF, Labour Levy Fees, etc. Each was explained in detail.

Responses from the boys: They were amazed! Each and everyone of them was interested. Not one of them had any idea that such deductions were made from wages and many questions were asked.

My feelings and perceptions of the session I realised how much we take for granted. Living skills that are natural to us are a totally unknown factor to some of these boys. They all knew the word "tax" but didn't realise they would have to contribute at a later stage. Medical Aid was a total mystery and most of them questioned the need to belong to such a scheme if you were never sick! From the "deductions" we progressed into budgets and how to manage one's money, though in so short a time we only skimmed the surface. I felt this was a session urgently needed for the older boys in particular and that they were very responsive to the teaching.

This session was actually run by my husband, and his comment was "Well at least they should now know that Gross Pay is not what you take home at the end of the week!"

Session 3: A New World

Objectives of Session: To evaluate standards, coping skills and value systems

Brief overview of session: It was explained to the whole group the scenario that this world was in a mess and would eventually be destroyed. They however had been chosen to start a brand new world on a planet. They were to be "beamed up" onto this planet where there was air and gravity. They in turn could "beam up" from earth, before it was destroyed, the things they considered essential to make a new world for themselves. They were then divided into two groups and a large sheet of paper was given to each group. They were told that they could draw or write (or both) their new world and the objects to be "beamed up".

Responses from children: At first they were totally at a loss as to what they should do. Each group waited for the other to start. Encouragement and hints of "what would you need to survive?" were given, one per-

son moved from Group B to Group A which then proceeded to split into two. Group B worked as individuals throughout, with one member not participating at all. They all asked questions and were anxious that maybe they were "not doing the right thing", not "beaming up" the essentials. No one attempted to draw anything, and all but one had their lists of needs confined to a very small area of the large sheet of paper. Group A argued amongst themselves as to the necessity of the needs each group had beamed up.

My feelings and perceptions of the session I realised that the boys needed a lot more introduction, direction, and encouragement to participate in assignments. A lot of explaining was needed to get them started, as they had no idea of basic needs of life. Although it was explained that this was a group effort and that pooling of ideas would be a good idea, they were unable to interact as a group and one person watched another for guidance and ideas. (I should have placed the two groups further apart.) I felt that had the two older boys drawn, the others would have followed suit, but as mentioned, they only made lists. The arguing was not serious and there was a lot of gentle bantering between them all. The 14-year-old who did not participate at all, does have problems relating to the group and this was further highlighted by this activity.

General comments: Each group or individual read out their list of needs. We discussed why certain things had been "beamed up", and then I asked them what they thought their new world would be like a hundred years from now. At first they stressed that it would be a better place than here, as they would have learnt from the mistakes made by this world. I encouraged them to look at their lists again, after which one of the older boys stated that "really they hadn't changed anything" and that "it was amazing that they hadn't thought up any new ideas." I found it quite sad that on the whole they lacked imagination, or the self-confidence to express imaginative ideas. They felt that there had to be a right or a wrong, although I had stressed at the beginning it was to be *their* world with *their* ideas and *their* needs. Even as we closed the session, summarising what our basic needs, value systems and standards demand, one of the boys still needed to know whether they had beamed up the correct number of items — feeling the list had to be 'marked'. They did however ask when the next session would be, so hopefully they did enjoy participating.

Session 4: Pins and Straws

Objectives To differentiate between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour. To recognise own and other team members' behaviour during the session.

Brief overview of session: The eight boys

were divided into two groups of four each. Pins and straws were handed to each group. It was explained that as a team they were to build a construction of any sort. This structure was to be evaluated on its height, strength and beauty. They were given a time limit of 20 minutes. The points for evaluation were written on the Flip Chart.

Responses from the boys: At first there was opposition to the group composition. The two older boys had been split up, and this did not please them at all. However, they eventually agreed to stay in their allotted groups.

Team A. The older boy grabbed the pins and straws and literally "took over". He scoffed at ideas put forward by two other members of the group, and yet was unable to come up with a concrete idea of his own. He eventually allowed one other member to assist him in the building, and also accepted that person's ideas of construction. The third member was mostly "put down" in respect of all his ideas and efforts to help. This did not discourage him however and he continued to place straws and pins as permitted. The fourth member watched but made no effort to help or suggest how to place any of the straws. The group was noisy and quite argumentative.

Team B. This group decided to move away from Team A. The older boy took on the role of leader, but asked the opinions of the rest of the group throughout the building process. The team worked well together, laughed a lot and looked on the whole session as a total fun thing. The passive member of this group was encouraged to participate, although at times they also ridiculed his ideas or the way he had placed a straw or a pin. In moving away from the Flip Chart this group lost sight of the points for evaluation and did not work on height at all. When at the judging this was pointed out to them, at first they were adamant that I had not mentioned height, but on checking the Flip Chart accepted the judging and "lost" quite graciously.

My feelings and perceptions of the session Each boy behaved exactly as I would have imagined. I expected a negative reaction from the two older boys when I split them up, and I also expected them to assume the "leader" role of each group. Structural efforts were good although not very imaginative. (I was pleasantly surprised that the pins were used on the straws and not on each other!) They tended to get "hyped up" during the session but calmed down fairly quickly when called together for discussion time. It was unfortunate that the other aggressive member of the house group was not available for the session, as I would have been interested to see what type of behaviour he would have portrayed. He is normally only aggressive towards the younger members and normally avoids interaction with the older boys.

General Comments: After the calming down of both groups we discussed "group feelings" and "individual feelings" during the session. Team A leader complained that two members of his group did not contribute anything but Team B felt they had all worked well together. The groups accepted that they had allowed the older boys to assume leadership and felt that this was "only right anyway". We discussed the terms 'assertive', 'aggressive' and 'passive' and the boys were asked to say which category they felt they and the other team members fell under. They were reluctant to say that Team A leader was aggressive and he maintained he was just "more assertive than most" They were all keen to know how we as child care workers viewed their behaviour, and we had great fun role modelling to them the different types of behaviour in various situations. We talked about how to deal with complaints in an assertive manner and they mostly agreed that this behaviour made them feel comfortable and able to deal with standing up for themselves". Team leader A nevertheless maintained that "a fist" was always the best answer and "might is right" was the only standard of behaviour to adopt. I'm not convinced he really feels this way, but thinks such an opinion makes him "look good" in front of the group. It was a fun session and I'm still picking up pins from the carpet!

Session 4: Filling in Forms

Objective To encourage reading with understanding; To determine relevance of questions; To understand possible legal implications; To anticipate response after completion and processing of form.

Brief overview of session: Various forms were collected for completion by those taking part in this session. These included: Post Office Savings Bank Deposit, a Post Office Savings Bank Withdrawal, an inland telegram, an application for employment, an application to join the local gym, and an application to open a Bob-T account. The various forms were handed out and the participants were asked to fill in as much as possible on their own and only to seek help when really necessary.

Responses from the boys: The very sight of a form seems to make them "freeze". They were however more relaxed with these as they knew they were not the "real thing". Most of the boys came for help within minutes of being handed the forms. Postal Address and Residential Address was a complete mystery and two boys did not know what was meant by "initials". They all just left blanks when they were unsure of what to write and 'block letters' became cursive writing on most of the forms. Computer Blocks also confused them.

My feelings and perceptions of the session The boys seem to develop a negative attitude towards forms and expect not to be

able to complete them even before they begin. Most of them declared in the original questionnaire that filling in forms did not present a problem, and yet most forms presented to them at school, Gym applications, army registration, etc. are handed over to us without a second glance by the boys, and they then expect us to fill them in and either post them or hand them back duly completed! I felt there was a need for this session.

