

# Child & Youth Care

A JOURNAL FOR THOSE WHO WORK WITH  
TROUBLED CHILDREN AND YOUTH AT RISK

ISSN 0258-8927 VOL 15 NO 4 APRIL 1997

**MARK GAMBLE ON A WILDERNESS EXPERIENCE**  
**REPORT ON CHILD CARE ACT CONFERENCE AT UWC**  
**ONOL WOOD ON CREATING POSITIVE MOMENTS**

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# Votes for all

Last month we considered one of the major proposals to be put to the NACCW's Biennial General Meeting in Durban this July, namely that the name of the Association should be changed. Another important proposal is that voting at NACCW meetings should not continue to be limited to Accredited Members, that is, those who are registered child and youth care workers.

## Sound intentions

The Association's original decision to reserve voting rights to accredited (registered) members was based on the fact that the only standards of practice for child and youth care in South Africa were embodied in the NACCW's registration procedure, and that here was the opportunity for our profession to take the responsibility for its own development and management in this country. The issue had been debated country-wide, and the membership at the time voted by a more than two-thirds majority to change the Constitution accordingly.

The intention was sound, but in practice the numbers didn't work out. In reality there will always be a relatively tiny proportion of registered people amongst South Africa's child care workers. To be registered, a worker requires a two-year qualification and three years of practice, but there is such a high turnover in the field that *the average length of service has been only 2.9 years*.

Those who register will be the un-average remnant who have made a long-term commitment to the field. It is a sign of hope that hundreds have indeed registered — but not enough for us to reach the critical mass needed for a field driven by its registered professionals.

What we have seen instead, are too few accredited members to stand for office in some of our smaller regions, often not enough voting members to form a quorum at regional meetings, and, worst of all, a sense of frustration and exclusion on the part of non-registered members.

## Solutions

The NACCW should continue to seek ways in which it can contribute to the professional infrastructure of child and youth care. It has a lot to offer here — certainly more than any conceptions of the field which the state may have at the moment, judging from its recent PAS formulation. However it cannot do this at the expense of its own structures and its own character. This Association should continue to be a home (and therefore a place of influence) for all who are involved in child and youth care work. It is not our fault or our wish that people should be able to work with troubled children and youth at risk without experience or prior training — that is the way South Africa has always seen fit to fund such work — but we can engage these new workers from Day One, include them in our fellowship, encourage them to participate in training, and motivate them towards professional registration. We owe this to them — and to the kids.

Our Regions, with their committees, officials and members, are central to this level of interaction. They provide the meetings, the discussion forums, the support and the channels of communication which are able to vitalise child care practice in programmes throughout this country. If achieving this requires us to revisit our Constitution, then we should do so. First things first. The proposal to open voting at this stage to all members gets my vote.

## So what has changed?

Many people ask this question in South Africa today. It's our job to ask it in connection with the child and youth care service. Over the past couple of years we have watched with interest and expectation the work of the Inter-Ministerial Committee on Young People at Risk. We have read of the new principles and the "new paradigm" for child and youth

care work. We have waited for the concrete results of these to see where we can all contribute. Also, a year or so ago, the IMC carried out an inquiry into the state's own institutions for young people (places of safety, schools of industries and reform schools) of which it was, in some respects, highly critical. Are these institutions better placed now to offer the services expected of them?

We have seen a few developments — some pilot projects and creative new programmes — but on the whole the field is no better off. Indeed, with reduced staff and the declining and continuing unimaginative subsidy system, probably every single agency is worse off today.

The irony is that everyone is willing to help. For twenty years the field has been asking for a better subsidy system than one which reflects only the residential component. The so-called new paradigm arguably derives directly from thinking developed within the child and youth care field itself. But while the old subsidy system remains in place and *becomes smaller*, it prevents the existing services from offering more than residential care and *slowly strangles their services and threatens their very existence*.

It is indefensible for the state to wind down the old subsidy while at the same time delaying on the introduction of a better one. It is indefensible for the state to be critical of mere residential services when its own subsidy system limits all institutions to this level of service.

It is indefensible for the state to play fast and loose with so many established services for children and youth (risking not only the facilities themselves but also the potential of the accumulated experience of a whole occupational group) before it has put anything better in their place.

It is indefensible for the state to speak piously of its children and youth, and of the problems of abuse, homelessness and neglect, without conserving and encouraging the willing resources which exist to help with these.

The bottom line now is that the next abused and traumatised child removed by the courts will arrive in a child care service which is today *less* able to offer protection or to provide meaningful care and treatment.

That is what has changed.

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Cover picture: Andrzej Sawa



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International Federation of Educative Communities (UNESCO)



Association Internationale des Educateurs de Jeunes Inadaptés  
International Association of Workers with Troubled Children

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## People



**Jackie Winfield**

Jackie is a training course co-ordinator with NACCW. She was born in England, and arrived in South Africa in 1981. After matriculating in Johannesburg, she registered at the Wits Medical School. The highlights of her first academic year were a half-course in Human Behavioural Sciences — and the dissection of a rat! The former led to an interest in psychology and her enrolment for a Bachelor of Social Sciences degree, majoring in psychology and sociology, at the University of Natal. She has not pursued her interest in rat dissection!

### Career choices

On completion of her degree in 1987, she had little idea about what career to pursue but was fairly sure that she wanted to work with people, so applied to do an LLB degree. Shortly thereafter, she travelled to Durban for a friend's 21st birthday party and has been there ever since (in Durban, that is; not at the party!) Her eye was caught by one particular advertisement which resulted in an interview being arranged — with Ernie Nightingale — who employed her at Ethelbert Children's Home as "Assistant Child Care Worker". One week after starting the job, she learned that she had

been accepted for the LLB degree, but it was too late ... she had been seduced by the glamour of child care!

### More training

In 1988, Jackie began the National Higher Certificate in Residential Child Care which she completed the following year. During this time, her links with the NACCW began, firstly through in-service training run by Lesley du Toit (then, the NACCW's Regional Director for Natal and Eastern Cape) and then through attendance at regional meetings of the Association. Between 1990 and 1992, Jackie tutored BQCC and did a little lecturing at the Ethelbert Training Centre.

### New job

She left the children's home at the end of 1992, took a four-month break and started working at the NACCW on a part-time basis, with intermittent relief work at William Clark Gardens Children's Home. During 1993, she registered as a professional child and youth care worker. The following year she was employed full-time by the NACCW and began study towards her BA Honours degree in psychology (part-time) at the University of Durban-Westville which she completed in 1995. Since 1996, most of Jackie's work has revolved around co-ordinating the UNISA Certificate in Child and Youth Care, although she is also involved in BQCC, Professional Assault Response Training (PART), and curriculum development. In her spare time Jackie enjoys the beach and going to the gym. Given half the chance, she would like to see more of the world and



A report from **Mark Gamble** on a wilderness experience with a group of young people

# "Slowly and with Dignity"

EDUCO AFRICA, a wilderness-based experiential organisation, has been developing a programme for Youth at Risk over the last six months. This is in response to an increasing awareness in the Child and Youth Care profession of the benefits of such a programme in fostering the development of self-esteem. However, this is not an article describing the processes, expected outcomes and so on of wilderness programmes. Rather, it is the story of seven youngsters from a Cape Town children's home, a Shawnee Indian Chief called Tecumseh, a fierce Cape storm, and fire in the belly.

**I**f you were walking in the depths of the Cedarberg Mountains a few weeks back, you might have come across a group of people sitting under a tree, discussing the events of the day. It has been quite a day; many hours have been spent rock climbing and abseiling. At the time one could sense the tension, the doubt and the fear

amongst the participants. Equally present was the sense of accomplishment, joy, mastery and support amongst the group as this difficult feat was accomplished.

The smell of the evening meal drifts across to where the group is sitting.

The pace of the discussion slows down as if to settle into the tempo of the setting sun.

Ken, one of the Educo staff members, points to the mountains and with a voice that reflects the variety of countries in which he has lived, draws the group's attention to the changing hues in the mountains lying behind us.

Johnny, sitting on a log opposite him, points to a leather pouch hanging around Ken's neck and asks: "What is that?" "It's my Pa waw ka," replies Ken.

"n Wat se ding?" asks Sammy, his eyes showing equal amounts of fascination and confusion.

"A Pa waw ka," repeats Ken, "it comes from the Shawnee Indians."

