

Child & Youth Care

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

ISSN 0258-8927 VOL 15 NO 3 MARCH 1997

**THOM GARFAT ON THE USE OF EVERYDAY EVENTS
SOSIALE ORIËNTERING VAN DIE KINDERHUISKIND
MORE FROM ALAN JACKSON ON EMERGING POLICY**

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What's in a name?

There is a proposal on the table at the upcoming Biennial Conference that the NACCW should change its name to the National Association of Child and Youth Care (NACYC). There seems to have been little or no opportunity for debate prior to voting on a proposal of such importance to our organisation, so here are some personal points to start the debate. I address two areas, firstly, the content of the proposed changes, and secondly, the whole question of a name change (with some alternatives which we might consider).

The content

I have not seen any written motivation for this proposal, but I gather that the intention is that our name should better reflect the nature of our work — in two ways: (a) by including the word "youth" and (b) by excluding the word "workers".

The first of these (adding "youth") itself illustrates the danger of changing an organisation's name, since the proposed new name *may already be out of date!* Our own conception of our work has already moved strongly into the field of *families and communities* — how do we add these to our name?

We are at a time in South Africa when NGOs are critically looking at their future roles, which may well change in the short term. When we come to add yet other perspectives to our work (whatever the future may suggest — prevention, training, AIDS, professionalism — who knows?) do we change again?

The second proposed change (excluding "workers") I do not understand at all, since it seems to me that the NACCW has always worked with *the people* who work with children and youth, and not directly with the youngsters themselves at all.

Name changes

We should look at *what can be lost* if we change our name, and also at how we might apply some *alternative ways* in which organisations indicate the nature of their work.

In three years' time our Association will have operated under its

present name for twenty five years, during which it has built up good prominence and status — with strong *recognisability*, throughout our own country and also abroad. This applies to our name, and to the acronym NACCW, which is also our logo. People, outsiders and insiders, know who we are.

Thousands of people have moved through the NACCW as members and students, and have on their walls certificates issued by the National Association of Child Care Workers. Those certificates would soon lose their connection with an organisation which no longer bears the same name.

Also, we don't want to start all over again in building up a well-known name, with people asking "You represent *who?*" or "You're doing a training course with *what* organisation?"

Alternatives to a name change

There are four levels at which an organisation indicates its function:

1. **Its name.** A name is essentially a label. Many organisation's names do not describe the work they do: Woolworths, the Red Cross, Equity, Amnesty International, MicroSoft, Grassroots. They rely on other ways to define their area of concern (see 2, 3 and 4 below.) Even though these organisations may change the nature of their work, they don't change names. The Red Cross, for example, has added enormously over hundreds of years to the nature of its work, but it hangs on to its established name.

2. **A subtitle or slogan.** It is a good idea to add a slogan to an organisation's name. Briefer than a mission statement, this adds, in a nutshell, more detail. "People you can talk to", "Your two-year guarantee store" and "the Better Connection" are examples. By all means we could add a slogan to our name, and change this as our activities develop and change.

3. **Its mission statement.** This tends to be a longer and more definitive statement. It can be an *external* statement, because it should sum up, accurately and briefly, exactly what the organisation concerns itself with. A funder

may ask, in order to get a clear picture of what we do, for our mission statement. Just as often, it is an *internal* statement by which we evaluate our own performance. The mission statement (far more than the name) should be a dynamic, living thing which changes as our activities change.

The NACCW has changed its own mission statement from time to time, and the present form reflects fairly accurately what we do:

"The National Association of Child Care Workers is an independent non-profit organisation which provides the professional training and infrastructure to promote positive child and youth development and to improve standards of care and treatment for troubled children and youth at risk in family, community and residential group care settings."

4. **What it does.** This means what we *actually* do — *and are seen to do* — in practice. Ultimately no words will ever communicate the essence of our organisation more powerfully than its *actions*. We may use eloquent and persuasive words in a name, but people will know who we are from what they see us doing and achieving.

Conclusion

To summarise my own view:

- I would be anxious about our organisation changing its name on the basis of a single, undebated resolution put before a meeting.
 - I am unconvinced about the meaning of the proposed name.
 - I fear that the proposed name may already be out of date and that we will set a precedent by which we may have to change our name again soon.
 - I doubt the wisdom of changing a name whenever the emphasis of our work changes.
 - I think we should not risk losing a recognisable identity built up over 25 years.
 - I believe that the addition of a subtitle or slogan would be a better alternative to a radical name change.
- My own vote boils down to a simple "No".

— BG

What is your view? Two issues of Child & Youth Care will appear before the BGM in early July, those in April and May. To make up for the lack of opportunity for country-wide debate on this issue, all members are invited to send their own ideas in for publication.

Child & Youth Care

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Volume 15 Number 3 March 1997

EDITORIAL: WHAT'S IN A NAME?	2
MEET NACCW TRAINER CECIL WOOD	3
THOM GARFAT ON THE USE OF EVERYDAY EVENTS	4
ARLIN NESS REVIEWS NEW BOOK: IN WHOSE INTEREST?	6
DEBORAH EWING: PITFALLS IN WORK WITH ABUSED KIDS	7
LENEL VAN NIEKERK VISITS A SCHOOL OF INDUSTRIES	10
NACCW NEWSBRIEFS	11
DIE SOSIALE ORIËNTERING VAN DIE KINDERHUISKIND	12
ALAN JACKSON CONTINUES HIS SERIES ON POLICY	14
COMMUNICATION SKILLS FOR ADMINISTRATORS	16
ROD ANDERSON: INTERVIEWING THE YOUNG CHILD	18
GAIL SCHULTZ: PSYCHIC CHILD CARE WORKERS	20

Cover: Jane Brown. Aborigine children off to school



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Child & Youth Care ISSN 0258-8927 is a non-commercial and private subscription journal, formerly published in Volumes 1 through 13 (1983 to 1995) as *The Child Care Worker*. Copyright © 1997 The National Association of Child Care Workers

Editorial: P O Box 23199, Claremont 7735, South Africa. e-Mail: pretext@iafrica.com
Telephone/Fax: (021) 788-3610. *Child & Youth Care* is published on the 25th of each month except December. Copy deadline for all material is the 10th of each month.

Subscriptions: Individual Membership of NACCW is R80.00 p.a. which includes a free copy of the journal. Non-members, agency or library journal subscriptions: R80.00 p.a. post free. Commercial advertising: R312 per page *pro rata*. Situations Vacant/Wanted advertisements for child and youth care posts are free to Corporate and Individual Members. All enquiries, articles, letters and new subscriptions may be sent to the Editor at the above address.

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People



Cecil Wood

Over the the past year and a half, Cecil, a trainer for NACCW, has trained Project Upgrade courses to well over 600 child care workers in the Eastern Cape.

Trained teacher

He trained as a teacher before being called up for military service in 1984 and then took up a post in a primary school in Port Elizabeth. He was being called away from his teaching post to army camps so often that he decided to join Correctional Services, so was relieved of these duties.

No place for kids

He headed up the school for juvenile offenders at the prison in Kirkwood. While enjoying this work, he knew it was no place for kids, and decided to join SOS Children's Villages.

He reasoned that through involvement in a children's home he could play a part in preventing kids ending up in prison. Cecil was appointed as head of the newly formed SOS village in Port Elizabeth in 1989. St Nicholas Home had just closed down and a number of boys were referred from there. They started with 24 boys in 1989 and grew to 120 children in 1995. Cecil grew personally in this leadership role. During his first year

at SOS Cecil joined the NACCW. He says he found the support, literature and interaction with others in the field very supportive in his new role. In 1992 Cecil completed his BQCC.

Executive member

It was during this period that he was elected on to the NACCW Regional Executive Committee. After a year he was selected as Chairperson for the region. A Principal's Forum was started which became most successful with principals meeting on a regular basis for discussion and support.

At this time many child care workers were disgruntled with their jobs — feeling they were not receiving recognition, that working conditions were poor, and they were not paid for overtime or weekend work. It was a volatile time too because of the political situation. Cecil often found himself in the middle of the conflict. He is proud of the fact that during his time at SOS they initiated work with children in a progressive, developmental way. A part-time Occupational Therapist and a Remedial Teacher were employed, and so a multi-disciplinary team was built up, which was very beneficial for the kids.

Influences

He met with many knowledgeable people in the field during these years — Jim Anglin, Martin Brokenleg and Larry Brendtro being a few. In 1995 Cecil resigned from SOS to become a full-time contract trainer/consultant for the NACCW. He is currently completing his BA degree majoring in Psychology and Education.

As we in South Africa are exploring the practice excellence theme of Creating Positive Moments, Canadian colleague **Dr Thom Garfat** reminds us of the rich literature and philosophical background of this aspect of our work

The use of everyday events in child and youth care work



“The emphasis on impactful joint experience is the essence of contemporary care work”

It seems unclear when exactly the expression “the use of everyday life events” first entered the child and youth care literature.