After discussing the actual completion of the form we discussed "How to process the form" since even the posting of a letter was an unknown factor by our group until we moved into the Group Home. They now know the postage rates, where to put the stamp on the envelope and where the nearest Post Box is situated. We explained various terminology used on forms i.e. spouse, next of kin, residential and postal address, etc. Legal implications were also discussed, e.g. to terminate a contract usually requires a month's written notice. So many of them in the past have just decided to stop going to Gym without giving any notice at all, as they had no idea this was required and stated on the Application Form.

General Comments: I felt this was a living skill well worth teaching. I would have liked more time to gather together a wider variety of forms, but as always the clock beat me. The boys were quite responsive during the session and I feel they did learn the basic requirements of filling in forms. I felt that most of the time they do not bother to read exactly what is being asked, and they become unsure of what to do when an unfamiliar word appears amongst the print — though I must admit I always let my husband fill in the Tax Return Form!

Session 6: Using the Telephone Directory

Purpose To give a detailed explanation of the Directory layout. To enable each child



... most forms presented to them at school, Gym applications, army registration, etc. are handed over to us without a second glance by the boys, and they then expect us to fill them in and either post them or hand them back duly completed!

effectively to use any directory.

We have noticed that the Telephone Directories appear to be a total mystery to most of the boys. This was expected to be a fun skills activity for the group.

The group is divided into pairs, each pair being given a sheet of paper and a pen/pencil. Telephone Directories from various areas are placed in the centre of the table with a list of instructions written on the Flip Chart. The first pair to complete the list are declared the winners. A time limit of 20 minutes is set.

These instructions include the following:

Find the telephone number, street address and suburb of the following:

A list of various surnames and initials.

A list of companies, banks, post offices etc.

Find the area dialling code for the following: Pretoria, Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town, East London, Bloemfontein, Germany, U.K., Portugal etc.

Find company names, and telephone numbers that will supply the following service:

Repairs to a swimming pool.

Servicing a car (BMW, Audi etc.)

A burst water pipe etc, etc.

Find the telephone number of the local Municipality Electricity Department and the nearest Police Station.

My telephone is not working, whom do I phone?

Which number do I phone to obtain the correct time?

After 20 minutes the group is called together for feedback and discussion.

During this time the layout of the Telephone Directories is discussed. Explanation of the various area directories, plus area codes, number changes, government departments etc. can be given together with some explanation of the use of the Yellow Pages. Also included in the discussion can be the correct way to answer the telephone.

There is a tremendous amount of information contained in the Telephone Directory and I'm sure this session is a valuable lesson for each one of the group.

A newly-admitted adolescent cuts himself badly on a shard of glass and is bleeding severely. Two child care workers arrive to help. One attempts to staunch the blood by holding the artery closed. The other goes for the rubber gloves ... We asked **Dr Diarmed McClean** of the Child Health Unit at Red Cross Hospital for some guidelines for managing AIDS in the children's institution

AIDZ AIDZ AIDZ in a Home

Hey sister, yes you sister, AIDS and you sister, think about it. But what about you the child care worker in a home? AIDS and fear, fear and stress and burnout and we have enough of that to share with many others!

But this fogging fear that walks with AIDS serves no other purpose than to obstruct positive AIDS work. It pushes us away from the critical and crucial point of accepting that AIDS is our problem and events us shifting from fear to hope.

Images of skeletons wearing burst condoms only make us more ignorant and less willing to be informed. Understanding AIDS personally and in our work will help us melt some of this fear. Reading about AIDS is just not good enough though; we need progressive, open workshops that will allow us to express and identify the sources of our fear. But you may as well read on: hopefully I will be able to give you some ideas about the kind of workshops you may want organised for you and for your children.

Before understanding the place of AIDS in child care work and particularly in children's homes and shelters, cornerstone facts must be accepted. AIDS is the final stage of a disease caused by having the HIV (Human Immune Virus) in ones body for a while — sometimes years. A person with the HIV in their body and blood may not know it; they appear and feel completely healthy before AIDS begins.

The HIV concentrates in blood, semen and vaginal secretions. The virus can be transmitted to another person if these body fluids with HIV get into the other person's body. Casual daily contact is OK and safe. The main way of getting the virus is through unprotected sex (not wearing a condom), sharing needles, and mothers giving it to their unborn children. Generally, HIV infection is a sexually transmittable disease and a disease of blood just like hepatitis or syphilis. The HIV epidemic, because of the deadly nature of the disease and no available cure, only calls for health measures that we should have been implementing anyway ... it should not be seen as a special threat requiring special measures. The special aspect of HIV is when we know that someone has the HIV (HIV positive).

For child care workers, particularly if you run a home or shelter, I have tried to emphasise certain areas.

High Risk Groups

Be careful of talking about high risk groups — there are more differences within groups than there are between them. Think rather of high risk behaviour. Sharing needles is very risky, so is unprotected sex (anal or vaginal). 'No sex' is very safe, 'no drugs' is very safe, and in between there is a spectrum of risk. Make sure you have plenty of condoms and can explain how to use them.

Who has AIDS?

This is only a useful question if you can really say that you are going to counsel and support those children after they have been given the bad news.

Don't consider testing everyone already with you or all newcomers ... are you really going to care for and support them with their bad news? Will you admit them if they test HIV-positive? Then why are you testing?

It can happen that the HIV test may be negative while the person is actually positive. Are you going to treat positives differently from negatives? ... There is no point, I will explain later.

Don't go testing healthy people unless there is really going to be benefit for them. Just make sure that your place is safe and that you and your children don't give each other blood and sexual disease.

Keeping the place healthy

You need to have a first aid kit and some plastic gloves with someone who knows first aid ... one of the children could do a first aid course.

Your biggest problem will be bleeding and septic wounds. You should consider that all blood has the HIV. Don't let blood or pus enter your body or let it get into any other child's body.

Make sure everybody looks after their skins, especially their hands, that there are no cracks and wounds. In winter you should consider some hand cream or vaseline for their skin after it is washed. If a bleeding accident happens, try not to touch the blood: use plastic gloves to clean it up and make sure the wound is dressed and cleaned regularly until it is healed.

Keeping children healthy

Condoms, a toothbrush and a healthy skin are powerful protectors against HIV. You should be able to discuss sex with

your children and allow them to get as many condoms as they need confidentially.

The sexual abuse of children, particularly girls, continues despite all our efforts, but we must continue with assertiveness skills and income-generating skills to help children to break out of this sexual prison. Unhealthy teeth means unhealthy gums and these may bleed when brushed. Children should try keep their gums healthy by brushing regularly. Each one should have their own toothbrush. Boys should have their own razor. Girls need to have regular PAP Smears. Often a girl may have an unhealthy raw, almost bleeding cervix and know nothing about it. This is almost a direct entry into her blood. A healthy cervix is more protection against HIV. If you have a cervix ... when was your last PAP Smear? I suggest an annual PAP Smear for street children. Drugs and alcohol and cigarettes all make the body defences weaker (they weaken the immune system). The struggle continues!

A child is HIV positive

You should try to discuss this with all the children and staff now. You probably already have a child or more who is HIV positive whether you know this or not. Try to believe and convince everyone that it's OK, it's safe and that the child (or staff) needs care, love and support. Keep the place healthy, keep everyone healthy and there will be no problems. If an HIV child or staff member gets ill then they need urgent caring medical attention. Try to identify a nurse or doctor who will act as your contact nearby.

Useful people and books

Good workshops are done by the AIDS Training Information and Counselling Centre (ATTIC) and the Progressive Primary Health Care Network (PPHCN) in your region.