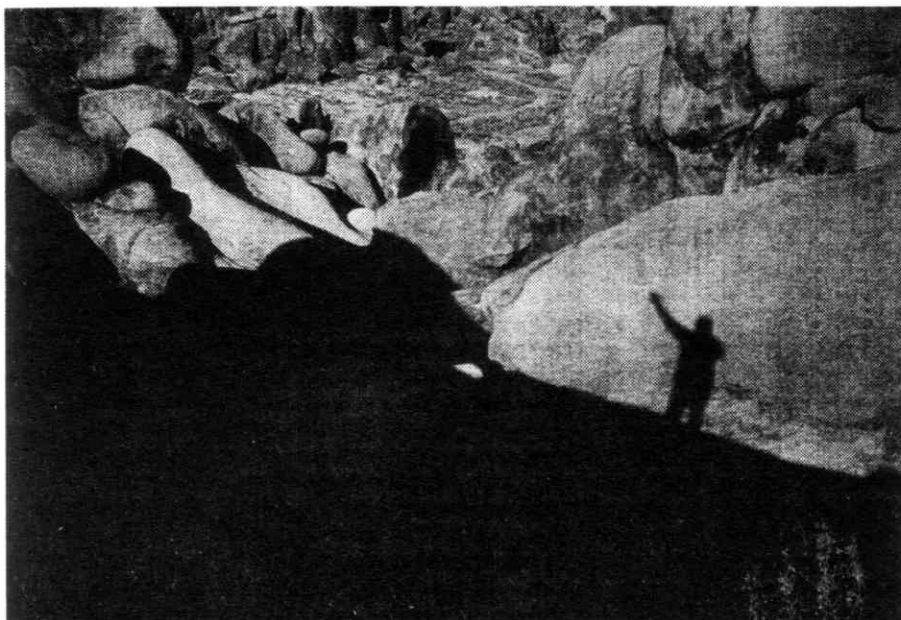
**Finally Johnny asks: "Ken, how can we get a Pa waw ka?"  
"By earning it," Ken replies.**

**D**arkness descends on the camp as Ken tells us of the Story of Tecumseh, the great Shawnee Chief, the pa waw ka and the rites of passage which each Shawnee youth had to complete; about diving into an icy river over a two-month period; the walk from the village to the river and back, at a pace which was "slow and with dignity"; and the search, on the final dive down to the river bed, to retrieve a power-piece, which symbolised the 'fire in the belly' — the inner strength that had been cultivated through these rites of passage. Once acquired, it would serve as a reminder in the difficult times that might follow. Ken draws the story to a close and for some minutes there is a period of reverent silence as the young people relive this story in their minds. Finally Johnny asks: "Ken, how can we get a Pa waw ka?" "By earning it," Ken replies.

**A** month has passed and the students participating on the first part of the programme have returned and are now well into the second and final part of the course. In this time they have learnt numerous wilderness skills and have supported each other when things got tough. They have been angry with one another, and resolved their anger. There has been laughter, and there have been tears. A sense of community has supported the students through the challenges that the wilderness has provided. "Slowly and with dignity" has become the motto of the group.

**T**he youngsters constantly refer to the story of Tecumseh. "Are we going to earn our Pa waw ka?", the most frequent question asked after, "When are we going to eat?" The story has be-





come a symbol for their experience. The youngsters know the story — who Tecumseh's brother was, his stepfather, the name of the great river into which he dived, and the fact that his power-piece was a rare crystal.

**W**e return from a two-day hike. A storm has been moving in. Every member of the group is soaked, but before we can get dry, tents need to be pitched. This is our last night together. In the late afternoon the boys gather in the small kitchen area and are shown how to make the pa waw ka's (i.e. leather pouches). There is excitement amidst the concentration. The pa waw ka's need to soak overnight and will be ready for the final ceremony in the morning. The students have done well, we have hiked in miserable weather, yet the spirit in the group is strong. There is fire in the belly.

**T**he storm hits us at about 11:30 that night, some two hours after we have all climbed into our tents. The tents are flattened by the gale-force wind. All of us move into the tiny kitchen. Even though some of the guys are a bit grumpy, space is shared. Israel swops his place with Sammy who is afraid he might fall off the table which has now become a bed. Clinton comes back outside to offer assistance to the staff, who are busy saving the tents. Through the night rain and wind force their way into the small building. Morning, wet and grey, greets us. There is work to be done and the students get to it — tents packed, pots cleaned, order slowly taking form amidst the debris of the previous night's storm. "When are we going to get our Pa waw ka's?", I am asked, over and over again. When the time is right the group begins the walk to the river.

"Ek gat nie swem nie," says a voice filled with anxiety. I hear Sammy's laugh. "Ons moet stap 'slowly and with digidy'." We reach the river and sit in a circle on a sandbank. The weather has cleared slightly; blue sky can be seen through the clouds. The group's excitement and noise quietyens of its own accord. They are not too sure of what is going to happen, but they know this is the moment they've been working towards. This is the occasion. Ken, who carries the spirit of the Shawnee nation both in his blood and in his soul, talks to the young people that surround him: "You are fine men, and I call you men because you have behaved in a way that reflects the best qualities of men in this time we have spent together." Each boy is gifted with a small crystal, a gift from us with a message of the strengths we have seen shine in his personality during the time we have spent together. And beside us there is the river. Ken turns to the group: "You have truly earned your Pa waw ka. If you so desire, I invite you to do as Tecumseh did, and meet the river." And I remember this — Johnny standing, stripping to his shorts, and (maybe not slowly but certainly with dignity) running to the pool and diving into its depths with the grace of an athlete. I remember as Johnny emerges, his clenched fist raised in triumph, the huge smile and the bellow of victory. And I remember the words spoken: "This is a day in my life that I will never forget."

*Mark Gamble is a child care worker who has worked for ECCO and Teen Centre in the Western Cape. In May he leaves for a six-week exchange at the Ohiophyle Wilderness Programme in the US.*



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## New Paradigms

10TH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILD CARE WORKERS  
TO BE HELD AT SHEPSTONE HOUSE, UNIVERSITY OF NATAL, DURBAN HOSTED BY  
THE KWAZULU NATAL REGION OF THE NACCW • 2 TO 4 JULY 1997

**NACCW**  
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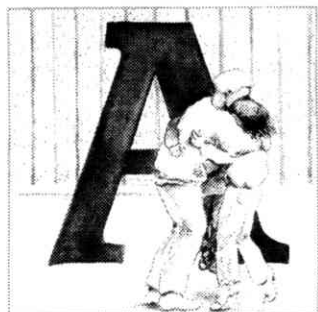
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# BOOKS

## Simple Secrets of Parenting: Easy as ABC

John Baucom  
*Child & Family Press*

A refreshingly simple book from Dr Baucom (who has nine children himself), with an alphabet of parenting tips of which we print ABC here:



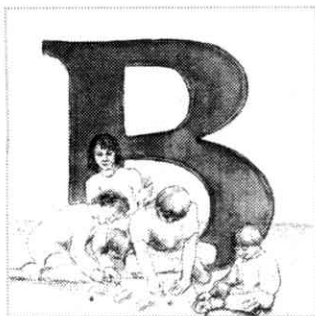
## Accept your child

Acceptance feels good. Children flourish when acceptance is offered. The most powerful acceptance is unconditional. This means that no matter what your child does, he feels accepted, loved, and nurtured by you. Acceptance communicates to your child that "no matter what you do, I will still love you, and there's nothing you can ever do that will change the way I feel."

Acceptance doesn't mean approving of everything children do. You can accept and love your child without loving his report card. Sometimes it's important to separate the behavior from the behaviour. Regardless of his behaviour let your child know he's still loved.

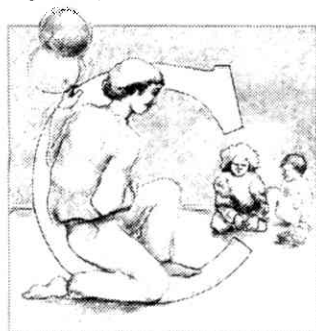
## Behave as if you care

Behaviour is active. Attitudes are passive. A behaviour is something you can observe or measure. In some way you can see, hear or experience it. Loving attitudes are nice, but loving behaviours are better. Behaving as if you care means doing



ing something with your child. The more senses you stimulate while doing this thing, the better. The key can be found in the word intensity. The more intensely positive the interaction, the more meaningful and real it is to your child. Your child won't believe you care unless you show you care. Just do it and see.

When National Merit Scholarship winners were asked which of their high school teachers was the most helpful, they never named the teacher who was the easiest or hardest or most intelligent. Across the board, the teachers rated most helpful were those who behaved as if they cared. These teachers communicated a one-on-one personal interest in their students' individual welfare. This is the miracle of behaving as if you care.



## Catch your child doing something right!

Everybody likes attention. I like it. You like it. Children like it as well. One of your child's basic needs is for attention — and she will do almost anything to get it. If she can get your attention for doing something right, she'll do that. If the only way she can get

your attention is by doing something wrong, she'll do that too. It's attention that most children are after. One way to give your child attention is to call her by name when you catch her doing something right. Make a big deal about it. Say, "Claire, get over here! I saw what you did. You helped your brother tie his shoes. That's great! Way to go!" If you make a big deal only when you catch her doing

something wrong, it's not difficult to figure out which behaviour will be repeated. If you catch her doing something right, she'll make an effort to get caught doing something right in the future. Catch her doing something right. Praise her for it. Compliment her. Thank her. Pat her on the back. Get excited. Give her balloons. Bake a cake.

*Catch her doing something right.*

## Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 stories to open the heart and rekindle the spirit

Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen  
*Health Communications Inc, Florida*

We published "I am a Teacher" from this book in our February issue. Two more extracts to tempt you —

## You are a Marvel!

Every second we live is a new and unique moment of the universe, a moment that will never be again ... And what do we teach our children? We teach them that two and two make four, and that Paris is the capital of France. When will we also teach them what they are?

We should say to each of them: Do you know what you are? You are a marvel. You are unique. In all the years that have passed, there has never been another child like you. Your legs, your arms, your clever fingers, the way you move.

You may become a Shakespeare, a Michaelangelo, a Beethoven. You have the capacity for anything. Yes, you are a marvel. And when you grow up can you then harm another who is, like you, a marvel?

You must work — we must all work — to make the world worthy of its children.