Probably, like many things in child and youth care, it snuck in through the back door (the same one the kids tend to sneak out of) when nobody was paying close attention. What is important, however, is that the expression has succeeded in capturing the heart of child and youth care, for it speaks to the essence of this field.

Similar expressions have appeared from time to time, as various authors have tried to express the idea that child and youth care involves, as Fritz Redl (1959) said, “exploiting” the events that occur during the daily life of a child in care, for the benefit of that child (Fox, 1995).

Redl’s expression has not readily been incorporated into the field, probably because of the political associations attached to the word “exploiting.” Redl, of course, was talking about *taking advantage* of (another politically sensitive expression) events,

as they occur in the life space of the child. While the words may not have caught on, the intention certainly did.

The little things

Maier (1987), for example, encourages us to attend to and use “the minutia of everyday life,” the little things, the small, seemingly unimportant events, out of which the days of our lives are constructed: things like waiting for meal-times, occasions of leave-taking, or just coming into contact with one another. Followers of Redl suggest the use of *life space interviews* in which the child and youth care worker takes advantage of an event (such as an argument between two youth) immediately after it occurs, specifically entering into the immediate life of the child. Peterson (1988) suggests watching for “naturally occurring therapeutic opportunities” that present themselves in the course of daily living: reflective states when a young person has “gone inside” and is “accessing other than conscious and present situation experiences” (p. 22). More re-

cently, Guttman (1991) has suggested that child and youth care workers must enter into the flow of immediacies of the child’s experiencing. In this way they can use interventions which are congruent with the flow of that experiencing (Fulcher, 1991). Entering into this flow of experiencing as it is occurring, and helping the child to live differently in the context within which the child and worker find themselves (Fewster, 1990), is central to impactful child and youth care practice. This *joint experiencing* between child and worker, and the facilitation of the opportunity for change within this joint experiencing, is the major difference between our work and other intervention efforts that rely upon interpretative insight, alteration of value orientation, behaviour modification, education, and so on.

In impactful child and youth care practice, the worker becomes, with the child, the co-creator of a contextual therapeutic environment (Durrant, 1993; Maier, 1994; Peterson, 1988) within which the



child might experience the opportunity for change.

The emphasis on impactful joint experience is the essence of contemporary care work.

Requirements

Child and youth care practice has evolved over time, and the expression "the use of daily life events" might be rephrased as "the entering into, and caring use of, daily life events, as they are occurring, for the therapeutic benefit of the child, youth or family." Such practice involves numerous skills, knowledge and ability on the part of child and youth care workers. They must, for example, have —

- knowledge of child development (Maier, 1987),
- understand how to access and use that knowledge (Eisikovits, Beker, & Guttman, 1991),
- know about the process of change,
- possess an active self-awareness (Ricks, 1989), which allows the worker to distinguish self from other (Garfat, 1994),
- be able to enter into an intimate caring relationship (Austin & Halpin, 1987, 1989) that involves
- attachment (Maier, 1993),
- understand the process of meaning-making (Bruner, 1990; Garfat, 1995; Krueger, 1994; VanderVen, 1992) and

- have a framework for organizing their interventive actions (Eisikovits, Beker, & Guttman, 1991; Garfat & Newcomen, 1992).

All of this is necessary so that they might be able to recognise and use those opportunities that occur as the events of a child's, youth's, or family's life unfold through daily living. This use of daily life events as they are occurring is one of the characteristics that distinguishes child and youth care practice from other forms of helping — which may also use daily life events, but at a distance removed from the immediacy of the experience itself.

Acknowledgements to the *Journal of Child and Youth Care*, Canada

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**DURBAN
CHILDREN'S HOME**

Arlin Ness introduces a recent book on resilience that was co-authored by a former youth who was at-risk. The authors outline ingredients for success with angry, adult-wary youth.

In Whose Best Interest?

Resilient youth are able to surmount the odds and succeed even when reared in high-risk environments. *In Whose Best Interest?* offers an inside view of resilience. Leading author John Seita survived a tragic childhood to become Dr. John Seita, a prominent author and youth-development professional.

John Seita came from a highly distressed family in an impoverished, high-crime neighbourhood in Cleveland. At the age of 8 he was removed from his alcoholic mother; by 12 he had experienced a dozen failed placements. I first met John when he was an angry young adolescent sent by the court to Starr Commonwealth, where I was then director of social services.

Core needs

In Whose Best Interest? outlines four core needs of every young person: Connectedness, Continuity, Dignity, and Opportunity (CCDO). These needs are sorely neglected when children are passed from agency to agency in our disjointed child-serving systems. What makes this book unique is John's willingness to candidly share his painful experiences. By teaming up with co-authors Martin Mitchell (one of John's child care workers early in John's residence at

Starr) and Christi Tobin (director for programme services at Starr), he adds objectivity to his recollections. The authors analyse his experiences against the backdrop of the CCDO principles.

In John we recognise many similar youths, and we feel a sense of urgency to change practices that prompt the question that is the book's title. The authors contend that we don't need "model" programs; we need persons who combine professional skills with the sincerity of caring that comes from the heart.

Growing up as a "youth in care" can be an ordeal that might better be termed "careless." Most of us would have difficulty sharing even with a trusted friend the innermost thoughts, hurts, and hopes that John offers his readers. Why has he bared himself to tell his story? In John's own words, "I have done it because I can."

Relationship beachhead

Young John fought anybody who tried to take the place of his mother or of the father he had never known. He manufactured substitute belongings in the members of the Cleveland Indians baseball team. Like John, they also were seen as losers in those years. But John stuck by his beloved heroes through every defeat, like a small boy idolising an imperfect father. This sports infatuation provided youth workers like Martin Mitchell a relationship beachhead with this adult-wary boy.

From the ages of 12 to 18, John experienced stability in his placement at Starr Commonwealth. Still, bonds with peers and staff were transient. For most of us, home is where we always can go when life comes undone. At 18, John had to abandon his institutional ark, knowing he could never fly back to safety. Starr, however caring, promised no permanence.

A common factor in many resilient lives is a sense of spiri-

tual rootedness. John gives no sermons, but a spiritual strand weaves through his story. From an 8-year-old who cried and prayed himself to sleep in a hovel mislabeled "shelter," to the power that emanates from his prose and professional demeanor, this uprooted boy obviously has spiritual roots. In his darkest times, John's connection to a higher power sustained his hope. His account suggests how important it is that caregivers respect the spiritual needs of young people. In John's words, continuity in the spiritual sense means "My prayers will be heard, I will be loved, and the security I seek will be found."

The final chapters provide a framework for rebuilding our education and child care systems in the best interests of the child. These principles are relevant to frontline staff, to administrators, and policy leaders. Connectedness, continuity, dignity, and opportunity represent a radical departure from system-bound, adult-driven approaches.

John's small book holds one's interest like a good novel; somebody should make a movie out of it. Readers are more than entertained, however. They are challenged to reclaim the spirit of idealism that brought most people into this line of work. In John's words, "No longer should we expect children to navigate without a map, steer without a rudder, or seek without a friend."

Arlin Ness is president of Starr Commonwealth, which operates programmes in Michigan and Ohio for youth who are troubled and their families. He can be contacted at: Starr Commonwealth, Albion, MI 49224.

In Whose Best Interest? by John Seita, Martin Mitchell, and Christi Tobin (1995), is published by Continental Press.

Reprinted from *Reclaiming Children and Youth*



Picking up the telephone and speaking to a Childline counsellor may be the first step towards saving a child from abuse and bringing the abuser to justice. However, there are many obstacles in the way, reports **Deborah Ewing** in the journal *Recovery*.

Between a phone call and a conviction...

When a child or her carer finds the anger, the courage and determination it takes to speak to a counsellor about the abuse they have experienced or witnessed, they want something done to stop it immediately.

They will find a friendly and sensitive ear at Childline, but if they want the case to go to court and the offender to go to prison, they will encounter many pitfalls, and usually, more pain.

Childline receives about 300 calls a month, of which about 200 request a Zulu-speaking counsellor. Most of those calls do not result in a court case. Durban Director Joan van Niekerk says there are several options when someone phones in with a report of child abuse.

If the child is under 14 and the case relates to sexual abuse, they may report it to the Child Protection Unit (CPU) of the SA Police Service. Or the case might be referred to Childline's own treatment unit, or to the local child welfare agency for preliminary investigation.

"Say a child of 8 is being molested by a 12-year-old, we would not usually refer the case to the CPU. We would engage the victim and the 'offender' in therapy. Our initial concern would be to protect the 8-year-old from further abuse, perhaps by trying to arrange for the 12-year-old to stay with other members of the family.