Good books to look at are *Facts For Life* and *All for Health* available from UNICEF, Facts for Life Unit, 3 V.N. Plaza, New York, NY 10017, U.S.A.

Also a series of three books *Strategies for Hope: 1, 2 and 3* available from TALC, P.O. Box 49, St. Albans, Herts AL 14 AX U.K.



Phillip Dipholo of Masikhule Children's Home in Cape Town recently consulted the NACCW: "Looking back on our job descriptions for child care workers, they seem dull and domestic — how do we write the therapeutic tasks of child care into so formal a document?" We suggested he work this out together with his staff team, and here he reports on the progress they made. At the same time **John Webster** reported on progress at the Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes — including new job descriptions for child care workers. We felt these would make interesting and helpful reading ...

Building Job Descriptions for Child Care Workers

I: Masikhule Children's Home

Summary of Key Result Areas

We began by identifying eight task or responsibility areas which applied uniquely to the child care worker. These were:

1. Physical Health
2. Education
3. Social Development
4. Psycho-Emotional
5. Christian Spiritual Development
6. Recreation and Sport
7. Administration of equipment, clothing, soft goods and toiletries
8. Escorting

Key Result Area (KRA) is a description of the main areas of responsibility of this post. These areas of responsibility are essential and critical for the results needed for Masikhule Children's Home's success. These KRAs are specific and unique to this post and are not repeated vertically in Masikhule Children's Home's organisational structure. Performance Standards (PS) are descriptions of the actions within each KRA that have to be performed and the results that must be accomplished. These must be specific, quantitative, time phased, measurable and results-orientated.

Child Care Worker: Major Goal

- To be effective surrogate parents to the children, and give them the warmth, love and care of primary relationship.
- This relationship must be exercised in a way that will inculcate in the children a feeling of being wanted, loved and belonging somewhere.
- The care given to the children must be aimed at addressing the physical, psycho-emotional, social, educational and spiritual aspects of human life.

KRA 1 : PHYSICAL HEALTH

Supporting goal: To ensure that all children are physically well, and those suffering from

any illnesses are referred for treatment, so as to prevent any epidemic in the home.

Performance Standards: The job of the child care worker in the area of "physical health" will have been satisfactorily achieved when:

- On arrival at the home, the child care worker takes every children under her care to the local divisional council clinic for immunisations.
- Those with chronic illness to be taken to the appropriate hospitals for treatment and regular check-ups.
- To be available any day and time or make suitable arrangements to take a child to the doctor, clinic or hospital.
- To make sure that the children's living environment and clothing is kept tidy, hygienically clean, and that they are taught and supervised in personal hygiene.

KRA 2 : EDUCATION

Supporting goal: To give to the children their basic human right of being educated, and an opportunity for a constructive life.

Performance Standards: The job of the child care worker will have been satisfactorily achieved in the area of "education" when:

- Every school day the children are assisted to prepare themselves properly for school (e.g. waking up in time, washing and dressing properly, have a balanced breakfast, lunch box and all school requirements)
- After school they are warmly welcomed at home, keen interest is shown in their academic progress and problems.
- Constructive assistance and supervision is rendered to the children with their school work, (ie. educational tours, videos, creative play and handwork, and extra tuition to those with a backlog due to their backgrounds.)

KRA 3 : SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Supporting goal: To instill in the children the basic concepts of neighbourly love and so-

cial responsibility.

Performance Standards: The job of the child care worker in the area of "social development" will have been satisfactorily achieved when:

- The children are taught and guided in the socially accepted norms and values of society (e.g. sex education, environmental care, cultural values, youth education etc.)
- Life skills are taught to the children (e.g. home economics, family planning, political responsibilities, communication skills etc.)
- Thorough observation and assessments of the progress and problems are recorded for feed back to the appropriate therapist.

KRA 4 : PSYCHO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Supporting goal: To encourage and build up the child/children's personal identity.

Performance Standards: The job of the child care worker in the area of "psycho-emotional development" will have been satisfactorily achieved when:

- The child's physical well being is adequately met. (e.g. provided with good clothing, food, adequate sleep, personal hygiene, good accommodation, a set routine (fixed hours for going to bed, getting up etc.)
- Good observation is done of any signs of ill health and treated accordingly (i.e. hair, eyes, ears, bed-wetting etc.)
- To be a good parent by listening, talking and understanding the child, thus addressing the emotional needs.
- To apply appropriate discipline and ensure that the child does not get out of hand. (i.e. limit setting)
- To facilitate the development process towards emotional maturity, by creating and maintaining a conducive atmosphere.

KRA 5 : CHRISTIAN SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Supporting goal: To bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the children, so that they may believe in Him and accept Him as their personal God and Saviour.

Performance Standards: The job of the child care worker in the area of "Christian Spiritual Development" will have been satisfactorily achieved when

- Each child care worker creates special time and opportunities, to counsel the child/children in Christian religious instruction.
- The child/children are taught to read the Bible, pray for meals, in the mornings and evenings.
- A systematic approach is followed in religious instruction in the various units (i.e. reading a certain book of the Bible through with explanations)
- The children are encouraged and assisted to attend Sunday School and Church services every Sunday.



KRA 6 : RECREATION AND SPORTS

Supporting goal: To relieve the children of their anxiety caused by the previous disturbances in their development.

Performance Standards: The job of the child care worker will have been satisfactorily achieved in the area of "recreation and sport" when:

- All child care workers are available to encourage and assist children in all recreational and sporting events organised by the institution (e.g. music practice, arts, hand-crafts, physical training, various sports etc.)
- The individual child care workers take constructive initiatives with their respective groups to plan, organise and conduct recreational activities.
- Thorough observation and assessments are made to identify each child's potential, in the various areas to encourage the development thereof.

KRA 7 : ADMINISTRATION OF EQUIPMENT, CLOTHING, SOFT GOODS AND TOILETRIES

Supporting goal: To teach the children a sense of appreciation, ownership and pride.

Performance Standards: The job of child care worker in the area of "Equipment, clothing, soft goods and toiletries administration will have been satisfactorily achieved when:

- Everything allocated to each child and room is neatly and clearly marked and recorded.
- Stock checking of these items is done in conjunction with the Senior Child Care Worker on the 1st day of each month.
- Items to be repaired are reported immediately to the Factotum via Senior Child Care Worker.
- The children are taught and encouraged to maintain, and economise, thus imparting

life skills to them.

- Clear distinction is made and explained to the children, between personal belongings and the property of the institution.
- That the institution's property (e.g. school wear, sports wear etc.) remain when the child is discharged.

KRA 8 : ESCORTING

Supporting goal: To properly fulfil the role of custodian as granted the institution by the Commissioner of Child Welfare in terms of Child Care Act (Act 74, 1983)

Performance Standards: The job of the child care worker in the area of "escorting" will have been satisfactorily achieved when:

- Every child is escorted safely to every destined destination. (i.e. hospital, outings, week-end and holiday visits etc.)
- All documents to be signed, are fully completed and submitted by return to the Senior Child Care Worker or Principal.
- Relevant information for therapeutic purpose is exchanged on both sides and reported back on arrival.
- Thorough observation and assessment is done on the child/children's return, to evaluate the suitability of the treatment program.
- On this area the institution will fulfil certain obligations in respect of distant travels:
 - Provision of food and busfare for both child and child care worker. (On forward journey the kitchen will provide)
 - Pay to the child care worker in advance the agreed upon subsistence and travel allowance.
 - Provide workman's insurance.
 - The child care worker in return will submit all receipts of any extra costs incurred, for repayment.
 - The child care worker will return within the shortest route and time and not make detours or cause delays for personal interests.