**Pablo Casals**

*One of the best known cellists of our century*

## We learn by doing

Not many years ago I learned to play the cello. Most people would say that what I am doing is "learning to play the cello." But these words carry into our minds the strange idea that there exist two very different processes: (1) learning to play the cello; and (2) playing the cello. These words imply that I will do the first until I have completed it, at which point I will stop the first process and begin the second. In short, I will go on "learning to play" until I have "learned to play" and then I will begin to play.

Of course, this is nonsense. There are not two processes, but one. We learn to do something by doing it. There is no other way.

**John Holt**

*Educationist and writer, author of the famous books How Children Learn, Why Children Fail, The Underachieving School*

In September 1996 a Conference was hosted by the UWC Community Law Centre and the Portfolio Committee on Welfare and Population Development. Some extracts from the report ...

# Towards redrafting the Child Care Act

The conference dealt with the process and general principles of law making for children, institutions, adoption, foster care and guardianship, children in especially difficult circumstances, and the role of the children's court.

## Institutions

This session was devoted to children's institutions, policy and the new paradigm for child and youth care. The session was addressed by Ann Skelton (Inter-Ministerial Committee on Youth at Risk) and Tseliso Thipanyane (Director of Research, Human Rights Commission, and a Board Member of NCRC). The panellists were Alan Jackson (Child Welfare, Cape Town) and Denver van Heerden (Director, Department of Welfare, Northern Cape Province).

Ann Skelton reported on the recent Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) investigation into places of safety. The investigation found:

- widespread inequality in relation to budgets, standards of care and extent of freedom allowed, and a range of other issues;
- lack of human dignity and abuse of rights in relation to sanitation, strip searches, punishment, confidentiality, etc.
- educational standards poor in traditionally black institutions;
- lack of capacity amongst professional staff;
- lack of contact with families, with many children placed in institutions far from home;
- inappropriate placements and arbitrary transfers. No review procedures exist and parents are only notified of transfers after they have taken place.

If we assume that institutions will continue to be necessary, all residential care should fall under the Department of Welfare as children have special *care* needs, not special *education* needs. Currently some facilities fall under

Welfare departments, while others fall under the provincial Education departments. The question is whether these educational institutions, which are running below capacity, have a place in a new society? There may need to be a change in the categorisation of institutions.

The United Nations standard minimum Rules for juveniles deprived of their liberty – JDLs) are applicable. These provide principles for the care of children in institutions generally. It is important that secure care (as envisaged by the IMC as an alternative to prison detention for awaiting-trial juveniles) does not become another form of imprisonment.

There also needs to be a formal and independent complaints procedure as well as provision for internal complaints and unannounced inspections.

Secure care facilities for children in trouble with the law need to be separated from those for awaiting trial children charged with less serious offences. We need also to decide what happens to convicted children.

In addition, equal weight must be given to prevention, family support, after care support and other appropriate options. The institutionalisation of children must be a matter of last resort.

**Tseliso Thipanyane** reported that, by and large, institutions have not lived up to their role as places of appropriate alternative care. Minimum standards need to be met as required both by the Constitution and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The JDLs are also useful in this regard. He also stressed the need for mechanisms for implementing and monitoring.

Thipanyane noted that the current draft amendments to the Child Care Act allowing for the inspection of state run institutions failed to involve the Human Rights Commission and the Commission on Gender Equality in the monitoring process.

**Alan Jackson** emphasised that residential care is not appropriate for children except for short term emergency situations. First, it is very expensive (R800 per child month), while in Correctional Services this jumps to R2 040 per month. This must be compared with foster care grants which are much lower (R288 per month). Second, there is no emphasis on family support. For example, the Lund Committee recommends R70 per child in social assistance grants to existing families which contrasts unfavourably with the costs of subsidising the child outside of the family.

Where there are allegations of abuse in institutions, there is a need for the suspension of the staff member concerned and an independent (outside of the institution and the state) investigation.

Jackson argues that no child, awaiting trial or sentenced, should be in prison. Secure care must also be provided for children who have been convicted.

**Denver van Heerden** argues that it is often inappropriate to place children in institutions. Many children are there through no fault of their own, but because they need care and protection, or because they have committed petty crimes. This is particularly so with regard to children under the age of 6 who should not be in institutions at all.

Programmes in residential care facilities are inappropriate. Informal studies have shown that more than 80% of our long-term adult prisoners come from institutions. The whole concept of reformatories and schools of industry must be revisited as these institutions do more harm than good. He reiterated that places of safety are not safe at all, but are often dangerous for the children who are sent there. State-owned facilities are too large and the legislation should look at a restriction on the size of institutions which presently, because of large numbers, act as



no more than hostels. Facilities are also inappropriately staffed.

## DISCUSSION

**Resources** There must be proper budgeting and adequate financial provision for care facilities. This also applies to family care programmes which are currently collapsing because of lack of funding. Government must be bound to invest money in the training and support of staff in these institutions. There must, therefore, be budgetary consultations at government level before legislation is put in place with programmes phased in as resources become available.

**Abuse Register** A register to record abuses by staff working in institutions is recommended, with access available to institutions and organisations working with children. It was noted that abuses also occur in institutions that are not covered by the Child Care Act. This, too, is recorded in the IMC document. There also needs to be a procedure for investigating allegations of abuse.

**Foster Care** A more proactive stance is required with regard to foster care. At the moment our approach is passive. We need to be reaching out to communities, particularly in the light of the increasing number of children with AIDS. There is a need for counselling for foster parents, and also for parents before children are removed. There should be an attempt to

involve parents in solving the problems of their children. This, however, must be done in a way that protects the child and also involves the community to which the child belongs.

**Smaller Facilities** There is a need to look at the feasibility of smaller facilities supported by communities. Cottage-type residences are expensive. Community-based facilities are far more suitable.

**Personnel** Staff should be handpicked to work in secure care and other facilities. But, in order to attract the best people, proper conditions of service are required. Because of the need to employ large numbers of staff, working within state structures may not be ideal.

**Transfer of children** Transfers should be effected via the children's court and not administratively.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### I: General Principles

**1. Reach and Synchronisation:** The legislation should not consist of a series of amendments to the present Act, but should proceed from the point of view of a new and appropriate vision. The fragmentation of laws affecting children has been identified as a serious problem resulting in a lack of co-ordination between the different bodies and processes dealing with children.

**Legislation should be drafted in a way that makes for ease of application. Questions of (user-friendly) language, structure and style should be considered in the drafting.**

The drafters should attempt to achieve the maximum possible reach in drafting the legislation. As many laws affecting children as possible should be synchronised in the new Act. Even if all aspects relating to children cannot be achieved in one Act, the aim should be to be as broad and comprehensive as possible. The focus should not only be on rights but on responsibilities as well.

**2. Definition of the child:** It is recommended that a child should not be defined solely by reference to age but that there should be some flexibility (as reflected in the Convention on the Rights of the Child). Such flexibility should be both upward and downward. It could be achieved by a provision formulated as follows:

"A child is a person below the age of eighteen years, provided that a person below this age may be regarded as an adult, and a person above this age may be regarded as a child if this is appropriate in accordance with the evolving maturity of the person."

It was noted that, for purposes of legislation, officials need clear guidelines about age. There should be, for example, uniform legislative criteria for assessing the age of children to be admitted to residential care facilities.

**3. Clear Guidelines:** There should be clear guidelines on matters which result in children being left in limbo. For example: issues such as who must consent to the adoption of a child when a child is regarded as abandoned need to be clarified.

**4. Religious and Cultural Concerns:** It is suggested that religious and cultural views impact on law reform. The drafting must therefore attempt to reconcile religious and cultural differences and children's rights. This must take place in the context that basic rights apply to all children, irrespective of religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds.

Customary law, both as living law (in practice) and documented law (e.g. court cases) must be taken into consideration, because it affects the reality of children's experiences. Customary law can provide interesting models.

**5. Rights and Obligations:** The law should emphasise the rights of children and their parents as well as the corresponding obligation, such as the reciprocal duties of support between parents and children based upon need and ability.



6. *Substantive Equality of Women:* The drafters should take into account the question of the substantive equality of women, not simply seek formal equality which may prejudice women. (This may emerge, for example, in the area of custody arrangements and divorce).

7. *Family structures:* There is a need to acknowledge the reality of family structures. The nuclear family is not the model that most children experience in reality, and legislation should avoid entrenching the nuclear model. The plurality of family arrangements in our society should be granted recognition.

8. *Accessibility of legislation:* Legislation should be drafted in a way that makes for ease of application. Questions of (user-friendly) language, structure and style should be considered in the drafting.

## II: Institutions

1. *Principles:* The following general principles relating to the admission of children in care facilities were agreed by the Conference:

1.1 No child should be in prison.

1.2 There must be proportionality between the measure imposed and the act(s) committed. For example, children charged with shoplifting should not be sentenced to reformatories.

1.3 Before resorting to treatment, the question of whether the responsibility and capacity of the parents of the child in question has been exhausted should be investigated.

1.4 The responsibility of the natural parents must be encouraged and enforced.

2. *Age, definition of the child:* Uniform criteria for assessing the age of children to be admitted to residential care facilities must be included in legislation.

3. *Responsibility:*

3.1 It is argued that the primary need of children in residential care is care rather than education. The question, therefore, of whether all state residential care should be administered by the Department of Welfare should be carefully considered by the Portfolio Committee on Welfare and Population Development.

3.2 Whatever the outcome of the above, there is a need for active collaboration with the Departments of Education and Correctional Services and the South African Police Service, all of which must take joint responsibility. The nature of this collaboration and responsibility should be established by law.