"In theory, if a case were going straight to the police, we would work together and support the victim through the process. The police would take a statement and refer the victim for medical examination. If the child is under 14, s/he will be seen in the children's department of the local hospital and if they are over 14, by

the district surgeon."

"The medical report is attached to the police file and it goes to court, and the senior public prosecutor makes the decision whether to prosecute. Ideally, every case should proceed but for many reasons, some of which we support, few cases do.

"During this process, the child should be receiving therapy (but few do). We would offer trauma counselling and prepare the child for court. The police investigation and the court case seldom take less than a couple of months and it's usually only when the case is finalised that it feels anything like resolved for the child."

What can go wrong along the way?

The case goes to the CPU and stays there ...

Van Niekerk pulls a case history from the current case file:

"Here is a 9-year-old raped by a farmworker. We have made 23 attempts over five months to follow up the rape but the police have done nothing ...

Then here is a case of a child aged three when the abuse was last reported in March 1996, and after 10 months nothing has happened. This child was so seriously physically abused that she had to go to hospital. We have made 16 attempts to get the police to follow this up. In December, we had a call from the police saying they thought the case file had gone missing. We sent all the details to them, the investigating officer said he would chase up and get back to us, but we have heard nothing."

"There is another case where we gave the police a statement from a child and a perpetrator, who named the children he had abused. When

we inquired why he was not arrested, the police said they had lost all the evidence ... the perpetrator has since fled. "In such cases, we will go to Superintendent Mohamed Dawood (Head of the CPU) and then to the SAPS Director, or the Area Commissioner, to make sure they are followed up, but that doesn't improve the general situation. I feel overwhelmed by all the problems with the police. Recently we helped them to motivate for more vehicles and then an internal investigation into resources showed vehicles were being taken by staff with no explanation of where they were going or why. The letters we had written were found lying in a drawer."

Superintendent Dawood responds that it is difficult for the CPU at management level to always know when calls are not followed up. He appeals to welfare and other agencies to fax details where case management is causing concern. "We are also human. We have to service 42 police precincts and work with a whole string of people, from courts to hospitals to counsellors. We can't always call them when they expect us to. There is a misconception among communities and professionals that the CPU is a police service with its own manpower, able to go straight out to cases as soon as they are reported. However, we are a small organisation of limited manpower and have to give quality time to serious crimes like rape and sodomy etc.

"Working on a single case can take up to six hours and the CPU can't react to every case simultaneously. Cases should initially be reported to the nearest police station, which can render immediate attention. Sometimes we get called

out to inappropriate cases (for example, custody disputes) and this wastes time. Rather, the local station should call us out where needed — though children should not be interviewed initially at the local police station, rather by the CPU or other trained people. If cases come through from welfare professionals, we do send out people straight away."

Police take up the case but lack medical evidence to support the investigation ...

All involved agree that medical evidence is a key factor in a successful prosecution but this can be difficult to secure for several reasons. Sometimes, there is no evidence because the perpetrator has not physically injured the victim; sometimes the victim does not go for a medical examination because no one realises it is necessary; sometimes the medical examination is conducted too late to provide evidence. Van Niekerk says, for example, "Addington Hospital is so overburdened with child abuse cases, you can't get a booking within two months, which makes a medical exam an academic affair."

Police take up the case but the victim recants on her statement ...

Supt. Dawood says: "85-95% of perpetrators are family related (most children are taught to stay away from strangers). When exposure comes about, the family is in an emotional state and will take all measures to protect the child but as time goes on they fear what the community will say, loss of income, etc. They start to put pressure on us to drop the case and on the child to recant. It's very difficult when a child's protector is the perpetrator." Childline counsellor Gloria Hlophe gives one recent example of many cases where the victim is under pressure not to testify against an abusing relative: "We received a call last year from a child saying she had been sexually abused by her father. She was 15 and said she had been abused since she was 10. Her mother openly admitted she knew what was happening but said she was waiting for the family to 'sort it out'. She didn't want to go to the police because her family of 5 is dependent on the father, but she finally agreed. The mother failed to take the girl to the hospital as agreed so we had no medical report to take to the police. Then the mother said the family had decided not to report the case because they can't afford to have the father arrested."

"They have arranged for the child to stay with an aunt who will bring her for therapy, but what about the other children? There are many cases where a mother sacrifices a child for the sake of having someone to support the fam-

ily." (At the request of the victim, this case was reported to the police. The man was arrested — and released on bail.)

The victim stands by his story but the case doesn't go to court ...

Gloria Hlophe gives an example of a case which the police were reluctant to prosecute: "I received a call from a 16-year-old boy last year to say he had been abused by a teacher who was related to his sister by marriage. This man had been touching the boy's private parts when he visited the family on many occasions over a number of years. The boy was very depressed and had moved out of his home to stay with an aunt."

"The CPU were very reluctant to take the case because the only evidence was the child's word against that of the perpetrator. The boy wants to report to the police because the perpetrator is a sports teacher and he believes he might protect other boys who come in contact with him from abuse. He has told his mother, who is angry, but doesn't feel they can do anything — there is no father at home and the mother is not confident to approach the other family because the perpetrator is respected in the community. "The only thing we can do is offer therapy through our newly formed group for the male victims of abuse who are starting to come forward."

The case goes to court but fails due to lack of corroborating evidence ...

Val Melis, Senior Public Prosecutor, says: "It's very difficult to get a conviction if the child is very young. The law says the evidence of a child must be treated with caution and you can't just accept it without corroboration." Supt Dawood agrees that some of the most shocking cases of abuse, of babies or children with mental handicap, are the most difficult to pursue, as the children cannot speak on their own behalf and no-one else is able to testify on their behalf — or someone refuses to do so because the perpetrator is a relative.

Gloria Hlophe relates a particularly distressing case that was thrown out of court due to lack of corroborating evidence. "In November, a 14-year-old girl was raped by her uncle. He was actually seen raping her by a security guard. The guard called the police and they caught the man in the act. The case was referred to the CPU and went to court within a month — but it was thrown out for lack of evidence: the child was never taken to a doctor, she was never given the chance to give evidence, the witness was not called and the court took the word of the uncle, who said the victim was his girlfriend." The parents and Childline complained

to the prosecutor who explained why the case failed but not why it was not sent back to the police for further investigation. Childline is still following up this case and Gloria says the child's suffering is only just beginning: "We took her to hospital to make sure she was not pregnant or infected with any STDs. The tests have revealed she is HIV-positive and we are still trying to find a way to tell her. She was already thoroughly traumatised and her parents are finished."

Police take the case to the prosecutor, who declines to prosecute ...

Val Melis says: "I am not going to recommend prosecution in a matter where there is not a fair chance of success — it will traumatise the child unduly to put them through the court process. We won't prosecute where it is not a serious abuse, or where there is no real injury but the child might be very traumatised by the experience of court. I have seen too many children shattered by that."

"Other problems could be that the child's statement may be taken by an inexperienced police officer, who interviews the child in Zulu but then has to translate the statement into English or Afrikaans, which is the requirement of the court. A lot can be lost in that translation. We do our own interviews and if it comes out that the police have missed something or failed to call a witness, we can ask them to go back and investigate."

The case goes to court and the perpetrator is released on bail ...

Supt. Dawood says lengthy court delays and bail problems influence the CPU's ability to pursue cases. "Many people believe that if the police arrest a person, it is their responsibility to make sure he stays in custody and is sentenced to prison. The family may not know someone has been released on bail; they think he has never been arrested. Having to see the perpetrator again is enough intimidation to stop a child testifying."

The case goes to trial and the perpetrator is jailed ...

Although only a minority of cases get this far, once a trial takes place, both the police and the prosecutor say the conviction rate is improving steadily with the development of the CPU and the establishment of a special child abuse court in Durban last May. Supt. Dawood says: "Our percentage solve rate is quite high if you exclude cases where the victim does not testify or where there is no medical evidence. The conviction rate is definitely higher than before the CPU was started, I'd say 20-25% (compared to the HSRC figures of 7.4% convicted and jailed for

1994-5). Offenders are also getting longer sentences — 10 years and more.”

Val Melis says the special court, the only one of its kind in the country, is having a positive impact on fighting child abuse. On average, the court handles two trials a day and she estimates the conviction rate there is now at least 50%.

Joan van Niekerk points out that even if an offender goes to prison, the future is very difficult for his victim: “The legal process ends, and the familial process of adapting to change goes on for years. The family might hold the child responsible for the loss of their bread-winner. The period of treatment for children trying to deal with their feelings depends on the nature of the abuse but older children tend to stay in therapy for a lot longer.” What will improve the situation?

The police, the prosecutor, the professionals and the community work together ...

Supt Dawood says that in the two

years since he took office, he has been trying to create integrated services with welfare agencies and other parties, to try to make sure a child is not dealt with by many different departments. The CPU has a staff of 46 and Dawood says they now have sufficient vehicles and have decentralised services.