II: Pietermaritzburg Children's Homes

We identified three ranked *groups* of responsibilities: that a child care worker should be (1) a significant, caring adult, (2) an effective child care worker, and (3) a responsible team member. Each group carries a number of task areas which are listed below.

A : A SIGNIFICANT CARING ADULT

Provide a suitable adult role model

- To provide the opportunity for each child to learn socially acceptable behaviours and manners in a caring environment.
- To provide children with ample opportunities to learn about everyday family experiences.
- To teach children by modelling those behaviours that are socially acceptable.
- To demonstrate to children self control and discipline through consistent example and intervention (To understand the difference between discipline, punishment and fear).
- To be responsible for maintaining the living environment in a safe, hygienic and homely manner.
- Demonstrate through the adults' own relationships and communication a non-discriminatory sense of mutual respect.

Have an intense concern for the well-being of all the children.

- To provide for each individual child the optimum level of care possible.
- To promote the development, growth, self-worth and sense of belonging of each child.
- To know intimately the children in your care, and to know at all times where those children are and that they are safe.
- To provide a secure and safe environment for each child without fear of punitive, damaging punishment. All corrective actions for unacceptable behaviour must be consistent, timeous, age appropriate and relevant to the behaviour.
- To accept unconditionally the child and his family.
- To provide an accepting caring environment for each child where he/she can feel and know that his history and background are not held against him/her.
- All information must be treated in the strictest confidence and used as the foundation for building his/her future.
- To demonstrate respect for children in care.

Have a dedicated involvement in the total life of each child in your care.

- To take an active participating interest in each child's school life and extra-mural activities.
- To encourage and assist each child to become involved in the community.

- To develop an awareness of each child's individual psychological, educational, physical, spiritual, and social needs and to actively promote these on behalf of the child.
- In consultation with the supervisor to become involved appropriately with the child's family.

B: AN EFFECTIVE CHILD CARE WORKER

To show initiative.

- To demonstrate initiative in order to maximise each child's potential to achieve.
- To use initiative within the parameters of the procedures manual and financial resources of the home.
- To use initiative in order to benefit the growth and development of the child care team.
- To implement appropriately, skills and ideas learned through training, study and supervision.

Provide a caring atmosphere and environment.

- To demonstrate at all times that you care for each child individually and are sensitive to his/her needs.
- To care for the unit and the living area is essential in creating a safe, homely environment for the children in your care.

Provide for the development and physical care of each child.

- Development.
 - To promote the overall development of each individual child in order to meet his personal needs (physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and educational)
 - To learn and know the developmental stages of childhood to determine behaviour that is age appropriate, and implement programmes accordingly.
- Physical Care.
 - To encourage each child to take an interest in and care for his/her living space.
 - To ensure that each child has sufficient clothing of his own. To ensure that all clothing is suitably marked, and cared for.
 - Each child must be taught to value and care for his/her own personal possessions and respect the property of others.
 - To teach and ensure that each child takes care of his/her own personal hygiene and appearance.
 - To recognise ailments and ensure that they are treated appropriately.
 - To ensure that each child has adequate nutrition, sleep and physical exercise in order to maintain good health.

To set up and maintain a structured environment.

- To establish and maintain limits and structure each child's environment to ensure safety and to manage behaviour.
- To be consistent in the maintenance of a structured environment and rules.
- To implement general and unit rules through appropriate discipline.

To carry out all administration duties.

- To ensure that all reports and relevant forms are completed timeously.
- To ensure that all daily administrative routines are carried out.
- To take responsibility for ensuring that all appointments are kept.

C: A RESPONSIBLE TEAM MEMBER

Foster, generate and participate in team work and co-operation.

- To be a participating and supportive member of the team responsible for all the children in the home.
- To co-operate with colleagues in order to generate and promote better child care practice and to develop an understanding of each other.
- Be prepared to assist when a colleague is in need.
- Foster and maintain communications with all team members for the general well being

of children.

- Use the correct channels and procedures for the recording and reporting of problems and concerns.

Develop an active commitment to the child care profession.

- To act in a manner that is a credit to the child care profession.
- Demonstrate an active commitment towards personal growth and advancement through participation in training.

To be loyal and responsible.

- Demonstrate an active loyalty towards the Children's Home including children, colleagues and other staff.
- Demonstrate responsibility and concern for all the properties and facilities of the home such as the vehicles, furniture, linen, food, living space and the property.
- To respect the confidential nature of our work and of the team.

News and Notes from the Transvaal

Kimberley visitors

We were delighted once to again host visitors from the Kimberley Region. Five workers from the Mimosa Place of Safety and the Galeshewe Place of Safety spent three days in Johannesburg learning how to teach Module 2 of the BQCC in Kimberley. It has been gratifying to work with such enthusiastic people who have made such a special effort to ensure that their child care workers are given training. It has also been a challenge to the Transvaal staff to "package" our training courses to ensure that they are transportable across the country. The child care workers in Kimberley have completed for the first time Module 1 of the BQCC, and we were very pleased with the results that they achieved. Thanks to the trainers Derek Swartz, Driennie Booyen, Sonia Henn, Melanie Kivedo and William Sithole.

Lack of facilities

A committee formed to investigate the lack of facilities for children with behaviour disturbances met with representatives from the various mental hospitals in the area as

well as representatives from the state departments. Representatives from The Child and Family Unit, Tara and J G Strydom Hospitals and Weskoppies all agreed that there was a need for a "secure" facility for such children. Such a service would have to be well staffed with a multi-disciplinary team as well as an educational service on the premises. This would ideally be an intensive family-based service, providing short term treatment that would enable a child to move back into a conventional children's home. The representatives from the House of Assembly and the Department of Education and Training expressed the view that such services are already provided by the Child Care Schools and the Reform Schools. It was evident that there was a gap in the perceptions of these services between the private sector and the departments concerned. Mr van Schalkwyk of Welfare Services, House of Assembly stated that the primary purpose of the Child Care School was to serve disturbed adolescents — a surprise to many who were under the impression that the Child Care Schools provided trade education. He also stated that it was entirely unnecessary for children to be kept in police cells awaiting placement to a Child Care School (as happened recently because Norman House Place of Safety was full). He stated that the transfer to a Child Care School can be made rapidly. He made a generous offer: anyone with a problem in this regard can 'phone him directly

on (012) 200338.

The NACCW will be working with the Department of Health Services & Welfare on a research project to establish a "profile" of the child who cannot be contained in a children's home.

Joan Nienaber retires

Mrs Joan Nienaber became Principal of the Louis Botha Home for Children in Pretoria in 1971. At that time the home had been newly built, being one of the first children's homes in the country to be based on the cottage system, where children of different ages and sexes live together under the care of houseparents in a "family". From the bare rocky patches between the cottages, Mrs Nienaber cultivated lawns and flower beds, planted trees and shrubs and created the parklike atmosphere that the children enjoy today. At the same time the children were taught to care for their surroundings and for each other. In the 20 years Mrs Nienaber has been Principal, she has been "mother" to hundreds of children, to whom she is affectionately known as "Mrs N". She became well known for her philosophy that children have rights and privileges, and that no matter what their background, they should be treated with dignity. On June 17 she retired to her cottage in Haenertsburg, aptly named "Harmony Cottage", to be near her son and daughter-in-law. Gary Westwood, Vice-Principal of the Home for the past few years, took over as Principal as from 18 June 1991.