4. *Separate needs:* Legislation or regulations should provide for the separation of:

(a) juvenile offenders from children in need;

(b) juveniles charged with serious offences and those charged with petty crimes.

5. *Residential Care as a Last Option*

5.1 It was the view of the Conference that too many children are sent to reform

schools. Legislation should, therefore, place an obligation on decision makers (children's courts, juvenile courts, social workers) to consider alternative measures in every instance. Thus residential care should only be an option of the last resort.

5.2 The law should provide for residential care on a short term basis only and should seek to achieve a state of affairs where this is possible. Courts should be hesitant to place young children in residential care. In principle, children under the age of six should not be admitted to residential care facilities and, if so, only as a very short term measure. Commissioners should be enjoined to take great care with placements of children under six years of age.

5.3 Commissioners should take into account the developmental stages of the child and also be aware of the financial implications of residential care.

All other available options must therefore be seriously considered.

5.4 This requires a range and network of strategies involving the building up of foster care and adoption services. The policy is, of course, that residential care should ideally be a short term option and must be seen within the context of a whole range of strategies. Care is needed in setting time limits in the law.

6. *The responsibility of parents:* To prevent overburdening of the state, and reliance on state treatment of children, emphasis in legislation should be on addressing the needs of parents (for example, financially). In addition, education and counselling of child and parents should form part of the philosophy behind the legislation.

7. *Implementation:* The Conference expressed concern that the main problem may not lie with the law but with its implementation. The legislation should therefore introduce monitoring with, for example, reference to bodies such as the Human Rights Commission and Commission for Gender Equality.

8. *Complaints, Inspections and Monitoring:*

8.1 Complaint procedures and mandatory inspection procedures for institutions of residential care must be set up. There are currently no internal complaint procedures at all.

8.2 The findings of any inspectorate set up to conduct investigations into residential facilities must be followed up with appropriate action. (For example, suspension of suspected staff, prosecutions, etc.). An inspections and child abuse register recording proven abuse cases must be accessible to institutions which employ people who care for children. Whether this should be done urgently by legislation (or as an interim measure, by administrative decree) needs to be considered.

8.3 Monitoring should be regular and provide for objective and independent in-

vestigations where abuse or violations are indicated. Such investigations should be external to the institution and to the Department under which the institution falls.

8.4 The Children's Court should play an active role in the monitoring of children in institutions.

9. *Other matters*

9.1 Size of Institutions: The size of institutions should be appropriate to the needs of the children and their treatment. If the institution is too large, it gives rise to conditions that perpetuate abuse.

9.2 Secure care for sentenced children: Consideration should, in the future, be given to the notion that secure care facilities may accommodate sentenced children as well as unsentenced children, to minimise children going to prison.

9.3 Transfers: Where the transfer of children involves a change in the nature of the placement (for example, from children's homes to reform schools), there must be a proper review before transfer takes place.

9.4 The Right to Know: The drafters should consider legislative provisions to enable children in institutions to be better informed about their own legal situation.

## Street Children

The following recommendations regarding Street Children were also made:

1. The formulation of the new legislation should consider whether a separate section on street children should be inserted.

2. A street child is defined as a person under the age of 18 years who for a number of reasons has left his or her family and is living on the street and is inadequately protected by responsible adults. A distinction must be made between children who live on the street and those who return home in the evenings.

3. Subsidised shelters and registration should be the responsibility of the state.

3.1 provisions with regard to shelters and registration must be cost effective and affordable; subsidisation must be fluid; registration rules must be flexible as both shelters and drop-in centres need to be registered.

3.2 provision should be made for self-referral in certain circumstances.

3.3 Shelters should have the option of pursuing an open-door policy.

4. The possibility of making the sale of solvents to minors illegal should be considered.

5. Loitering laws or by-laws being used to clear the streets of street people should be scrapped.

*Towards Redrafting the Child Care Act. Recommendations of a Conference of the Community Law Centre (UWC) and the Portfolio Committee on Welfare and Population Development, September 1996.*

**What do you think? Send your own views and comments to the Editor.**

# The World of Child Care Workers



"Each new child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man."

— Rabindranath Tagore

## Meet NACCW's Admin Staff



**Val Lodge** started at the NACCW in March 1988, working for Di Levine (Regional Director) from her home. When Di left the NACCW, Val worked for Jacqui Michael. Since the beginning of 1995 she has been

managing the Transvaal/Gauteng regional office on her own. Her husband, Barrie, is Director of St George's Home. They have a son aged 26 who is a chartered accountant at a large oil company and a daughter aged 24 who is editor at an Educational Publishing House, reading for Masters in English Education. Val's interests include church activities (she has just become the first woman church warden in their parish), gardening, knitting and crocheting. Val has first hand experience in the field as she was a child care worker at Malcolms House in East London for 3 years.

**Vuyi Mbole** left school in 1983 and worked as a private teacher from 1984 as her parents could not afford to send her to college. She worked as a teacher until 1991. She then left teaching with the aim of going to college but ended up doing administrative studies for two years. Vuyi started working at NACCW Head Office in Durban in 1994. This enabled her to continue with her studies. Recently she obtained the Certificate in Child Care through UNISA. She is looking forward to doing relief work in institutions so as to register as a professional. She enjoys watching TV, reading, and playing music. She has two children — a son aged 7 and a daughter of 12.



**Gail Solomon** was born in Marandellas, Zimbabwe, and has lived in South Africa since 1977. She has lived in Durban, Johannesburg and finally moved to Cape Town six months ago. She is NACCW's newest staff

member, as she only started working as the half-day bookkeeper at Head Office in Rondebosch in April this year. Gail is married and has two daughters and a son. Her hobbies and interests include reading, cooking cycling and caravanning. She also loves all animals and even had a pet pig in Johannesburg which she sadly had to leave behind! We hope she will have a long and happy association with the NACCW.

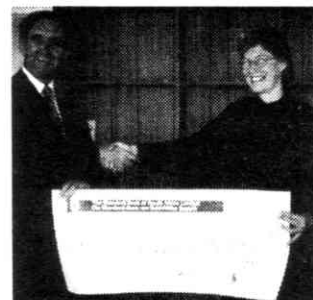
**Celecia Bowman** has been with NACCW since May 1994 as Merle Allsopp's secretary. Celecia has a nine year old son and her interests include competitive ballroom dancing, reading and camping. Her job consists mainly of administrative duties at the Western Cape Office, including the BQCC course. During the time she has been working with Merle and the rest of the NACCW team she has found her job very fulfilling, exciting and challenging.



**Myrna Davids** has also recently joined the NACCW staff. She started at Publications Department in January and is responsible for compiling and sending out coursework to the various regions. Myrna is married with three children who are all at primary school. She

loves craft markets and enjoys the company of people with a sense of humour.

**Brenda Filmatter** has been in the Publications Department for seven years, dealing with administrative and secretarial tasks. During the years she has seen the NACCW grow and develop in its membership and training programmes. As a mother of three young children she has found the material she deals with a constant source of interest and inspiration. Other interests are reading and hiking. Brenda definitely has the office with the most stunning setting of all staff members — overlooking a tree-filled garden with the waters of the Marina da Gama just 10 meters away! She lives in Simon's Town with her husband and family.



### Cheques and balances!

*The NACCW's Director Merle Allsopp receives a donation from the Standard Bank of South Africa for R45 000 — a truly appreciated helping hand at times like these, when the Association, month by month, struggles to meet expenses.*

## Child Care opportunities in America and Europe

**Youth Discovery Programmes** has many families looking for *Au Pairs*.

If you are between 18 and 28 years old, have baby-sitting experience and love children then this is for you!

*Formal child care education, a valid driver's licence and non-smoking will be advantageous.*

Please note that you should commit yourself to being abroad for a minimum of 6 months and must pay your own airfare.

*For further information please phone Mila at Cape Town Youth Discoveries Programmes on tel. (021) 231583 or Nicky at Gauteng YDP tel. (011) 4423320.*

# Exchange programme with the Pittsburgh International Initiative

The initial visit of the NACCW to the Pittsburgh International Initiative in October last year is not to be followed with two members of the Association being offered a six week exchange programme at two of the specialised programmes of the Pressley Ridge schools. The successful applicant are Dolly Naidoo in KwaZulu Natal and Mark Gamble from the Western Cape.



**Dolly Naidoo** is an experienced Child and Youth Care Worker. She has worked for many years at Lakehaven Children's Home. She is presently working at the Durban Children's Home as a senior Child Care Worker. She serves on the Regional Executive and has been a member of the NACCW for many years. She will be attached to the Kinship Residential Programme which is a programme that includes short term intensive residential care for troubled young people. The programme includes a family liaison component and the active involvement of the Child and Youth Care Worker in the school environment.

**Mark Gamble** is employed by EDUCO School of Africa and is involved in a process of determining the viability of developing a wilderness diversion/inter-

vention programme for youth at risk. He has previously worked for ECCO and Teen Centre. Mark Gamble will be attached to Ohiophyle Wilderness Programme of the Pressley Ridge schools. The programme includes a structured wilderness experience for very troubled young people who have been in trouble with the law.



There is a creative educational and family liaison component to the programme.

Both representatives will correspond with us while in Pittsburgh and share their experiences with us. It is expected that on their return they will present a report to the Child and Youth Care Journal and be available for presentations at Regional Forums if practically possible. Dolly and Mark leave for Pittsburgh on the 8th of May.