“We have upgraded our services to go out to the communities and work in an integrated way. We have satellite offices at Umlazi, Tongaat, KwaMashu and will open one in Pinetown as well as the Durban central office.

Dawood is very understanding of the distress children and families affected by abuse go through and believes the police culture of dealing with survivors of rape and abuse has improved significantly: “We are much more sensitive and co-operate with all involved —communities, welfare etc.”

Val Melis says the setting up of the special court to deal only with cases of child abuse marked a breakthrough in efforts to see that victims of these crimes were treated in a sensitive and

efficient way. However, budget and policy constraints have already undermined the court’s capacity.

Initially there were two prosecutors assigned to the court — one to do preparation, clear up uncertainties and familiarise children with the court procedure, and another to present the matter in court — but at the moment there is only one to deal with everything. “We are going to have a huge backlog.

“The Department of Justice formula to work out the number of prosecutors required for a court is outdated. We have been trying to lobby for a change of policy and there is even talk of industrial action among prosecutors.

A prosecutor can be taking home 40-60 dockets a night to prepare for court.

Last year, we were told the Department of Justice had identified the need for 20 extra prosecutors but can’t appoint them because of budgets.

“My view is that the child abuse court must be kept open no matter what.”

BREAKING DOWN THE BARRIERS: REDRAWING THE BOUNDARIES

5TH INTERNATIONAL CHILD AND YOUTH CARE CONFERENCE, TORONTO, CANADA JUNE 3 TO JUNE 6TH 1997
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The World of Child Care Workers



CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The Director of the NACCW is a member of the Reference Committee of a Task Group of the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training, which has been appointed by the Minister of Education to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of special needs in education and training and educational support services at all levels of education and training.

Clearly troubled children and youth at risk with whom child and youth care workers are concerned should be included in the investigations and recommendation of this group.

If you would like to make any input to the work of this group, please feel free to write directly to the Secretariat, NCSNET, UWC, Box 17, Bellville 7535, fax 021-959-2389, or write to Merle Allsopp at NACCW, 47 Kromboom Rd, Rondebosch 7700 naccwct@iafrica.com

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A Visit to a School of Industries

Highly respected former Headmaster of the Batavia Special Secondary School in Cape Town, Lenel van Niekerk, experienced more than he expected on a visit to a school in George.

On Friday, 7 February at 3 pm an overseas visitor and I briefly stopped at the Kruinsig School for Girls in George to confirm an appointment for Thursday 13th. Friday is the one afternoon of the week when most schools are deserted. At Kruinsig we were surprised to find the reception area of the school a hive of activity — girls and lady teachers were laying tables, arranging flowers and preparing a feast — a black tie affair for the Round Table. The lady teachers cater to the public and collect funds for the children of the school. The caretaker offered to take us on a quick walk-around, to show us the grounds.

Activity

The well-kept gardens were obviously his pride and joy. At the swimming pool we saw a number of girls getting last minute instructions from their coach in preparation for the inter-schools gala the next day. At the athletics track athletes were also rounding off their training for the next day's inter-schools meeting. When we arrived at the parking area we saw a group of well-dressed girls boarding the school bus. They were going shopping. Was this really a school of industries or an exclusive school for girls? We couldn't wait for our return on the 13th.

Eye-opener

Thursday, 13 February was a real eye-opener. The school offers the complete NIC and NSC courses. Sophisticated computer instruction, instruction in clothing manufacture and hotel management. A store-room has been transformed into an elegant restaurant where the girls cater to the public. The confidence of the girls really impressed and I could understand why the school had not had a single failure in matric during the past ten years, and a successful placement

rate of 86% on leaving school.

The pride of the headmaster was the singing of his children. After attending assembly we could assure him that his pride was justified. The girls are in great demand to sing at local functions and at surrounding towns.

The school has two well-qualified psychologists on the staff and they are available twenty-four hours a day. The overworked social worker is a vital part of the staff as she is the link between the children and their families and the social workers at the home towns of the children.

The hostels are beautifully maintained and the girls decorate their own rooms and the areas around their beds — creating a very homely atmosphere.

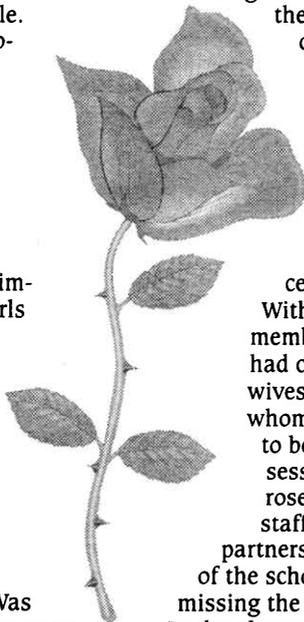
One red rose

At the end of the school day we thought our visit had ended but we readily accepted an invitation to attend the Valentine's Day celebrations the next day.

Without the teachers and other members of staff knowing, the girls had contacted their husbands, wives and boyfriends — all of whom had been told that they had to be at the school at 1 pm in possession of a long-stemmed red rose. At 1 pm the children led the staff members to their Valentine partners and gave them the last hour of the school day off! The children dismissing the staff at an industrial school? In the absence of the staff, the girls then decorated the hall for their Valentine Day Dance. The girls had invited partners from local high schools, flashing lights, too-loud music, attractively attired young people. This could have been a good high school anywhere in the world.

Making a difference

We left with me feeling proud that Kruinsig High School was in the Republic of South Africa and that this school was actively responding to the theme of the NACCW: "Create positive moments: Make a difference for children and youth — Now"





An impressive group of child and youth care workers make their public Declaration to the Code of Ethics upon receiving their registration certificates at the recent graduation ceremony of the KwaZulu Natal Region of the NACCW.

Constitution Changes at BGM

Notices for the NACCW's Biennial General Meeting have been circulated, and include a number of proposed changes to the Constitution. One of the most far-reaching will be the reversal of an earlier BGM decision to limit the vote to registered members. Although the registration of child and youth care workers has continued at an encouraging rate, there have not been enough to provide reasonable quorums at meetings in some of the Regions, and this has hampered the operation of the Association.

Another important proposal is that the name of the Association should be changed to the "National Association of Child and Youth Care". Two further changes are proposed to tidy up administrative details: allowing for the election of a National Vice-Chairperson, and slightly redefining the terms of practice

for registered members.

The Biennial General Meeting is scheduled for 09:00 on Wednesday 2 July at the Conference venue, University of Natal in Durban.

The BGM also elects the National Chairperson, and members have received a Nomination Form for this purpose.

Zeni Thumbadoo appointed as the Deputy Director of NACCW



Earlier this month the NACCW's National Executive Committee appointed Zeni Thumbadoo as Deputy Director of the Association. When Lesley du Toit left the staff, Merle Allsopp was Director of Training before being appointed Director — and no appointment was made to replace her. This new appointment restores the staff complement to its earlier level.

In announcing the appointment to staff, Merle remarked: "Zeni has been a member of the NACCW, a member of a Regional Executive and the National Executive, and more recently a contract Trainer for long enough to know what it is she is getting herself in to!" Zeni was social worker at Lakehaven in Durban from 1983 to 1993. She also has child care qualifications and is a registered child and youth care worker. She spent two years as a control supervisor responsible for residential and social work programmes with Child Welfare. Married, with two children, she lives in Durban.

"The illusions of childhood are necessary experiences. A child should not be denied a balloon because sooner or later it will burst."

— Cox

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Sosiale Oriëntering van die Kind in die Kinderhuis

Sosiale wording van die kind

Die kind bevind hom in 'n medemenslike wêreld waarin daar binne sy kultuurverband ooreenkomstig sosiale norme, sedes, waardes en gewoontes voortdurende kontak en wisselwerking tussen mense plaasvind. Die kind het egmenslike sosiale behoeftes soos menslike samesyn, kommunikasie en toebehorendheid (Pretorius, 1986:14-15). Deur te sosialiseer word die kind binne sy kultuurverband 'n lid van 'n sosiale groep, word hy 'n selfstandige en verantwoordelike volwassene persoon ooreenkomstig die norme, sedes, waardes en gewoontes van die groep. Sosialisering kan alleen met verantwoordbare leiding en voorlewing van volwassenes (ouers, onderwysers, etc.) suksesvol wees. Dit moet altyd in gedagte gehou word dat alhoewel die sosiale wording van die kind uitgelig en bestudeer kan word dit nooit van die totale wording van die kind geskei mag word nie. Die kind wat nie op sosiale vlak by die samelewing kan inskakel nie, bereik nooit volwaardige volwasewording nie (Le Roux, 1992:26).