TUESDAY

Lungs (Part One)

Tuesdays weren't a lot better than Mondays, I thought. It was sometimes hard to get up because of going to sleep so late the night before, after the film. I woke up really early that Tuesday, though. I was cold from sleeping in my damp clothes and it had been a bad night. It was still dark and everyone else was snoring like mad. I needed to pee so I got up and peed out of the back door. There was a sort of hollow in the ground there, from everyone walking in and out, and when it rained there was always this puddle that you had to jump over to get in or out of the house. I peed in the puddle and went back to my blanket but it was too cold to sleep and the floor seemed harder than usual. I lay awake for a while trying to see the damp mark that ran all along the wall. It was just bright enough to see it. When I was a little kid I used to pretend that that mark was a picture of a mountain, the way it rose and fell along the wall. I used to make myself scared imagining lions and that creeping along the mountainside. Then I remembered the problem of the money behind the Omo box and that took care of sleeping altogether. I got up and found my school bag and a piece of bread in the kitchen and I went to school. I left the back door open on purpose — I hoped the cold air coming in would wake the rest of them. Anyway, it was easier to jump over the puddle if you left the door open, because you could get up a bit of a run at it. I'd peed in that puddle and I didn't fancy landing in it in my bare feet. It was kind of strange at school when it was still half-dark and there was no one around. Cold, too. The new school was only a couple of years old — sort of long, concrete buildings with these long corridors, also concrete. There was nowhere

Jontin

PETER SLINGSBY

in that place it was ever warm, I can tell you, what with the way the wind blew up and down those corridors. I tried all the doors but every one was locked. I had no idea of the time, but it was too cold to sit outside watching the sky lightening so I went and sat in the toilets and sang hymns. At least it wasn't so draughty in the toilets even though they had these sort of half-doors that didn't reach the floor. Your feet used to get pretty cold in those joints but at least you could look over the doors to see if anyone was inside. I hadn't been there for long when Jontin turned up. I always used to forget how small he was. I mean, I was pretty small and skinny myself but he was more than a year older than me and yet he was quite a bit smaller. I know I said he wasn't that much smaller than me but he was really, if you came to think about it. He was skinny, too, that guy. He had these sort of knobbly knees full of scars and his feet always looked too big for him. I heard him coming and went to the door — I thought he was one of the little kids when I saw him. Then I remembered that he was often the first kid at school and I felt a little better because I wasn't him. I told you before, he peed in his blanket most nights. If they caught him in the morning before he could run off to school he would get one hell of a hiding from his step-father, then he would have to hang his blanket out on the washline. All the other kids would see him and tease him because he'd peed in his bed. I felt quite sorry for the guy, really. I mean it can't be easy when you still wet your bed and you're nearly thirteen. That's why he used to come to school so early. He would wake up wet and he would know, so he would get up quickly and hang up his blanket and get the hell out of the house before his step-father woke up. It would still be dark and no one else would be around so he would go straight to school.

My granny reckoned the mouse trick was the way to stop a guy peeing in his bed. If a kid kept peeing in his bed you had to catch a mouse, in the same house. It was no use if you caught some other mouse, outside in the bushes or in the wood pile — you had to wait until you caught one in the house. Worked better if you caught it in whatever room the kid slept in. Then you cut off its head and skinned it and cleaned it. Then you boiled it slowly. Then, when it was nice and cooked, you made the kid eat it. It worked every time, she reckoned. Sounded pretty disgusting to me — I mean, there's a lot of little bones in a mouse, you can hear that when a cat eats one.

I guess they never tried the mouse on Jontin. Mind you, his house smelled so much like cat pee I reckon they could never find a mouse inside it.

Jontin came into the toilets with his teeth chattering — I mean, he wasn't stuttering, his teeth were clacking away he was so cold. He was wet, too, and pretty smelly I can tell you. That was the other thing about him — about him and his brothers. They wore the same clothes for days on end and they slept in them too. I mean, I often slept in my clothes but at least I never peed in them. If Jontin peed in his blanket he also peed in his pants. He would wear them to school and they would just have to dry on him — just like that.

I remember once when I was in his class, before he failed for the first time and they kept him down. Miss Sheila took him to the teachers' bathroom and washed him and his clothes. She sent his brother Elroy home to fetch more clothes for him and they were so dirty that she washed those, too. He never came to class all day because he had to sit in a towel in the office while his clothes hung on the fence to dry. He was still in Miss Sheila's class after all those years even though he was older than me.

He was really wet, from head to foot, and shivering so much I thought he might die so I ran home to find some other clothes for him. It was still black dark and our stupid dog barked at me when I did this flying jump over the puddle. My mother called out my name, but they were still in bed and I was able to grab a jersey and some matches and sprint back to school. Jontin was still shivering in the toilets when I got there. He took off his clothes and put on my jersey and we made a fire behind the toilets to dry his stuff. I gave him my bread and he was soon jumping around in front of the fire, showing off his bare bum and playing with his willie. He and his brothers Elrico and Elroy were like that. I don't think they would have cared if they'd walked around all day stark naked. Jontin really had rather a small little tassel — I mean, for a guy who peed in his bed, you'd have thought he would have had more to show for it. I took off my pants too and danced around the fire with him,

to show him that mine was bigger than his. Then we heard some other kids coming and saw that it was getting light, so we got dressed quickly and put out the fire. I mean, it was six cuts from the Head if you got caught making a fire at school.

Jontin's clothes were still wet but he put them on over my jersey so I told him he could keep it. I didn't want a jersey that was full of his pee.

As it turned out we needn't have worried. It was the farm kids arriving at school and they didn't mind getting cuts if they made a fire — at least they would be warm, and in no time they built it up again. They had to walk to school — six or seven kilometres they reckoned. They started early as hell, in case they didn't get a lift. They had got one that morning which was why they were at school so early. They all started dancing and Jontin took off his wet pants and started showing off his Willie again even though one guy's little sister was there. She was only six but still she was a girl and there was no way I would take off my pants in front of a girl. I suddenly felt dog-tired so I went back to the toilets. At the back was a sort of cupboard where they kept the empty boxes that the toilet paper came in and I knew I would be warm in there. I made a bed out of empty boxes and fell asleep. The next thing was the hooter was going.

That Basil was a mean guy. You could see that just by looking at him. He had these heavy eyelids and he was big and fat and when he looked at you he'd let this little mean smile run across his face. His mother was a teacher so he probably knew a lot about what the teachers talked about. All through the first lesson he gave me that mean smile whenever I looked at him, so I should have known that something was cooking.

It was. The hooter went and Miss Luchelle had hardly had time to start the next lesson when there was a knock on the door. It was Cyril with a message from the Head. He wanted me and Glezenti. We followed Cyril down the stairs. Me? What now? What did he want me for? We saw the yellow van parked outside as we came down the stairs, the yellow van with the blue and gold star on the door but I never connected it. I should have. Constable Ferdie was one of our policemen — not one of the whiteys. I mean, he lived near us. My stepdad got canned with him most Fridays — they knew each other well. He was a big guy, Ferdie, and when he was off duty he drove a beat-up Kombi and he always gave me lifts, especially if I was carrying a heavy shopping bag or a gas bottle. He was in the Head's office with Bertram and before I knew what was happening we were all in the back of the yellow van, bumping down the bad road outside the school. Ferdie was driving.

It was kind of strange, riding along in the back of that van through town in the mid-

dle of the morning. I mean, we only got to town after school or in the holidays and that — it was strange because there were no kids around. Not many people, either — I guess they were all working.