## Learning Curve

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in.  
I am lost ... I am hopeless.  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes forever to find a way out.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I'm in the same place.  
But it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in ... it's a habit.  
My eyes are open.  
I know where I am.  
It is my fault.  
I get out immediately.

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

I walk down another street.

## St Michaels Children's Home

A vacancy exists for a suitably qualified female child and youth care worker to work as part of a team in a therapeutic milieu.

- Experience with teenagers an advantage
- Must have valid driver's licence
- Residential position

Please fax CV to 021-797-4187 or hand deliver to St Michaels, Hemmyock Road, Plumstead 7801

Haiku

Child, give me your hand  
That I may walk in the light  
Of your faith in me.

— HANNAH KAHN

BLONDIE



by CHIC YOUNG

Dale and Darlene Emme always carry with them the knowledge that if they'd arrived at home seven minutes earlier one day in September 1994, they might have saved their teenage son.

At 11:45 he wrote a suicide note and then shot himself in the front seat of his cherished, 1968 Mustang. At 11:02, the Emmes drove into that garage and found him.

Within days of the tragedy they began to look for ways to save other teens. "We have dedicated the rest of our lives to preventing this kind of thing from happening," says Mr Emme, who with his wife has established the Yellow Ribbon programme from their home in Westminster, Cole. They have distributed more than 100,000 cards that carry a suicide prevention message (visit their website [www.yellowribbon.org](http://www.yellowribbon.org)).

The Emmes are part of an emerging grassroots movement determined to remove the cloak of shame that has contributed to the rise in youth suicide — the third leading case of death among young Americans. And according to most experts, it's preventable.

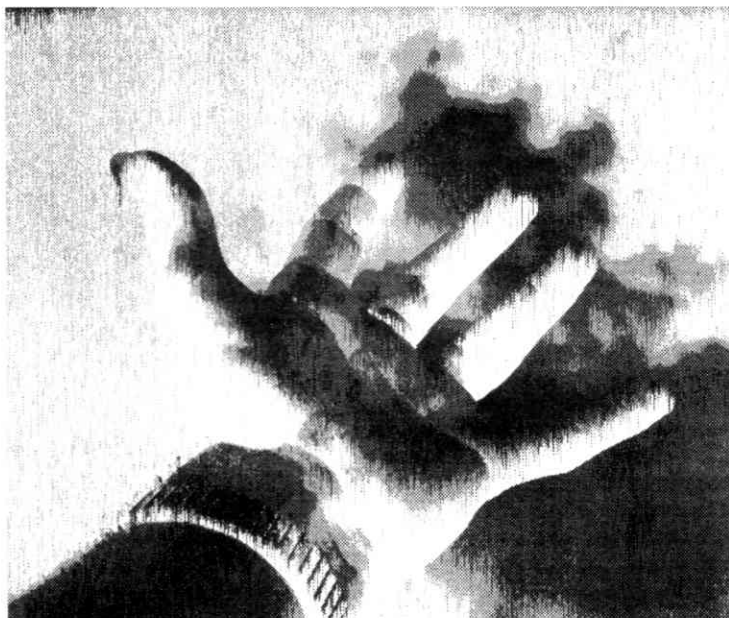
Fuelled by the grief and determination of families of suicide victims, small, local support groups have begun to organize nationally, holding candlelight vigils from town halls to the steps of the White House. They've blanketed Congress with letters and schools with information on the causes of suicide and ways to prevent it.

In the process, they're also helping to generate new funding sources for suicide prevention and research.

### Sobering statistics

This effort is also spurred by sobering statistics. Since the 1950s, the youth suicide rate has quietly quadrupled, according to the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. Within that increase is a more disturbing trend: The victims are getting younger. Between 1980 and 1994, the suicide rate for 10- to 14-year-olds jumped 120%. "It's gone from a fairly minor rate to one that's just a notch below the adult suicide rate," says David Clark, director of the Centre for Suicide Research and Prevention at the Rush Presbyterian/St Luke's Medical Centre in Chicago.

While research into youth sui-



**Alexandra Marks** reports on fresh efforts to reverse a disquieting trend

## Teen Suicide: Seeking New Solutions

cide is limited, Dr Clark and other experts say that it is triggered by a variety of factors, including chemical depression, substance abuse, a pattern of antisocial behaviour, traumatic family disruptions, stress from school and peer pressure.

But the presence of two other elements — drugs and guns — also appears to significantly push up the suicide rate among US youths. "Access to lethal means — firearms and prescription drugs — plays a role," says Alex Crosby an epidemiologist at the CDC's Division of Violence Prevention.

And if kids consume alcohol, research shows, they are "much more likely to use a gun to kill themselves," says David Brent, chief of child psychiatry at the Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic in Pittsburgh.

### Two-pronged approach

A recent CDC report found that while the US youth suicide rate is double the international rate, if firearm-related suicides are removed, they're almost equal. "Firearm related suicide is 11 times higher in the US than for 26 comparable countries," says CDC epidemiologist Etienne Krug, who wrote the study. Short of gun control which many consider a politically unlikely solution, experts and grass-roots

activists have taken a two-pronged approach to prevention: 1. targeting at-risk youth, and 2. changing the way society views suicide.

Jerry Weyrauch and his wife have taken it upon themselves to organize hundreds of independent grass-roots support groups that have sprung up around the country. The Wey-rauchs lost their daughter to suicide 10 years ago. Like most suicide survivors, they carried their grief and shame privately for many years. But their burden slowly turned into an urgent need to help others.

### Pen and people power

Last year, Mr Weyrauch founded the Suicide Advocacy Prevention Network (SPAN), from the couple's home in Marietta, Georgia. Besides co-ordinating grass-roots suicide prevention efforts, he has begun petition drives in Congress and state legislatures to declare suicide a national problem and to urge the development of a proven, effective prevention programme.

"The one thing that got us started on this was MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving)," says Weyrauch. "If we can harness that kind of pen power and people power, we can begin to raise awareness and remove the stigma associated with suicide."



Parents often blame themselves for their child's suicide. They don't want to discuss it publicly. "We just go home and lick our wounds," he says. "But by making it OK for people to talk about it, we can change that and help prevent other suicides."

Last year SPAN helped organise suicide-prevention awareness days in 12 communities. On May 10, it delivered more than 8,000 letters to members of Congress urging that suicide be officially recognised as a national problem. And this May, they're hoping to deliver more than 52,000 letters — one for each life lost to suicide each year in the United States.

It was a similar desire to put youth suicide on the national agenda that led the Ronald McDonald House Charities to start funding youth-suicide prevention research and programmes three years ago.

"It just seemed to be an issue that was not being paid attention to; like substance abuse 20 years ago, it was being swept under the rug," says Ken Barun, president of Ronald McDonald House Charities.

The charity funded a three-year 13.2 million prevention programme and study at the University of Illinois at Chicago. It was Ronald McDonald House's first grant in the area of youth suicide, and researchers across the country welcomed it. "This is not an easy area to raise money in," says Alan Berman of the American Foundation for Suicidology in Washington. "Our research is still in its infancy, and we desperately need support to find out what works in prevention."

Dr Berman says there are still very few corporations willing to have their names associated with suicide. "This is still stigmatic and taboo," he says.

Like many prevention programs, the Chicago effort targeted schools where most at-risk youth can be found. In 1995, a CDC survey of high-schoolers found 25 percent had thought about suicide in the last year; 18 percent of those had formulated a plan; and 9 percent had attempted to take their own life.

The Chicago programme used a fairly new strategy called the "gate-keeper" approach. Suicide-prevention experts went into the hundreds of schools in the Chicago area and taught teachers, guidance counsellors, hall monitors, and lunch-room attendants the signs of suicidal behaviour and how to cope with it.

"That appeared to have the most impact," says Mr Barun, "but we also found that there was nothing really comprehensive or hands-on that the teachers could use that would give them all of the information they needed."

So the researchers designed a suicide prevention CD-ROM. This February in the first national effort of its kind, the Ronald McDonald House sent out more than 30,000 copies to junior and senior high schools across the country.

### Spotting the signs

"There are clear signs when a child becomes suicidal. If people are trained to spot them, they can prevent it," says Scot Simpson, head of the Washington State Youth Suicide Prevention Committee.

Parents and teachers are advised to be alert when children show a preoccupation with death and dying, withdraw from friends, lose interest in hobbies or school or make a will. Mr Simpson and his wife founded the committee after their teenage son committed suicide in 1992. Mainly through their efforts, Washington is now the only state with a official, state-wide suicide-prevention strategy and a million-dollar budget to pay for it, according to Simpson.

As in many districts, it took a crisis in Patterson, N.J., to ensure that each school was equipped to deal with the threat of suicide. "We had a 15-year-old in his second year in high school who shot himself last year," says Eileen Shafer, supervisor of substance awareness, physical education, and health for the Patterson school district.

Within each of its 96 schools, the Patterson district has now set up mini crisis teams that include each school's principal, nurse, guidance counsellor, school psychologist, and the substance-abuse counsellor. Whenever a child talks about suicide or displays suicidal behaviour, at least two of the team members are called in to make an assessment.

### Extensive training

"People who need to spot and refer a child at risk need intensive training," says Karen Dunne Maxim, co-ordinator of Bridges, a prevention programme developed at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey in New Brunswick.

Ms Maxim and Ms Shafer say it's critical to address any talk of suicide immediately and the Bridges programme gives the staff the most updated and in-depth information on how to deal with such talk.