Die gesin as primêre sosialiseringsmilieu

Die eerste "sameewingsruimte" of medemenslike situasie, waarin die kind "as

een van ons" aanvaar word, is die eie gesin. Die gesin is die invloedrykste van al die opvoedingsituasies waarin die kind hom bevind. Langeveld (1974:43) stel dit duidelik: "Het gesin is immers de primaire gemeenschapsvorm voor het kind. Daar leert het te leven." Binne 'n gesonde gesinslewe sal die kind byna alles vind wat hy vir sy strewena volwassenheid nodig het (Le Roux, 1987:23). As eerste medemenslike verhouding wat die kind stig is die ouer-kind-verhouding die belangrikste aangesien dit as verwysingsraamwerk vir die stig van alle ander sosiale verhoudings dien.

Die sosiaalverwaarloosde kind

Die feit dat die kind uit sy eie ouerhuis verwyder is lewer bewys van die problematiese situasie waarin die kind hom bevind. Opvoedingstekorte, opvoedingsfoute en versteurde gesinsverhoudings dra by tot die sosiale verwaarloosing van die kind. Opvoedingsfoute kan onder meer liefdeloosheid, afwysing, inkonsekwente dissipline en optrede, ongeborgenheid, oorbeskerming, fisiese verwaarloosing, ensovoorts insluit (Kapp, 1991:115). Opvoedingsverwaarloosing dui daarop dat die opvoeding van die kind ernstig tekortskiet; die ouer as opvoeder, doen te min

aan die kind se opvoeding, leiding, gesag en dissipline; te min eise van selfbeperking en te min sosiale norme, sedes, waardes en gewoontes word aan die kind voorgeleef (Vos, 1994:52). In die disfunksionerende gesin word

die kind nie toereikend, aan die hand van norme en waardes, met sy sosialisering en met sy uitgaan na die sosiaal-maatskaplike werklikhede begelei nie. Die verwysingsraamwerk wat die sosiaalverwaarloosde kind in gesinsverband vorm is as vertrekpunt onvoldoende vir sy sosialisering met ander. Vir Pretorius (1986:18-19) beteken verwaarloosing van opvoeding tot saamlewe dat die kind nie gesteun word om saamlewingsinvloede te selekteer en te verwerk nie en dus weerloos gelaat word teen beïnvloeding van ongewenste aktiwiteite en groepdruk. By opname in die kinderhuis beskik die kind oor baie min goed-ontwikkelde sosiale interaksie-vaardighede. Die kind beskik nie oor die vermoë om interaksie te inisieer of om dit vol te hou nie (Van Niekerk, 1991:95).

Sosialisering buite die huisgesin

Die kind se sosiale verwysingsraamwerk wat in gesinsverband gevorm word dien as vertrekpunt vir sosialisering buite die gesin. In die groter sosiale gemeenskap ontmoet die kind ander mense in 'n ander milieu en in ander situasies met wie hy moet sosialiseer. Kruger & Van Rooyen (1987:22) sê die kind kom met al hoe meer, vir hom, vreemde mense, vreemde aktiwiteite en situasies in aanraking waarby hy moet aanpas en korrek moet optree. Die kind wat geborgenheid en toebehorendheid in 'n eie gesin beleef word daardeur aangespoor tot toereikende sosiale verkeer met mense buite die gesinskring. Deur die doeltreffende voorbereiding van die ouers vir 'n nuwe milieu, met ander mense en ander eise, sal die kind bereid wees om sosiaal te waag en te eksplloreer.

Sosialisering in die kinderhuis

Die kind word in die kinderhuis opgeneem as sosiaal-



verwaarloosde kind. Die moontlikheid bestaan dat die sosiale verwaarloosing in die kindershuis kan intensiever weens die konflik tussen die sosiale norme en waardes van die eie gesin, en die van die kindershuis en 'n nuwe "gesin". Hoe groter die verskil tussen die norme en waardes van 'n eie gesin en die van die kindershuis hoe meer verandering kan by die kind ontstaan rakende sy plek en rol in die samelewing (Le Roux: 1992:45). Een van die grootste probleme wat die kind met toelating tot die kindershuis ondervind is dat daar gelyktydig by nuwe norme en waardes en verskillende rolveranderinge aangepas moet word, bv. nuwe kindershuisreëls, nuwe "ouers, broers en/of susters" asook ander kindershuis personeel. Pretorius (1986:16) sê die kind wat in sowel 'n eie gesin as 'n kindershuisgesin opgroei, "lewe-in-meervoud".

Verhouding tussen die kindersversorger (huisouer) en kindershuiskind

In die sosiale oriëntering van die kindershuiskind is die kindersversorger-kind-verhouding baie belangrik aangesien dit as grondslag vir die vorming van alle ander sosiale verhoudings dien (Sonnekus, 1986:113). Om voldoende hulp tot "hersosialisering" te verleen moet die kindersversorger (huisouer) die kind aanvaar en daardeur sy vertroue en respek wen. Die kindershuiskind moet die kindersversorger (huisouer) se sosiale leiding as betroubaar, opreg, bestendig en in ooreenstemming met die waardes en norme van sy gemeenskap beleef. Die kind betree die kindershuis met ongunstige ervaringsreste rakende verhoudingstigting. Wanneer die kind uit sy ouerhuis verwyder verander die "blinde kinderlike vertroue" in volwasse mens meestal in "blinde wantroue". Die kind voel in die steek gelaat, verwerp en verraai deur sy ouers (volwasse mens) en vind dit moeilik om enige volwassene te vertrou.

"Hersosialisering" van die kindershuiskind

In hierdie verband verwys "hersosialisering" na die veranderinge in die sosiale gedrag en gewoontes van die kindershuiskind. Alhoewel dié kind die ondersteuning van verskeie sosialiseringssagente nodig het om hom in sy nuwe rol sal te ondersteun, aan te moedig en te lei, is dit die kindersversorger (huisouers) wat die grootste verantwoordelik dra. Huisouers kan hulle egter tot die kindershuis hoof, maatskaplike werker of ander kundiges wend vir hulpverlening met die hersosialisering van die kind.

Die rol van die kindersversorger

Dit is noodsaaklik dat die kindersversorger (huisouer) oor toereikende kennis

en gesag beskik om die leefreëls, sosiale vaardighede en kultuur aan die kind te kan oordra. Deur die voorleef van die gemeenskap se waardes en norme deur die kindersversorger (huisouer), kan die kind dit verwerf en naleef en hom op 'n sosiaal aanvaarbare wyse gedra en toereikend sosiaal funksioneer. Die kind kan egter ook op ander wyses as deur die opvoederlike begeleiding van die kindersversorger (huisouer) gesosialiseer word. Pretorius (1986:14) sê leer tot samelewe kan ook deur selfstandige sosiale ervaring, beïnvloeding en sosiale vorming deur portuurgroepe, sosiale groeperinge, ensovoorts, verwerklik word. Hierdie wyses van sosialisering kan egter soms ongewenste beïnvloeding beteken omdat die kindershuiskind sy sosiale oriëntering as labiel beleef weens sy "lewe-in-meervoud" en omdat hy nie sy eie plek in die samelewing ken nie. Dit is dus die taak van die kindersversorger (huisouer) om die kindershuiskind in sy sosiale wording, in die kies van vriende en lid word van 'n groep, tot die regte keuses te begelei. In dié verband, sê Le Roux (1992:45), moet aan die kind hulp verleen word om negatiewe of ongewenste samelewings-invloede te interpreteer en in die korrekte perspektief te stel. Die Kindersversorger (huisouer) moet die kindershuiskind tot die besef van die onaantoonbare inhoud van sekere lektuur, televisie-programme en rolprente lei. Kindersversorger (huisouers) kan deur 'n verantwoordelike, respekvolle, toegeneë en opofferende houding die kind help om hom paslik in die gemeenskap te gedra, ander se eiendom te eerbiedig, gesag te aanvaar, hulp te verleen en verdraagsaam te wees. Die vraag is egter hoe moet die verlangde kennis, vaardighede en gesindhede ten opsigte van sosiale norme, waardes, sedes en gewoontes deur die kindersversorger (huisouers) aan die kinders oorgedra word? Vos (1994:136-143) kan onder andere die volgende wyses aanbeveel word:

- Een van die belangrikste wyses wat kindersversorger (huisouers) kan volg om kinders te leer is om volgens die regte voorbeeld te lewe. Deur self die voorskrifte van die samelewing in hul lewenswandel te volg, kry die kind 'n duidelike identifikasie-model waarmee hy kan identifiseer. Deur identifikasie en nabootsing van die voorbeeld van verantwoordbare kindersversorger (huisouers) "leer" die kind algaande wat van hom verwag word om as volwaardige lid van die samelewing aanvaar te word.
- Kindersversorger (huisouers) moet deur doelgerigte onderrig bydra tot die sosiale vorming van die kind. Dit kan veral deur doelgerigte, sin-

volle kommunikasie met die kinders geskied tydens 'n uitstap, aan die etenstafel, voor die televisie, ensovoorts. Antwoorde kan dan gesoek word op vrae soos: Waarom mag ek nie blikke/papiere rondstrooi nie?, Hoekom word daar voor ete gebid?, Is die inhoud van die televisie program aanvaarbaar?, ensovoorts.