At the copshop we all had to get out and Constable Ferdie stood us behind the counter in the charge office. The counter was so high I could hardly see over it. Glezenti couldn't — he was smaller than me. He kept asking me what Ferdie was doing. Glezenti was my cousin, a bit white like me, but he was only ten and he was quite fat. Not like Bertram. He wasn't family, he was black with a face like an Indian. He was quite big, too. He was fifteen. Ferdie took our fingerprints and stood us against the wall to measure our heights and he asked a lot of questions about our names and where we lived and who our parents were. I mean, I could hardly believe it. He knew who I was, who my stepdad was and where I lived — he didn't need to ask me. I smiled at him when he asked me but he just frowned back.

There was some bigwig whitey policeman moving around at the back — perhaps that's why Ferdie was so stern. I winked at him a bit, but he ignored me. Then he asked each of us a lot of questions about the burglary and we had to write our names at the bottom of the things he wrote. I told him I knew nothing about it, that I was at the Bay with Marc and why didn't he ask Marc. He made me sign and then he took us outside and locked us in a cell.

Glezenti was blubbing again but Bertram didn't seem to mind, except when I asked him why I was there. He just turned away. It was pretty smelly in that cell, I can tell you. There was a toilet on one side but no chain to flush it, you had to wait until a policeman flushed it from outside the cell. It was full of — well, you know what — when we were put in and no one flushed it. There were some dirty benches and a table and some wooden bed things. It was quite dark too, although there was an electric light burning.

The walls were full of scratches — messages and names. Some of the messages were pretty rude and Glezenti started to cheer up. He found some pictures scratched there too — of men and women, you know what I mean. He tried to tell me what they were — as if I didn't know. I told him to shut up when suddenly we heard them unlocking the door and Doppie came in.

Doppie was a strange guy. His sister Hendrietta was in my class. I didn't like him very much — I didn't like him at all. He was nearly fourteen but he was much bigger than Jontin. He was nearly as big as Cyril. He stopped going to school a long time ago — just walked out and never went back. He used to spend his time hanging around the shops, begging for tips from the whiteys. I'd heard



that he stole, but I never knew for sure. He had a funny look in his eyes, that Doppie, and I didn't trust him. He came into the cell with a big smile for Bertram, but he seemed surprised to see me.

"What's he doing here?" he asked Bertram but Bertram just dropped his eyes again. I decided I hated Bertram then. He had got me into this mess for nothing — I had nothing to do with it. He'd got Glezenti into it too, I could see that, because Glezenti started blubbing again when Doppie came in, and Glezenti never blubbed.

Doppie talked to Bertram for a while, keeping his voice low so I couldn't hear what he was talking about. Glezenti kept sniffing away — I mean, up till the day before in the office I'd never seen Glezenti cry so I wasn't too sure what the problem was. Doppie suddenly stood up and came across and pulled Glezenti up by his hair and slapped his face. Glezenti had this long straight hair like a whitey. That was when I knew I was scared of him — of Doppie. I just sat in the corner, hoping he wouldn't see me.

He told Glezenti he was a little s*** and all sorts of other things, about how he'd better not tell anyone that they had sent him into the house to unlock the door and all that. Glezenti just stared at him. Then he pulled Glezenti's hair again and made him promise. That's when I really got scared. That Doppie, he was just a kid really, like all of us, but he was going on like a bigtime skollie. He pulled out a knife. They were supposed to take your knives and things away, but I guess they thought Doppie was also just a kid so they didn't search him properly. I was really scared and I looked across to Bertram but he was just staring at the floor. Doppie was whispering to Glezenti, very softly, showing his knife, when suddenly he told him to climb on the table.

I didn't know what to do. I mean, Bertram was the only one of us big enough to stop Doppie but he just sat there, staring at the floor. He looked up when Doppie told Glezenti to take his shirt off.



Introduction

The phenomenon of street children was recorded in South Africa as early as in 1957 by two black journalists, Motsitsi and Magubane, in Johannesburg. Since then, there is a lot which has been written on street children. However, very little has been written on rural street children.

The Phenomenon of Rural Street Children

This phenomenon does exist in rural areas. Furthermore it has been dealt with by some of the communities involved. Cradock and Queenstown are examples of such communities. These two communities typify highly cohesive and politicised communities. These two have taken it upon themselves to deal with this problem.

The Queenstown Initiative

The 'Save the Children' project in Queenstown is the brain child of three African women. The latter were concerned about the young boys and girls who were roaming around the streets of this rural town looking hungry and unkempt. They brought their concern to the attention of the Queenstown Resident Association which showed equal concern.

This group was given permission by the local Roman Catholic Church to put up two cabin trunks next to its church building just outside the town centre. Four women from the above-mentioned association volunteered to work as child

Report by **Thobeka Mangwana** who is lecturer/researcher at the Institute for Social Development, University of the Western Cape

Rural Initiatives on the Phenomenon of Street Children

care workers. They asked for donations from the local business persons and other people at large. Their duties varied from collecting donations in kind or cash, cooking, washing clothes, washing and feeding the children and preparing them for school.

Today the Queenstown Resident Association is very proud, for it has a fully-fledged structure which serves as a drop-in centre, an over-night shelter, and a home to street children and children on the street.

Within this complex there is also a pre-school which keeps even the young inmates occupied during school hours. The project initiators are struggling very hard to raise funds.

The Cradock Initiative

The Institute for Social Development, University of the Western Cape, during the course of its research project of "Supporting Community Development in Rural Towns of the Cape" noticed the presence of the children on the streets of Cradock. The researchers involved mobilised a concerned response from the churches which serve Lingelihle Township. Both the clergy and the laity expressed a desire to respond to the needs and problems of the children in question.

A research study was conducted so as to investigate the circumstances under which the children survive on the streets. This included information as to who the children are, where they sleep, what they

eat, and whether they share the money earned with their families.

A follow-up study was also conducted by the Institute. This study was aimed at eliciting awareness and response to the community in general. The study examined the attitudes and perception of the Lingelihle community to children on the street with particular reference to what should be done to help the children.

A social worker was employed by the University to facilitate the project. Several community meetings were held in order to introduce the project to the community at large. An interim committee was elected. This committee worked closely with the social worker. A drop-in centre was established in town in the back rooms of the University house in Cradock. Children on the street were allowed to come to this centre at any time for food, for a bath and or clean clothes or just for company with other children of the same kind. A second drop-in centre was established in the Lingelihle community hall.

A programme was drawn up for the times this centre would be opened and the type of activities that the children would be engaged in so as to keep them occupied. The local women's organisation helped the social worker in collecting clothes from the community for the children, washing dirty clothes, bathing those children who need help, cooking and feeding the children.

During the above process, a rapport was established between the children and the social worker. She managed to get twelve of the approximately thirty children to attend school regularly.

Today a constitution has been drawn up; an executive committee has been elected by the community; the committee is involved in a large scale fund-raising; so far it has been successful in raising funds from two major community-based programme sponsors. The funds could keep the project going for the next two financial years. The committee for the Masiphumele-sikhululeke project, as it is known, intends to employ the services of a part-time social worker and also a full-time child care worker.

Concluding Remarks

The above two communities are an example of rural community pride in dealing with some of the local socio-political problems it experiences. These efforts show the preparedness of the people to share the little they have.

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Prof Richter defines children on the street as those children who go into the urban areas in order to earn or beg money and who then return home.

Conflict is infectious. Child and youth care workers often find that conflict with and between troubled youngsters spreads; it is used by others to deal with their own fears and feelings. In this article **Gary Adams** offers a framework for understanding the types of groups that foster this contagion and several techniques for diffusing or de-escalating it.