Experts say educators and parents should understand that a young person often does not have enough life experience to tell the difference between small problem and serious ones. A triviality to an adult is often perceived a unbearably painful to a child. "Give them time, praise, encouragement, consideration, and the same respect you would grant another adult," says information distributed by the Yellow Ribbon Program.

The Bridges training programme underscores such advice. "I found the actual hands-on practice the most helpful; the way they demonstrated the skills needed to draw out the child," says Joanne Weiss, a guidance counsellor at Patterson's East Side High School.

Maxim says all school systems, like Patterson, need to have a suicide-prevention strategy in place, complete with proce-

**"It just seemed to be an issue that was not being paid attention to; like substance abuse 20 years ago, it was being swept under the rug."**

dures that include involving a parent and outside mental-health agencies, if warranted.

While New Jersey is ahead of the curve nationally — by making funding for Bridges available — not every school in the state has a programme in place. Like most other places in the country, prevention programs are a district-by-district decision.

While many academics applaud those prevention efforts currently under way, many question their effectiveness.

"I think there's been a mismatch between resources and where the need is," says Pittsburgh's Dr Brent. "Crop-dusting, where you give a little bit to everyone, may not be the best use of resources."

Brent believes the future of prevention lies with new more targeted approaches. In New York, Columbia University's David Shaffer has set up experimental screening programs where adolescents are asked in a brief questionnaire whether they've ever had suicidal thoughts or signs of depression.

"What we find is that kids will tell you about themselves if you ask them. They love forms, they love to fill in questionnaires" says Dr Shaffer. "You don't have to rely on their neighbour to tell you there's a problem."

Shaffer says such screening could be done in schools, doctors' offices, at a yearly meeting with a guidance counselor. Then the information could be used to target treatment more effectively.

In Chicago, Dr Clark is taking that approach a step further. With a new grant from the Ronald McDonald House Charities, he has set up a programme to ensure that children already identified as "at risk" for suicide get support from their families and appropriate counsellors. A team will follow a family for six months to ensure that the parents stay involved with their child and the experts working to help him or her.

Clark and other experts are still sorting out the most effective methods to prevent teen suicide. But those working at the grass-roots level are convinced that the growing national attention to youth suicide he already begun to save lives.

"Kids are constantly coming up to us to thank us," says Emme of the Yellow Ribbon Program.

Alexandra Marks is a staff writer for the *Christian Science Monitor*

"Real leaders concentrate on doing the right thing, not on doing things right" — the core message of this Digest written for the Educational Resources Information Centre

## Ethical Leadership

"Real leaders concentrate on doing the right thing, not on doing things right." That advice from organizational consultants comes as no surprise to leaders of educative institutions, whose lives are filled with difficult ethical dilemmas. Principals experience such dilemmas on a daily basis, says William Greenfield (1991). Having moral obligations to society, to the profession, to the school board, and to students, they find that "it often is not clear what is right or wrong, or what one ought to do, or which perspective is right in moral terms."

Unfortunately, relatively few administrators have been trained to deal with these conflicts. Until very recently, ethical issues were given little attention in preparation programs (Lynn Beck and Joseph Murphy 1994).

### What ethical responsibilities do school leaders have?

Greenfield notes that school leaders face a unique set of ethical demands. Schools are moral institutions, designed to promote social norms, and principals are moral agents who must often make decisions that favour one moral value over another. Moreover, although schools are dedicated to the well-being of children, students have virtually no voice in what happens there. For all these reasons, the leader's conduct "must be deliberately moral."

Leader's moral duty expresses itself not only in the obvious day-to-day ethical dilemmas, but in the mundane policies and structures that may have hidden ethical implications. Robert Starratt (1991) notes that every social arrangement benefits some people at the expense of others; simply to assume that schools embody desirable standards is "ethically naive, if not culpable." Thus, the principal must not only behave responsibly as an individual, but must create an ethical institution.

As leaders, principals have a special responsibility to exercise authority in an ethical way. Greenfield points out that much of a principal's authority is moral; that is, teachers must be convinced that the principal's point of view reflects values they support. Coercion through bureaucratic authority will seldom have a positive, lasting effect.



**Kidder claims that many apparent dilemmas are actually "trilemmas," offering a third path that avoids the "either-or" thinking.**

### What ethical dilemmas do principals face?

As defined by Rushworth Kidder (1995), an "ethical dilemma" is not a choice between right and wrong, but a choice between two rights. For example, considering a bribe would be a "moral temptation"; deciding whether scarce resources should go to a gifted curriculum or a dropout-prevention program would constitute a dilemma.

Dilemmas arise when cherished values conflict. A principal who values both teacher autonomy and student achievement will face a dilemma when teachers want to enact a policy that lowers expectations. This kind of conflict is heightened because school leaders are public officials with obligations to many people who often have competing values or interests. Should parents be informed if a counselor learns that their daughter is considering an abortion? Should a student group be able to book an assembly speaker whose views will offend some in the community? Should the principal support a teacher who has made a questionable grading decision? Some studies suggest that obligations to superiors put special pressure on ethical decision-making. For instance, Peggy Kirby and colleagues (1990) asked principals to estimate how "a typical colleague" would respond to hypothetical dilemmas. Respondents usually indicated that colleagues would take "the path of least resistance" by deferring to superiors or taking refuge in official policies. Kirby and her colleagues speculate that these hypothetical colleagues actually reflect the norm.

### How can leaders resolve ethical dilemmas?

Moral philosophers generally agree there is no ethical "cookbook" that provides easy answers to complex dilemmas. But a number of thinkers have suggested some guidelines. First, leaders should have and be willing to act on a definite sense of ethical standards. Starratt argues that a fully informed ethical consciousness will contain themes of caring (What do our relationships demand of us?); justice (How can we govern ourselves fairly?); and critique (Where do we fall short of our own ideals?). Second, leaders can examine dilemmas from different perspectives. Kidder describes three. One is to anticipate the conse-

quences of each choice and attempt to identify who will be affected, and in what ways. Another approach uses moral rules, assuming that the world would be a better place if people always followed certain widely accepted standards (such as telling the truth). A third perspective emphasizes caring, which is similar to the Golden Rule: How would we like to be treated under similar circumstances?

Third, leaders can often reframe ethical issues. Kidder claims that many apparent dilemmas are actually "trilemmas," offering a third path that avoids the either-or thinking. For example, faced with a parent who objects to a particular homework assignment on religious grounds, a principal may be able to negotiate an alternative assignment, thereby preserving academic integrity without trampling on parental rights. Finally, leaders should have the habit of conscious reflection, wherever it may lead them.

#### **How do leaders create ethical institutions?**

By their nature, most schools do not encourage discussion of ethical issues; educators spend most of the day isolated from one another, and time is always at a premium. One means of raising ethical awareness is to form an ethics committee similar to those found in many hospitals. Such committees would not make formal rulings, but would raise awareness of ethical issues, formulate ethical codes, and advise educators grappling with ethical dilemmas (Betty Sichel 1993).

Thomas Sergiovanni (1992) says that truly effective schools are those with a shared covenant clearly articulating the school's core values and providing a standard by which actions will be judged. Leaders must not only take the lead in formulating the covenant but actively support and enforce it. When a vital standard is ignored, principals should "lead by outrage."

#### **What virtues must leaders practise?**

Students of ethics are unanimous on one point: moral leadership begins with moral leaders. Howard Gardner (1995) says of great leaders that they embody the message they advocate; they teach, not just through words, but through actions.

What virtues are most important for school leaders? Some studies suggest that honesty is the quality most appreciated by subordinates (Michael Richardson and others 1992). And any principal who has launched a risky new program or has publicly shouldered the blame for someone else's mistake can testify to the importance of courage. Some who write about ethics argue that leaders must use their power with restraint, since it always holds the poten-

tial for treating others as less than fully human. Peter Block (1993) advocates stewardship, which is the willingness to accept accountability for results without always trying to impose control over others. In simplest terms, stewardship asks leaders to acknowledge their own human faults and limitations rather than hiding behind their status and power.

Whatever virtue is desired, moral philosophers going back to Aristotle have emphasized that it must become a habit. Just as musicians develop musical ability by playing an instrument, people become virtuous by practising virtue. Ethical behaviour is not something that can be held in reserve for momentous issues; it must be a constant companion.

To be an ethical school leader, then, is not a matter of following a few simple rules. The leader's responsibility is complex and multi-dimensional, rooted less in technical expertise than in simple human integrity.

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Cecil Wood, the NACCW's training consultant in the Eastern Cape Region, addressed the Graduation and Registration Ceremony of the Border Region in March. He spoke about the 'Create Positive Moments' theme which child and youth care workers are exploring now

## Making people feel SPECIAL

The NACCW's National Executive Committee, meeting in Durban on 18 January with the professional staff team, drew up an exciting nation-wide strategy aiming at *practice excellence in work with children and youth*.

The idea is that a particular theme related to practice is chosen, around which the Association's activities, nationally, are centred for a given period.

The first theme in the programme, to be pursued during the first half of this year is:

*"Create Positive Moments — make a difference for children and youth now"*

This means that every encounter between child and youth care workers and young people offers a moment which can be positive and growth enhancing. This theme reminded me of the work of Stephen Covey, the author of *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* and *Principle Centred Leadership*.