- Deur dissipline en tug. Wanneer die kindersversorger (huisouers) op grond van hulle eie sosiale waardes besef dat die kind se optrede of gedrag sosiaal onaantoonbaar is, moet hulle deur middel van die nodige positiewe dissipline en tug die kind lei in die vorming en inoefening van dit wat sosiaal aanvaarbaar is
- Die skep van 'n van 'n gesonde huislike atmosfeer. In 'n atmosfeer van liefde, aanvaarding en geborgenheid kan die kind tot sy eie volle potensiaal ontluik en geestelik en liggaamlik toegerus word om sosiale vaardighede te ontwikkel om met selfvertroue sy regmatige plek in die samelewing vol te staan.

Slotopmerking

Daar word vertrou dat die besprekings en bevindings in die artikel van waarde sal wees vir persone verbonde aan kindershuis en tot die verheldering van die sosialisering van die kindershuiskind sal lei.

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What are all the big words and acronyms in the field of welfare – such as Programmes, GEAR, the SWAP and the Lund Commission? Child care workers should know about such developments, but many, busy with on-line work, are confused. This is the second in a series of articles in which we ask **Alan Jackson** of Cape Town Child Welfare to explain ...

National Developments in Child and Family Welfare

Funding of Welfare

The policy which is unfolding, and which will affect you and me, is related to two central issues: one is how much money is available; the other is how do we prioritise and share in the spending of what is available? Here's yet another acronym —

GEAR

This stands for the Growth, Employment And Reconstruction, which is the government's programme to address the country's economic growth — related to their macro-economic plan. Economic growth is of course a priority, so in spite of the priorities which others have set for these areas, we are seeing instead *cutbacks* in health, education and welfare, because these are not the major focus of the GEAR programme.

There is of course sense in the GEAR programme — *if it works* — but when it means that health, education and welfare in the meantime must take a major back seat, then this is bad news for us. It is unlikely that we shall see change to this, but we are not the only people affected: the labour movement and the SA Communist party, for example, at a political level, are also being dragged along by this economic policy.

One just hopes that the GEAR programme actually works, for then taxation and other revenue improves — so maybe in five years' time some money may come back to these services. This is a common point of contention in national financial policies: growth is a prerequisite for distribution vs. distribution will promote growth. Of course, this must also be decided on a nation by nation basis: looking at Scandinavia for example, demographics changes (like low birth rate, high proportion of older people) can make unexpected things happen.

The Lund Commission Report

Firstly it needs to be said that the Lund Commission Report is intent upon redressing the imbalances of the past — and it is a useful attempt. And, to a great extent, the government has no choice but to follow its lead.



Francie Lund

I think that one of the comments which the Haarmanns (of the Institute of Social Development at the University of the Western Cape) have made on this issue is that if everybody was to get the same opportunity which presently was made available to the few, it would cost R18.8 Billion per year — and at the moment the estimate is that the government makes available for welfare services little more than R1.2 Billion. The cake is nothing like big enough.

Who gets the cake at present? Here is an example: The amount spent on social security per child in the Western Cape is R114 per child per month (maintenance grants, etc.) and in the Northern Province the equivalent figure is R2. Many of the old homelands or even the independent states could not even dream of such figures as those in the Western Cape. People agree that we need to balance those two extremes — but

how do we balance them? Balance them up (and make the country even more bankrupt) or balance them down?

The Lund Commission presented figures which in effect said to the government these are your choices —

If you limit help to ages 0—4 at R70 per month (assuming you are going to stick to the R1.2B available now) then 24% of children could benefit.

If you increase available funds to R1.5B then 29% of children could benefit.

If you increase them further to R2B then 39% of children can have access. (39% sounds like a large proportion, yet it is really not.

The Haarmanns offer the sobering statistic that 68% of all children up to 9 years of age in South Africa live with a caregiver who earns less than R250 per month.

The Lund Commission went on to illustrate to the government further options: for example, ages 0—4 at R125, ages 0—6 at R70 and R125 per month, and so on. Clearly they were saying that they would prefer more to be spent than at present.

Many people feel that welfare funds are being cut back dramatically, but in fact they are not. It is a case of cutting our coat according to our cloth — of which there isn't very much.

Eligibility. Under the old system only mothers and children in single parent households were eligible for maintenance grants. This is now clearly unconstitutional, and now grants are available in respect of *children* who qualify only, no longer for parents. The criteria for qualification are not yet decided, but the suggestion is that grants be paid only for a limited period, and that R70 per child should be enough. (20% of the children in the Western Cape were receiving maintenance grants)

One complication to face is that

the only children eligible will be those whose births are properly registered. The idea also is that the old maintenance grants will be phased out over five years, but social security is dynamite for politicians — it is very hard to reduce. It is a bread and butter issue, related to votes.

But there is a major problem when we look at the social security figures: the Lund Commission has recommended that foster care grants remain at the existing level of R305 per month, and maintenance at R70. At the level of family choices as to whether we support our child or allow him to go into foster care, the R305 (foster care grant to auntie) will speak louder than the R70 maintenance grant. Such a discrepancy can be an inducement *not to* continue to care for children.

The state will argue that a low maintenance grant will see parents putting pressure on the justice department to make sure that fathers pay. The Lund Report report supports this by also recommending increases in private maintenance.

A view of the Lund Commission and the state is, of course, that much welfare revenue should be coming from the fathers. Although 83% of supported children are with mothers earning virtually nothing, their fathers are reasonably well off by comparison. The idea of forcing up fathers' maintenance payments might fly — but the discrepancy between foster care and maintenance is still crazy.

Against these figures, we are forced to look at the implications of expensive residential care services, the cost to the state being around R800 for children's home subsidies to R2000 and more in some state-run institutions! Just how much of that are we going to be able to afford, and how do we reconcile these figures with the maintenance and foster care figures?

Many question the moral justification of keeping the total amount static at R1.2B. The Haarmanns say: If one introduced, over a five-year period, a system by which all children up to six years of age are supported at R135 p.m. (with a means test excluding caregivers earning more than R800 per month), then 83% of all children would get support, and costs for the first year would be R1.5B. Within five years this would reach R6.5B — equal to the amount which the government is spending at present on old age pensions.

This represents a strong moral argument. Where are we putting our money? On what basis are we deciding between children and the elderly? Nobody decries pensioners' support — but at the expense of children?

Again such an issue has to do with votes. Pensioners are voters and are a powerful constituency.

The NPA

This is the National Plan of Action for Children. This is an attempt to provide a policy with action steps with respect to the needs and rights of children. (In each province the equivalent effort is called the PPA.) The motivation for both comes from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, and the commitment which the country has made to this by signing and ratifying the Convention. The difficulty with the NPA and PPA is that unless they are translated into hard cash they will mean very little. At best, present levels of provision for children might continue — but more likely they will be reduced. The NPA is driven by the Health Department at a national level, together with other relevant departments.

Many words appear on paper in required reports to UNICEF, documenting our attempts to meet Convention requirements, but in fact new attempts being made to fulfil rights of children are very sporadic.

In reality, the UN is probably used to a lack of progress in many countries in reaching the ideals of the Convention. With regard to the costs of the NPA, although some expenses may appear high, when one looks at the overall budgets allocated by the departments, these have been extremely limited. The NCRC has two representatives on the Executive of the NPA, otherwise this is made up of representatives of state departments.

The PPA has a 'welfare arm' which is only a part of the PPA. Many people have the impression that many of the aims of the NPA would be met in any case by the various departments, because the overall policies are already fairly widely accepted. One wonders whether we need yet more structures. We have the White Paper on Welfare and we have the SWAP, along with developments in health care. The NPA is in danger of being just a paper exercise for the benefit of the UN.

More on welfare programmes

We talked a little about programme funding last month. The motivation for introducing them is sound. It is important to highlight the *outcome* of programmes, what sort of impact they have had, how much they have cost — and that the programmes were designed in the first place around important issues which address identified social indicators, like infant mortality rates. We would want to see programmes which tackle such significant issues, not just programmes which people think would be good.

Arising out of social indicators are the priorities we set. What *are* national and provincial priorities? It makes immense sense to state these, because unless we do prioritise, we are in trouble, and here the programme system is helpful.



“ ... if everybody was to get the same opportunity which presently was made available to the few, it would cost R18.8 Billion per year — and at the moment the estimate is that the government makes available for welfare services little more than R1.2 Billion. The cake is nothing like big enough.”

The system will operate on the basis of tendering. The state will decide which proposal makes the most sense for them in terms of their priorities and their resources. It introduces the system of competition, which is always healthy.

A difficulty mentioned last month is that as yet no financial system of this kind has been worked out. This will take some time, and it must be *negotiated* with the private sector — consulting will not be enough.