VERBAL MANAGEMENT OF CONTAGIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Joe, upset over his last home visit, has a terrible day in school. He acts out physically and aligns himself with other youth who are also having a difficult time. Consequently, at the end of the school day, he is told that he will not be able to partake in the group's off-grounds activity that evening. He reports to the living unit where Sam, a child care worker, notices he is upset. "Let's talk," Sam says with concern. "No!" Joe screams. "I'm not talking to you or anyone else in this crazy place." Then he pushes Sam and walks quickly to several peers who are eager to support his negative behaviour. "None of us are going to listen to you," they declare in unison.

This, or a similar incident, is probably familiar to most child and youth care workers. Situations where one youth's acting-out behaviour affects others are certainly common-place in group care and most workers know that they must intervene to deal with the conflict — or their groups may become extremely difficult to manage. However, while the necessity to restore order is obvious, the methods for achieving this end often are not. In this article, an attempt to offer some assistance will be made. The objective is to provide another practical framework for understanding groups and a few additional strategies for intervening in contagious situations. Most of the information presented here is based on trial and error experiences in two residential centres for high and low functioning youth.

We have found that contagion is most likely to occur in group care settings in one of five specific types of groups: calm groups, play groups, tense groups, belligerent groups, and out-of-control groups. We have also found that contagious behaviour can often be diffused or de-escalated with a few simple verbal techniques. A description of the group types and techniques follows.

CALM GROUPS

In calm groups, the group members are usually involved in quiet everyday activities such as one-to-one sessions or table games.

A few youths might also be showering or cleaning their rooms. The overall interac-

tion among the group is positive and friendly. Hence, the conflict that occurs is usually minor and it can be easily diffused if the worker uses his/her rapport with the youth or one of five verbal techniques developed by Samuels and Moriarty (1979): problem solving, distraction/diversion, re-expression, presentation of reality, and strong verbal command.

Individual Rapport. Whenever possible, workers should use their individual rapport with a youth first. Rapport is the trust and confidence that develops over time between a worker and a youth. We have found that rapport usually emanates from relationships in which the youth's care is paramount and in which the youth learns that the worker uses logical consequences rather than fear or pain to control negative behaviour.

An example of one of the many ways rapport is used is as follows: Tim, upset over losing a game of checkers, stands up and begins to swear loudly. The worker, who has a rapport with Tim, merely looks at him and frowns. Knowing that the worker has tried to be fair, firm and consistent in the past, Tim sits down and softly mumbles, "I'm sorry."

Problem Solving. Problem solving with calm groups consists of taking the youth or youths aside and identifying alternatives to the current disruptive course. For example, a youth who is having trouble getting to dinner on time because he is engrossed in his reading can be presented with the options of either preparing for dinner five minutes earlier or delaying reading until later in the evening.

Distraction/Diversion. Distraction/diversion is used with the moderately angry youth to focus his/her attention on something more enjoyable. For example, Sue uses her visiting privileges to visit Scott and her actions make Bill jealous. The worker, sensitive that Bill is getting angrier by the minute, tosses him a basketball. "Think quick," the worker says as he flips the ball. "How about a game of buckets," the worker continues. "O.K.," Bill replies. Then later, with Bill's anger under control, the worker and Bill discuss their feelings about the incident with Sue and Scott.

Re-expression. Re-expression is used to help a youth recognise his anger and frustration and to encourage a more appropriate means of expression. For example, a youth who is frustrated by a delayed home visit goes to his room and slams his door behind him. The worker, knowing that the youth enjoys writing poetry, reminds him about the consequences for door slamming and encourages him to put his feelings on paper. In these cases, alternative forms of expression, such as writing, playing music, drawing, painting, working with clay, and role playing can serve to help calm a youth and at the same time to express himself/herself in a more comfortable way.

Presentation of Reality. Confronting a youth with the reality of consequences for continued acting-out behaviour can curb the behaviour before a consequence is needed and the rest of the group is unsettled. For example, a youth throws a cookie at another youth and the worker forms the thrower that if he doesn't pick up the cookie, and if his behaviour continues, the youth will have to leave the room and miss the activity for the evening.

Strong Verbal Command. A strong verbal command is a short, quick, usually loud command given by a worker to get immediate attention. With a calm group, it is used infrequently, and as a last resort. For example, several children may be watching TV quietly when, suddenly, one child gets up to leave the area and accidentally falls over another child. Then the imposed-upon child strikes out and a fight ensues. The worker's loud, "Break is up!" or "Stop that!" may cause both children to stop or pause long enough for other interventions.

PLAY GROUPS

In play groups, group members are normally engaged together in activity such as basketball, volleyball, dodgeball or table games. The difference between calm and play groups is that in the play group some good-natured teasing and horseplay may be going on in addition to, or as part of the activity. In other words, the interactions are potentially more disruptive. The conflicts which can arise include out-of-hand horseplay, individual or group inability to cope with losing, or accidental, but unwanted, physical contact.

The first step is for the worker to constantly be aware that teasing and horseplay can get out of hand, and to be as sensitive as possible to the group's and individual member's ability to tolerate it. Then, as with the calm group, when these interactions begin to border on becoming problematic or indeed to deteriorate to a conflictual situation, individual rapport, problem solving, distraction/diversion, re-expression, presentation of reality, and strong verbal commands can be used to

curb further deterioration. For example, eye contact (individual rapport) may be sufficient to stop an overly aggressive football player. Changing activities or a discussion about cheating (problem solving) may be suitable for an incident of card cheating. A compliment for a previous play (distraction/diversion) may help a frustrated basketball player. Switching from baseball to kickball (re-expression) may work for frustrated youths with inadequate hand/eye co-ordination. A reminder that the activity may have to cease (presentation of reality) may work with a group of roughhousers. And finally, a firm "slow down" (strong verbal command) may work for an anxious group on the way to a dodgeball game.

TENSE GROUPS

A tense group is characterised by a series of simmering minor problems among group members. In general, they are semi-resistant to fulfilling unit responsibilities and/or co-operating in group activities. Limit testing (complaints and derogatory remarks) and formation of negative sub-groups (two or more members of the main group who band together for a counterproductive purpose) may be occurring. In these situations, experienced workers can usually sense or feel the tension as it begins to develop.

Following is an example of a fairly common tense group situation. Steve, a member of a potentially negative sub-group, enters the living unit requesting to see his worker. The worker, however, is busy trying to calm another youth. Steve, refusing to speak with another worker, agrees to wait, but he is obviously in a defensive mood.

The worker is detained by the other youth until dinner begins at 5:20. At supper, Steve sits with Ronnie, Bill and Greg, members of this sub-group. Steve and Ronnie, who is also having a difficult day, begin to complain about the worker. Soon Ronnie and Greg add to the unpleasant interchange. By the time everyone returns to the living unit, Steve's anger towards the worker has completely clouded over the original problem. When the worker seeks Steve out, he refuses to talk and instead decides to continue to complain and incite his peers.

Meanwhile, Greg begins to involve additional group members by spreading the word about the worker's unfairness to Steve. Soon the entire group is tense and problem-bound, all because the worker did not have time to deal with Steve's original problem.

Understandably, workers can't always do everything at once. However, steps can be taken to stop situations such as this from reaching the point where tension is needlessly spread throughout the group. The natural solution, of course, is prevention. That is, workers can be aware of how each youth deals with delayed gratifica-

tion and use strategies to help. For example, the worker might have taken a moment to at least acknowledge that he was aware of Steve's desire to speak to him and that he would try to meet with him as soon as possible. When prevention fails, the following techniques may be helpful.

Individual Rapport.