### A special bank account

In these few minutes I'd like to share with you some of Stephen Covey's words of wisdom. Covey uses a very powerful metaphor in teaching relationships. He speaks about the 'Emotional Bank Account'. We all know what a financial bank account is. We make deposits into it and build up a reserve from which we can make withdrawals when we need to. An emotional account is a metaphor that describes the amount of trust that has been built up in a relationship. It's the feeling of safety you have with another human being. If I make deposits into an Emotional Bank Account with a child through courtesy, kindness and honesty and keeping my commitments to

them, I build up a reserve. The child's trust toward me becomes greater — and I can call upon that trust many times if I need to. I can even make mistakes, and their trust level (emotional reserves) will compensate for these.

If I have a habit of showing discourtesy, disrespect, cutting the child off, overreacting, ignoring him, betraying his trust or threatening him, eventually my emotional bank account will become overdrawn. The trust level gets very low, then what flexibility do I have?

None. I'm then walking through a minefield; I must be very careful about what I say. Our most constant relationships require our most constant transactions.

These are sometimes automatic deposits or withdrawals in your daily interactions that you didn't even know about — especially with teenagers in your care.

Suppose an adolescent in your care is in the process of making some important decisions that he feels will affect the rest of his life.

If the trust level is too low, he simply will not be open to your counsel, because your account is so overdrawn.

### Six deposits we can make

Stephen Covey suggests six major deposits that build the Emotional Bank Account. Put differently, these are six things I could do to create positive moments for children and youth, using the word 'SPECIAL' as an acronym.

**S** — Apologising *Sincerely* when you make a withdrawal. When we make withdrawals from the Emotional Bank account, we need to apologise and we need to do it sincerely. Great deposits come in the sincere words like "I was wrong", "That was unkind of me" or "I showed you no respect."

It takes a great deal of character strength to apologise quickly out of one's heart rather than out of pity. Leo Raskin taught "It is the weak who are cruel. Gentleness can only be expected from the strong."

Here is an example of what sincere apology is *not*:

"My briefcase is missing and I believe you have taken it," said one man to another. In a few minutes he discovered his briefcase in a corner of the room. "I must apologise for having accused you," he said.

"Never mind," said the other man. "You thought I was a thief and I thought you were a gentleman — and we were both mistaken."

**P** — showing *Personal integrity*.

Personal integrity generates trust and is the basis of many different kinds of deposits. People can try to understand, to remember the little things, keep promises, clarify and fulfil expectations, yet *still* fail to build reserves of trust if they do not show personal integrity.







**... the key to the ninety-nine is the one, especially the one who is testing the patience and the good humour of the many — because everyone is ultimately a “one”.**

Integrity includes, but goes beyond, honesty.

*Honesty* is telling the truth, i.e. conforming our words to reality.

*Integrity* is conforming reality to our words — in other words, keeping promises and fulfilling expectations.

One of the most important ways to show integrity is to be loyal to those who are not present. In doing so, we build the trust of those who *are* present. When you defend those who are absent you retain the trust of those present.

Stephen Covey says that he has found that the key to the ninety-nine is the one, especially the one who is testing the patience and the good humour of the many, because everyone is ultimately a “one”.

**E** — Clarify *Expectations*. The cause of almost all relationship difficulties is rooted in conflicting or ambiguous expectations around roles and goals. This includes how you communicate with a child over such decisions as — telling her to clean her room — who feeds the fish — who takes out the rubbish. We can be certain that unclear expectations will lead to misunderstanding, disappointment and withdrawal of trust.

Many expectations are implicit. They haven't been explicitly stated or announced, but people nevertheless bring them to a particular situation, e.g. in marriage.

A man and woman have implicit expectations of each other in their marriage roles. Although these expectations have not been discussed nor sometimes even recognised by the person who has them, fulfilling them makes great deposits in the relationship — and violating them makes withdrawals.

That's why it is so important whenever you come into a new situation to get all the expectations out on the table. This takes a real investment of time and effort upfront, but it saves great amounts of time and effort down the road.

**C** — Keeping *Commitments*. Keeping a commitment or a promise is a major deposit, but breaking a commitment is a major withdrawal.

Corey says that he tries to adopt a philosophy never to make a promise he does not keep.

He makes promises carefully and very sparingly, and is aware of as many variables and contingencies as possible so that something doesn't suddenly come up to keep him from fulfilling it.

Occasionally, despite all our efforts, the unexpected does come up, creating a situation where it would be unwise or impossible to keep a promise we've made. We should still value that promise — rather keep it anyway, or explain the situation thoroughly to the person involved and ask to be released from the promise.

**I** — understanding the *Individual*.

Really seeking to understand the other person is probably one of the most important deposits you can make, and it is the key to every other deposit. You simply don't know what constitutes a deposit to another person until you *understand* that individual. To make this deposit, those things which are important to another person must be as important to you as the other person is to you.

A six-year-old interrupts with something which seems trivial to you but which is very important to him. By accepting the value he places on what he has to say, you are making a great deposit.

We tend to act on what we think other people want or need (which we often base on our own needs and desires — either at the moment or when we were a similar age).

But if they don't interpret our effort as a deposit, what use is it?

**AL** — *Attending to the Little things*. The little kindnesses and courtesies are so important. Small discourtesies, little unkindnesses, little forms of disrespect mean large withdrawals.

In relationships the little things are the big things.

People (children are people) are very tender, very sensitive inside. Within the most toughened and calloused exteriors, are the tender feelings and emotions of the heart.

In my own experience, I remember that my mom winking at me made me feel special. ■



## Systems Kids

*Life to some is fun and games  
ours are fear and pain.*

*Our lives are spent wondering  
where we're going and how  
we're getting there, waiting  
to hear the next person say  
they care and not ever be there.*

*Our lives are spent trying  
to find a way to make it  
through the day.*

*Our lives are spent in  
confusion and delusion,  
people talking and not saying  
exactly what they're meaning.*

*Our lives are spent with  
constant stress, life seeming  
like an impassable test.*

*Our lives are spent just trying  
to get by, sometimes it's so  
hard you break down and cry.*

*Our lives are numbers in  
a file, not knowing if it's  
forever or just a while.*

*Our lives are those of  
system kids like shadows  
in the dark,  
unseen and unheard.*

— Tammy, age 16

JOURNAL OF CHILD AND YOUTH CARE, CANADA

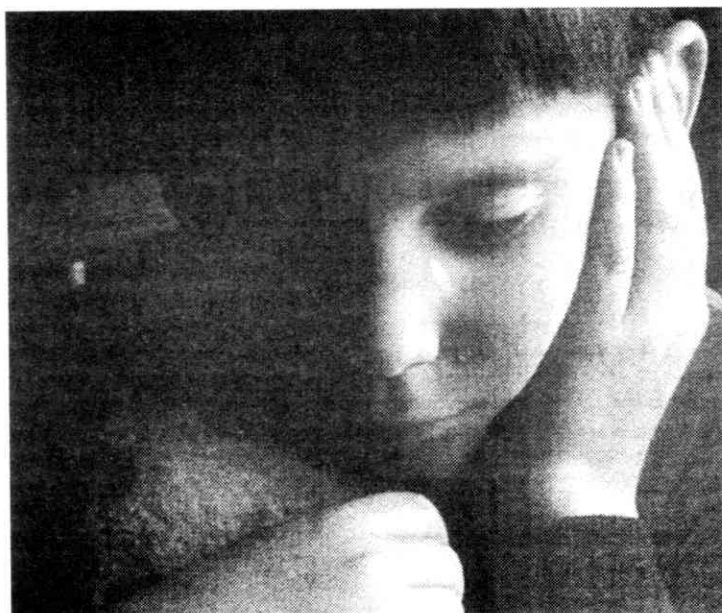
**Noreen Ramsden** of the Southern Natal Children's Rights Committee describes a widely-used approach encouraging children to improve the quality of their own lives and those of others — a most valuable reminder of the qualities of childhood we should be encouraging.

## Never too young to help

*Child-to-Child* is an approach to working with children that is used in 87 countries all over the world. It may involve one child helping another, or a group of children helping each other, or children influencing their own families or a neighbourhood. It is used in schools, in refugee camps, among street-children, by scouts and guides, social workers, and religious groups.

The basic idea is that children can help to build a better world, and in so doing they can have fun together, feel important and needed, and learn co-operation and leadership. The adults who help the children in *Child-to-Child* activities encourage the children to reflect on their own lives and their neighbourhood, and then to choose an activity that will improve the quality of life for themselves or others. This may be forming a soccer club or cleaning up the park; asking the traffic department for speed humps to slow down taxis on the road past their school or putting on a play about the dangers of smoking or abusing drugs. There is an entire Primary Health Care programme based on *Child-to-Child*.

In an established group, where there is trust between members and the adults who accompany them, support for friends who have experienced death or disaster occurs naturally. All too often, adults encourage children to 'bury' their grief; they distract the child and do not allow the group to talk about the unpleasant experience. It is, however, very important for children to begin to understand some of the feelings they experience when death and disaster strike: feelings such as sorrow, anger, guilt, betrayal, anxiety, fear and even resentment — possibly towards others who have not suffered as they did. Adults can help children to explore feelings: what they are and what causes them.



Children can be encouraged to tell stories about what made them happy or sad, angry or frightened: to sing happy or sad songs, to draw pictures about feelings, to act out role plays that show a wide range of feelings.

In a group, children can share their experiences, such as how they felt when someone close to them died, how they showed these feelings, and what made them feel better. They can share the nightmares and anxieties they so often have to suffer as a result of the hurt. They can plan how to help a child (or children) to feel better by being a 'good friend' and can discuss what good friends do. This may be hugging and showing physical comfort; it may be encouraging them to join in games; it may be talking to them — or even explaining to a teacher why Thabo seems 'naughty' in class. They can help each other to make sense of life experiences — religious beliefs are often a great comfort.