There are other problems. There are no social indicators or priorities set down as yet, nor outcome measures defined. So all the critical elements are still missing — and in the meantime we are all writing programmes in the knowing that nothing will change for some time.

To be positive, this gives us an opportunity to motivate what we consider to be the important indicators.

Alan Jackson is Director of Cape Town Child and Family Welfare Society.

Still to come in this series: the amended and consolidated Child Care Act and Regulations, and the Draft blueprint on an effective national strategy on abuse.

On average, leaders are engaged in one form or another of communication for about 70 percent of their waking moments. In this Digest for the Educational Resources Information Centre, **Karen Irmsher** provides suggestions for administrators who want to increase the effectiveness of those interactions

Communication Skills for Leaders

What one skill is most essential for effective communication?

"Seek first to understand, then to be understood," recommends Stephen Covey (1990). He, and many others, believe this precept is paramount in interpersonal relations. To interact effectively with anyone — teachers, students, community members, even family members — you need first to understand where the person is "coming from."

Next to physical survival, Covey observes, "the greatest need of a human being is psychological survival — to be understood, to be affirmed, to be validated, to be appreciated." When you listen carefully to another person, you give that person "psychological air."

Once that vital need is met, you can then focus on influencing or problem-solving. The inverse is also true. Institution leaders who focus on communicating their own "rightness" become isolated and ineffectual, according to a compilation of studies by Karen Osterman (1993).

Good listeners don't interrupt, especially to correct mistakes or make points; don't judge; think before answering; face the speaker; are close enough to hear; watch non-verbal behaviour; are aware of biases or values that distort what they hear; look for the feelings and basic assumptions underlying remarks; concentrate on what is being said; avoid rehearsing answers while the other person is talking; and don't insist on having the last word (Richard Gemmet 1977).

To master the art of listening, Gemmet advises developing the attitude of wanting to listen, and then the skills to help express that attitude.

What are some other skills of effective communicators?

Asking Questions is an excellent way to initiate communication because it shows other people that you're paying attention and interested in their response. Susan Glaser and Anthony Biglan (1977) suggest the following:

- ask open-ended questions;
- ask focused questions that aren't too broad;
- ask for additional details, examples, impressions.

Giving Feedback. Several types of feedback—praise, paraphrasing, perception-checking, describing behaviour, and "I-messages" are discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

When giving feedback, say Charles Jung and associates (1973), it is useful to *describe observed behaviours*, as well as the reactions they caused. They offer these guidelines: the receiver should be ready to receive feedback; comments should describe, rather than interpret; feedback should focus on recent events or actions that can be changed, but should not be used to try to force people to change.

One especially important kind of feedback for administrators is letting staff members know how well they are doing their jobs.

Effective leaders give plenty of timely positive feedback. They give negative feedback privately, without anger or personal attack, and they accept criticism themselves without becoming defensive.

Paraphrasing. Charles Jung and his colleagues stress that the real purpose of paraphrasing is not to clarify what the other person actually meant, but to show what it meant to you. This may mean restating the original statement in more

specific terms, using an example, or restating it in more general terms.

Perception Checking. Perception checking is an effort to understand the feelings behind the words. One method is simply to describe your impressions of another person's feelings at a given time, avoiding any expression of approval or disapproval.

Describing Behaviour. Useful behaviour description, according to Jung and his associates, reports specific, observable actions without value judgments, and without making accusations or generalisations about motives, attitudes, or personality traits. "You've disagreed with almost everything he's said" is preferable to saying "You're being stubborn."

What's a nonthreatening method of requesting behaviour change?

"I-messages" reflect one's own views and rely on description rather than criticism, blame, or prescription. The message is less likely to prompt defensive reactions and more likely to be heard by the recipient.

One form of "I-message" includes three elements:

- (1) the problem or situation,
 - (2) your feelings about the issue, and
 - (3) the reason for the concern.
- For example, "When you miss staff meetings, I get concerned that we're making plans without your input." For expressing feelings, Jung and colleagues recommend a simpler form. You can refer directly to feelings ("I'm angry"), use similes, ("I feel like a fish out of water"), or describe what you'd like to do ("I'd like to leave the room now").

How can individuals improve the nonverbal components of their communication?

Whether you're communicating with one person or a group, nonverbal messages play an important role.

Kristen Amundson (1993) notes that one study found 93% of a message is sent non-verbally, and only 7 percent through what is said.

Doreen S. Geddes (1995) offers the following pointers:

- **Body orientation.** To indicate you like and respect people, face them when interacting.
- **Posture.** Good posture is associated with confidence and enthusiasm. It indicates our degree of tenseness or relaxation. Observing the posture of others provides clues to their feelings.
- **Facial expression.** Notice facial expressions. Some people mask emotions by not using facial expression; others exaggerate facial expression to belie their real feelings. If you sense contradictions in verbal and nonverbal messages, gently probe deeper.
- **Eye contact.** Frequent eye contact communicates interest and confidence. Avoidance of eye contact communicates the opposite.
- **Use of space.** The less distance, the more intimate and informal the relationship. Staying behind your desk when someone comes to visit gives the impression that you are unapproachable.
- **Personal appearance.** People tend to show more respect and respond more positively to individuals who are well-dressed, but not over-dressed.

How can school leaders enhance interpersonal relationships with colleagues and constituents?

Vision, humor, accessibility, team-building skills, and genuine praise all can help to create a positive emotional climate.

Vision. Allan Vann (1994) notes that "principals earn staff respect by articulating a clear vision of their school's mission, and working collegially to accomplish agreed-on goals and objectives." This process should begin before school starts, and be reinforced throughout the school year.

Removing Barriers. Communication barriers can deplete team energy and isolate individuals who may then proceed on the basis of faulty assumptions. Meetings and various in-house communiques, combined with private discussions, can remove interpersonal barriers before they become larger problems.

Giving Praise. Communication experts recommend using sincere praise whenever possible to create a more constructive atmosphere. An indirect



Notice facial expressions. Some people mask emotions by not using facial expression; others exaggerate facial expression to belie their real feelings. If you sense contradictions in verbal and nonverbal messages, gently probe deeper.

way of giving praise is through telling others stories about people on your staff who are doing remarkable things. **Being Accessible.** It is important to be available and to welcome personal contact with others. Informal meetings are as important as formal ones. Ask people about their families and call them by their first names. An administrator who takes the time to get to know the staff will be able to identify, develop, and make best use of each staff member's capabilities.

Building Teamwork. When organisations move toward more decentralised management, open communication becomes even more essential. A sense of teamwork can be nurtured through an earnest effort to help each staff member achieve his or her potential.

Using Humour. Various researchers indicate humour is the seventh sense necessary for effective leadership. Results of a study by Patricia Pierson and Paul Bredeson (1993) suggest that principals use humour for four major purposes:

- (1) creating and improving a good climate;
- (2) relating to staff members the principal's understanding of the complexities and demands of their professional work life;

(3) breaking down the rigidity of bureaucratic structures by humanising and personalising interpersonal communications; and

(4) when appropriate, imposing consequences and other necessary unpleasanties.

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Child Care Worker

Homestead (Projects for Street Children) require the services of an experienced Child Care Worker for night and weekend shifts at their Children's Home. This is a full time post and the successful applicant will be able to speak English and Afrikaans, have had experience working with older adolescents in a Children's Home and preferably be in possession of a valid drivers licence.

Call Annie on (021) 419-9764 / 3.

THE HOMESTEAD

Rod Anderson of the Child and Family Unit, Red Cross Children's Hospital, Cape Town, reminds us of some of the basic skills of formal encounters with children

Some thoughts about interviewing the young child

The interview with the young child is often one of the most difficult requirements of our everyday clinical work. We are typically presented with a young boy or girl in trouble or in distress, and we have to find a way of making contact with the child so that we may get some understanding of the nature of their problems in order to help in the way that is most needed. However, we immediately come up against the fact of the child's immaturity which does not allow for ordinary interviewing. Such factors as the child's lack of language skills, their limited capacity for introspection, and their lack of personal motivation for help, make an individual interview with the child very complicated.

Whose version of things?

Given these difficulties we may too readily turn to the more accessible accounts of the child's difficulties given by others who know the child well (parents and teachers for example). The danger here is that we too easily accept *their* perception of the problem and do not take care to get the *child's* own version of things: know how they have experienced and interpreted events in their life. We must remember that the child's interview with us often is the first occasion they have had to discuss their difficulties with an interested adult without their parents being present. Having decided to do the interview another obstacle may arise. We may know our interview schedule backwards — all that needs to be covered in a comprehensive mental state examination. The problem here is that, although we may have all the right questions, these may very well prevent us getting the information we need. This is not to say we do not need to know the details of the child's mental status examination. It is just that the question and answer inter-

view tends to have two major drawbacks.