Once a tense group has developed, individual rapport can be used with as many members as possible. Rubbing one youth's head, commenting on another's special hobby, and just listening to another are only a few examples of what might be done. The objective, once again, is to use individual rapport as soon and as often as possible.

Small Group Discussion. Small group discussion with the negative sub-group can also curb escalation of the tense group. Once the sub-group is identified, the worker may attempt to discuss the problem with the group in a quiet, removed area. Again, as in problem solving, the worker helps the group find alternative outlets. For example, several youths who are concerned over one youth's stolen jacket might be presented with the option of settling down so that the worker can investigate and perhaps conduct a discussion with all the group members. The objective is to calm the sub-group enough to allow for more productive alternatives to be explored and implemented.

BELLIGERENT GROUPS

In a belligerent group, non-compliance is commonplace. In this context, the belligerent group, in contrast to the tense group, is potentially more volatile and behaviour is more blatant. In other words, the group members are, in general, refusing to co-operate (e.g., refusing to do their jobs, clean their rooms, shower, or attend activities).

Large group discussion is the main strategy for de-escalating the belligerent group. Strategies described previously are usually inadequate, because the contagion has reached the point where outer order must be restored before the worker can proceed with inner controls. The first goal is to get the group in a contained area, and not necessarily be concerned with minor disturbances such as swearing. Presentation of related consequences (presentation of reality) may take



"Lengthy discussions are not appropriate for belligerent groups .."

place as the group leader calmly attempts to assemble the group. For example, the group may be reminded that the dance planned for that evening will have to be cancelled if everyone can't work harder at co-operating.

Getting the group together is not an easy task, but it is more manageable if extra help is available, and if the workers insist that other issues will not be dealt with until everyone is standing or sitting, in reasonable order, in the designated area. Once the group is together in a relatively contained, out-of-the-way area, the worker(s) must be extremely sensitive to the tolerance levels of various group members and be able to anticipate further outbursts. This is not an easy task, but workers do get better with experience. When the group is reasonably settled, the worker(s) can proceed with a discussion of the problem as he or she sees it and encourage the group to work together toward mediating the situation. If the group can't participate in discussion, then the worker must at least set some parameters for further interactions. The objective is to restore outer order and try to get members to begin to co-operate rather than resist the worker's authority. This process is, of course, enhanced if the children are reminded of the benefits that can be achieved through co-operation.

The group should be dispersed as soon as possible. Lengthy discussions are not appropriate for belligerent groups; quick reminders and limit setting are.

OUT-OF-CONTROL GROUPS

The last and potentially most disruptive group type is the out-of-control group. When a group is out-of-control, as most workers know, youths will blatantly ignore staff direction and completely disregard most rules. Some youths may be attacking staff, others may be barricaded in their rooms, and still others may be attempting to run away. Usually additional staff or outside assistance is needed to restore the

therapeutic environment.

In well-planned programmes, out-of-control groups are the exception. Workers are sensitive to the conditions that lead to this kind of deterioration and they do everything possible, including using the techniques outlined above, to alter the conditions quickly and efficiently. Nonetheless, even in the most preventative environments, groups of troubled youths can get unruly. In our experience, two conditions appear to be present most often with out-of-control groups: a new staff member has been given too much responsibility too soon and/or negative group leaders have taken charge of the group. The best ways to prevent out-of-control groups, therefore, are to exercise extreme caution in deciding when a new worker is ready to assume total responsibility for the group, and to know who the negative leaders are and how they are likely to gain control of the group.

The major task, once a group is out-of-control, is to re-establish adult authority. The most effective way to do this appears to be to first gather as much adult help and support as possible and then to remove the negative leader or sub-group from the larger main group. This may require physical removal, although it is recommended that physical intervention is always the last option.

After the negative leader(s) has been removed, extra staff should remain to reassure the other youths that the environment is secure. When several staff are on hand, it may be wise to have the staff member who has the best rapport or who is the calmest and most objective stay to supervise the negative leaders. Then, once order is restored, the above strategies outlined earlier can be employed with the understanding that the group may recoup slowly. It is not unusual for an out-of-control group to turn into a belligerent group before returning to its normal status.

Summary

This paper was written with the knowledge that there are many more alternatives for dealing with group conflict and curbing group contagion. These are just a few of the techniques and strategies that the author and his colleagues have found to be effective in the working environment.

The author would like to thank the Wyalusing and Eau Claire Academies' Crisis Teams. Special thanks to Linda Robertson, Bob Pickett and Wayne Belanger.

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5 Years Ago

For readers who weren't around then, we look back over our July 1986 issue

Die **Redaksie** let op dat af en toe daar verskil of afkeur ontstaan oor een of ander mening of artikel wat in *Die Kinderversorger* verskyn. "Uit die aard van die saak is dit onvermydelik en nie onverwags nie. Besprekeing en geskil word inderdaad verwelkom, aangesien dit 'n lewendige beroep aandui wat deurentyd groei en verander." (Dit bly seker nog steeds ons redaksiebeleid: by die Junie 1991 redaksievergadering word daar eintlik gevra "Hoekom ontvang ons geen stimulerende en omstrede briewe aan die redakteur nie?") As elkeen van ons mekaar se menings respekteer, dan bestaan daar geen kwaad in argument en geskil nie.

A report on a one-day workshop organised by **Kleinmond Child Welfare Society** began with the startling paragraph: "Every child who has been found in need of care and committed to a children's home or institution from Kleinmond during the past eight years is now in prison. Apart from the R2000 to R3000 p.a. spent on each of those children while in care, they now constitute a double burden to the state as unproductive prison inmates. Could not something better have been done for those children with all that money?" The workshop went on to consider the establishment of a small group home in Kleinmond itself, where Child Welfare had set up a realistic service infrastructure.

A helpful review of the personality development of the pre-schooler was contributed by **Glynis Harper**. She takes us through the counterposed tasks of socialisation and the development of self-awareness. "Of course children and adults are different, but they are equal in terms of human worth and dignity. Remembering this helps the parent to treat the child with respect,

which in turn encourages the child to respect the parent". Next, Glynis deals with language and play: "Identifying the feeling beneath what the child is saying and then putting it into words helps the child come into contact with her emotions and gradually to talk about them rather than just acting them out". On fears and anxieties: "Above all, children fear being unloved or abandoned by their parents. Children should never be threatened in a way which might reinforce such fears".

The toy library at St Michael's Home was described by **Selma Wastell**. The children learned that the library system meant that the toys would be always available for them. Selma told of the girls who 'fostered' a doll and who might, if they cared for it properly, 'adopt' it permanently — and of the boy who pondered the toys, something he had never had, and who lamented that for him, now, "it was too late to play".

'Centrefold' feature was an illustrated visit to **St George's Home** in Johannesburg, with its fine Sir Herbert Baker buildings and extensive grounds. Enrolment had declined from 220 to 150 as the Home's preventive role with non-committed children had proved financially insupportable. An advantage of St George's had been the recognisable model of the boarding school with excellent extra-mural facilities backed by a qualified child care service.

An article on punishment and reward as elements of child-rearing was included as a **Student Paper** by a second-year Cape Technikon student. The paper takes us from the 'cold' application of behavioural theory to understanding children's developmental goal of achieving internal as against external controls.

Assistant Director

A new post has been created within the Association for an Assistant Director in the National Office in Durban. Applicants should have the background and experience which equips them to contribute at a leadership level to the aims and objects of the NACCW. The salary and other terms of employment are negotiable, and enquiries should be directed in the first instance to the National Director, Lesley du Toit, National Association of Child Care Workers, Box 28323, Malvern 4055, Telephone (031) 463-1033.

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