### Activities for a Children's Group

The adult tells stories or the children make up stories to explain feelings, possible causes of feelings, and the signs of dif-

ferent feelings.

What help can be given in each individual case, because every child is different and has different needs?

Discuss "What makes you laugh, Why do you cry, What makes you angry?"

Compare the different responses of the children and how they have different feelings about their various situations.

Discuss a real life event where people reacted differently — with laughter, anger or sympathy. Did anyone try to help?

Guessing feelings: children take it in turns to say a sentence, such as "What are you doing?" with different expressions of feeling (angrily, sadly, happily or with surprise or fear). The other children have to guess what the feeling is. This can also be done in drawings: for example, children guess the feeling when they see someone running away (fear) or wanting to fight (anger).

The children may combine to draw a big picture showing pleasant happenings and feelings and another showing violence and unhappy feelings. Role plays or sketches can be made up and acted by some

children for the others to identify the feelings of the characters: a lost child, a girl who has torn her dress, one child snatching something from another or teasing another.

Ask the children what they would do if they saw a child who was: angry and destructive, crying and afraid quiet and alone, apparently unhappy Can the children think of ways of helping others feel better in their family in their group or school in the neighbourhood or town?

Help them to plan an action to help others or to help others understand the feelings of children. Raising awareness about feelings can be done by a poster or by making up a song and teaching it to others, or by putting on a sketch at a gathering — a religious meeting or school assembly — and so on.

The loss of a loved one is just as painful to children as it is to adults. Children may also be further distressed by the grief of their parents or other adults close to them. Children need someone to listen to their thoughts and fears. This is often difficult for family members who are trying to face their own feelings and memories.

#### **ASAP — Affection, Security, Attention, Play**

Children may not always show signs that they are grieving, but they will always need affection and security. Adults, and other children, can help to give them this. Children also need attention: someone to listen to them and to take account of their feelings. Children also need friends to play with. In play they can take control of their lives; play helps them to feel that they are important, that they belong and are needed. It helps them to relax and also to express their feelings.

#### **Death**

Death means different things in different cultures and religions. It may be frightening, or we may think that it is a natural part of a political struggle, or we may believe it is God's will or our Destiny (Karma). We will explain death to children in different ways, depending on our own beliefs, culture, and situation. But children will be helped by our explanations and attitudes, if death is seen to have meaning and not to be senseless.

Children are also helped, as are adults, by the customs and rituals that each community has built up around a death in the family; mourning and burial customs are important.

Ask the children what their families do when someone dies. Does it depend on the age of the person or whether they are a man or a woman? Is there a feast or a ceremony and, if so, who takes

part in it? Are children included? Do people wear special clothing and, if so, for how long?

Children can be encouraged to ask old people about traditional customs. Are these still carried out? Are there traditional songs about how death came into the world? Children can make up plays, songs and stories about the customs they have discovered.

Stories from the children's and adults' own lives, from newspapers radio, or TV can provide starting points for discussion and for children to think of ways of helping others. After each story the adult can ask, "If that person was in our group, how could we help?"

#### **Activities**

Children can share with each other about a time when they: needed a friend and had one were a good friend to somebody else needed a good friend and did not have one.

Discuss what a child needs if s/he is unhappy after a death: friends need to be very gentle, good listeners and patient. The child must be allowed to show sadness by tears and in other ways. Children should not be surprised if their friend takes a long time to get over the sadness. Other children can help them just by being with them, hugging or holding hands, playing a game with them, or doing something simple to show that they care — such as giving them a small gift.

It may be too difficult for children to talk about their feelings when someone they love has died. Adults and other children can encourage them to express feelings in other ways such as drawings and poems.

Primary school children in Uganda wrote about AIDS:

*The old and the young have died  
The rich and the poor have vanished  
The handsome, beautiful, the ugly  
have disappeared  
Because of AIDS the killer  
Last week you killed our father  
The other week you killed our mother  
Now you are killing our brother  
Leaving us orphans.*

Children have different feelings after death, not only sadness. They can often feel guilty about the death; they can also feel angry, frightened, confused, and unable to accept that someone they love has gone for good. They may feel that they have been abandoned.

Children may have some of these feelings for many years after the death. The feelings may be very strong and difficult to cope with. When children show these feelings, people may think they are behaving badly.

Children (and adults) can help by understanding these feelings. There may be one person, even a child, that the grieving child trusts and likes more than the others. This person can really help by listening and accepting what the child says.

Children can understand that if another hurt or loss occurs later on, the first hurt comes back, often with great force. When children have lost someone they love, other children (and adults) should remember to:

Talk to the children and be friendly. When we ignore them or the death, this adds to their sadness and painful feelings.

Listen to them. It does not help to say that we know how they feel: it is difficult to know how someone else feels. Be patient. We should not make them think that they should get over the feelings quickly.

Encourage children to join in play and other activities, but do not force them to do so. Don't say things like "You'll soon get over it", or "Just think of all the good things you have", or "Everything will be all right." This suggests that the child should deny his or her feelings.

Hanbury, Clare (Ed.) *Child-to-Child and Children Living in Camps*, The Child-to-Child Trust. Available from: Teaching Aids at Low Cost (TALC) PO Box 49, St Albans. Herts. AL 4AX. UK. 1TK

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Robert Klose, writing in the *Monitor*, considers the unambiguous opinion of a child

# My toughest critic



I recently finished a book-length manuscript, a children's adventure story aimed at the fifth to sixth grade reading level. It involves two cousins, one American and the other Icelandic, who are entrusted with the delivery of two ponies to another part of Iceland. Along the way they quarrel, reconcile, overcome challenges, and so on. After editing the first draft I distributed copies to several friends who serve a reliable reader-critics. Then, on a whim, I did something that seemed on the surface to be a neat idea — I asked my eleven-year-old son if he would let me read the book to him. "I want to see what you think of it," I said with a wink and a nod.

**A**lyosha ruminated for a moment and then assented. He would give me a slot just before bedtime. "But only one chapter a night," he admonished with index finger raised, "because I need my sleep." Since I have cultivated a tradition of reading to and with my son, I expected him to quietly listen to my story, nod wisely, giggle where appropriate, and generally tell me that my work was the greatest thing ever written.

Then came the great disillusionment. The first night, as Alyosha snuggled to a sitting position against his pillow, I took my place at the foot of his bed. "OK," I began, clearing my throat. "Iceland Summer."

As I began to read, my son called for me to stop. "What is it?" I asked, and I looked up from the story. My son shook his head. "The title," he said. "It's no good."

I looked down at the title page and considered his comment. "But buddy," I said, "how do you know if it's not good if you haven't heard the story yet?" Without blinking, Alyosha repeated that the title just wasn't any good. I

told him I would ask him about the title again when the book was finished. He accepted this.

The first chapter introduced all of the American characters. My son generally approved of them, but he had a bone to pick with Ben, the 14-year-old boy.

"Stop there," he said, bringing me to a screeching halt in the middle of a fight scene. I looked up from the manuscript and managed a sweet smile. "Yes, my son?"

Alyosha wagged his finger and clucked his tongue. "Ben doesn't talk like that," he declaimed with compelling self-assurance.

I looked at my story. "Of course he does," I said. "This sentence is what I want him to say." No," he said, not the least bit perturbed by my thick-headedness. "I mean, Ben *shouldn't* talk that way. It doesn't go with the way you described him."

I thought for a moment and realised that this was exactly the type of comment that has real value. But I felt myself becoming ever-so-slightly defensive as I tried to explain the character's language to my son.

**M**y son, ordinarily a reluctant reader, had turned out to be a deadly critic. He listened with painfully focussed attention and made pointed, no-nonsense comments. When I was done with that first chapter (45 minutes to read five pages!), I kissed him good night and left his room, feeling as if I had been peeled. The second night — Chapter 2 — went no better. In fact, I prepared myself by re-editing the chapter before reading it to him, hoping that I could somehow improve it beyond reproach. But once again I barely intoned the first paragraph when my son soured his expression.

"Ben isn't mean enough," he said.

"What do you mean?" I asked, noting that my main character had just stolen something from another boy.

"But Ben is going to turn out nice in the end, isn't he?" Alyosha reasoned. My gosh, he was right, of course. I was only on page 10, and he had already seen clear through to Chapter 23. If Ben's eventual goodness was to shine in the end, he had to start out much more disagreeable.

**I** realised, at this point, that I was having trouble acknowledging my son's contributions to my writing.

Was I having a problem with his criticisms because he was a child? Or was it because he was my son and I felt that family members had to be kind to one another? I swallowed my pride, affirmed the value of his comments, and skulked out of his room as he turned out the light.

He spent the next night at a friend's house and I edited my work in peace. When he returned the next day I said nothing about it. That night I tucked him into bed and made a brisk exit from his room. As I passed over the threshold he called out to me. "Aren't you forgetting something?" he sang, bristling with anticipation.

I retrieved my manuscript, assumed my position at the foot of his bed, and word-by-word we clawed our way through my story. Even as I write this, we are still at it, and will be for some time, for children know what they like and are reluctant to give it up. If, and when, we do finish this labour, I have vowed to solicit comments only from adults in the future. For adults can be counted on to nod wisely, giggle where appropriate, and tell me that my stories are the greatest things ever written. Why would a writer want to hear less?