Firstly, such an interview can often be used to protect the *interviewer from feeling afraid* of not knowing what to do when they are confronted with a child. Secondly, and more importantly, the question and answer interview tends to inhibit freedom of expression. If we are prepared to wait and listen, the child may be able to begin to use the interview setting in a truly spontaneous way, a way which allows us a deeper insight into the child's personal world. We can always ask questions later, and the answers then are more likely to be given willingly and in a fuller, more meaningful way. The important point is that if we fail to really *get in touch* with the child at the deepest most personal level, we may not be able to elicit or hear *what the child needs to communicate*.

The interview as a relationship

This brings me to something that is perhaps so obvious that it needs to be stated — the fact of the interview being a relationship. A relationship is a two-way process in which both parties affect one another. Similarly, in the child interview there is always a dynamic interaction between the two people present. To my mind what is involved here is more than a meeting of the ego or consciousness of both parties — there are also unspoken aspects which are communicated, aspects which can significantly influence the course of the interview. What I am referring to are hidden aspects of the interviewer and the child which affect each one's ability to really get in touch with or understand the other.

From our side as interviewers there may be all manner of expectations, hopes or fears that we may bring to the situation. These will of course vary ac-

ording to the interviewer's personality, level of experience, and nature of the problem we are faced with. For instance, we may be so preoccupied by what our supervisor might think or what theory tells us about such cases, or be so intent to show how nice and kind we are, that these considerations overshadow the interview.

Let me give an instance where my own need to be helpful nearly got in the way. From the outset of the interview this little boy seemed unable to do anything for himself. He needed help in thinking about what he should do, and when he eventually decided to paint — he then needed my help to open the tap as well as advice as to how to mix the paint. In my eagerness to show what a nice man I was I soon found myself doing all sorts of things for him — things which he could in all reasonableness do himself. This was precisely not what this boy needed. He did not need me to be helpful because by doing this I was merely repeating a problematic feature in his own family. I was simply perpetuating the way he had been treated in the past, the type of treatment which was the main contributor to the difficulties for which he was referred.

Learning from how I feel

Paradoxically, how the child makes us feel and act in an interview can also be used to deepen our understanding of the child. What I am suggesting is that how a child affects us is a form of "*communication by impact*" (Casement, 1985). To use the above example, my need to be helpful was not only telling me about an aspect in myself but also provided me with a hint as to how this boy had become passively helpless. Perhaps there was someone in his environment who intervened too much in his life in a way that

did not allow him to feel confidently able to master the world alone, a fact confirmed over time in my work with this child? It became clear that he had an over-anxious mother who fussed and clucked over everything he did. Returning to the theme of interviewer anxiety, certain other concerns typically arise. For instance, we may worry too much about our level of knowledge, or maybe that we are doing harm by allowing the child's distress to emerge, or by digging into sensitive areas. The possibilities are innumerable and none can be lightly dismissed, nor should they be. They need to be considered seriously as they are ways of telling us about things in ourselves that may obstruct our interview with the child.

This is why supervision is so important. We need to have an experienced eye to help us reflect on what transpires between us and the child — to help us discover if and when our own issues may be interfering or distorting our work.

Now of course the child will bring his or her own unspoken feelings, expectations and fears to the interview. For instance, the child may come along with the hope or wish that we will take the pain away, that we will change how their parents treat them, or that we will tell them what to do.

For example, a young boy had been brought because of difficult, disobedient behaviour at home. In the interview with him alone, I tried to discuss some of the things his parents had complained of. However he denied these, despite having been present when these were discussed. Instead he wanted to play "cops arresting bad-dies". These baddies were hunted down, screamed at, imprisoned or beaten. It now became clear why this young boy could not acknowledge and discuss his very obvious difficulties with me. He had brought to the interview the hidden expectation that I was a policeman-like person who punished naughty boys, perhaps by beating them or even sending them away. Of course, if this was the case, he could not — did not dare — talk about his bad behaviour. We had to deal with this anxiety before we could get to anything else.

Here is another variation on this theme. I noticed a young girl I was interviewing, often looking at me expectantly as if she was waiting for something to happen. At some point she began talking about being in hospital where a bad cut she suffered had been stitched. As she told me this she began searching my room for something. It became clear she was searching for something she believed I had. I asked what this could be? Her reply was that she imagined I had a ma-

chine which I used to fix children's problems, much like the doctors had done with her physical wound.

Discovering what the child brings to the interview

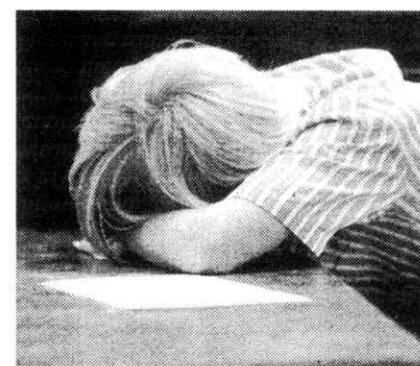
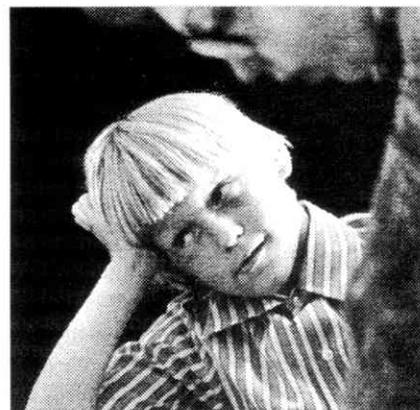
We can see from these examples that the thing we might want to deal with or get from the interview may not coincide at all with what the child needs first to deal with. As you can imagine, the possibilities are innumerable. The important thing for the interviewer to remember is the question: *what is it that this particular child may be bringing to the interview, which may help or hinder our attempts to reach the heart of the problem?*

Something else which is necessary to help us reach the child is that we provide a suitable setting. The well-known British psychoanalyst Donald Winnicott spoke much about the importance of what he called 'the holding environment' (Davis & Wallbridge, 1983). Although he used this term originally to refer to the way the mother held and cared for her baby, he saw that what was involved here clearly had relevance to the relationship between patient and clinician.

The 'holding environment' with its atmosphere of care which "supports yet does not dominate" provides the child with "an indispensable sense of being safely held". This holding environment begins with the physical setting in which we attempt our interview. For instance, is it reliably free from disturbances? By this I mean such things as: is there sufficient privacy, do we have sufficient time, is the interviewer liable to come and go unexpectedly, are we continually interrupted by people walking in, or by telephone calls? All of these details will convey to the child a sense of whether they will be attentively listened to or perhaps suddenly (symbolically) dropped or abandoned.

Personal response to settings

From some of the earlier illustrations it may have become clear that young children often communicate more about themselves and their inner world symbolically through play than in any other way. It is vital therefore to have available a range of simple toys that will allow for the broadest possible range of symbolic expression. Equally important is the 'mental setting' we provide. In most cases, the way we can best discover the child's problems and attitudes is to start by allowing the child to make use of the interview in the way they wish. That is, by simply listening and waiting, and not by bombarding the child with questions or getting the child to draw this or do that. If we are prepared to wait a while, the child will be able to use the situation in an entirely 'personal' way.



All of these details will convey to the child a sense of whether they will be attentively listened to — or perhaps suddenly (symbolically) dropped or abandoned.

By doing this we allow the child to express how they see their situation — what their thoughts and fantasies are. As we have seen already, these thoughts and fantasies may concern both the interviewer, as well as important people in the child's life and certain experiences they may have had. What is more, we must be sure to *take their feelings and fantasies seriously*. We too often conclude that what the child is telling us is "just their imagination". For example, the child may talk about how they feel their parents hate them. Through our contact with the parents we cannot see how this is true. We may then be tempted to conclude that these are 'just fantasies'. What is important is that we realise that *the child feels they are true*. Fantasies express for them a painful 'internal reality', and this internal reality is just as real as external reality. From the point of view of understanding the child it is their perception of reality which must concern us. For instance, a young boy, who had

lost his younger brother 9 months earlier, was presented with complaints that "he lied and made up incredible stories". In my interview with him by himself, he began telling me about a pony which he kept in the park next to his home. This was in fact not true. He was again telling one of his "incredible stories". What struck me though was his need to convince me that this fictional object actually existed despite all evidence to the contrary. I pointed this out to him. He then surprised me (and I think himself) by telling me "something he could not tell anyone" — that his brother was still alive and lived in a shed outside their house! He knew no one would believe it if he told them, but he often saw him and spoke to him. I took all this seriously and did not attempt to point out that this could not be true. Instead I recognised it as an indication of his desperate need to hold onto the belief his brother was still alive. He had to cling on to this *fantasy* as he was somehow at this moment unable to accept the painful reality of his brother's death. (During therapy it became clear that he could not accept his brother's death because he was convinced it was the extreme unconscious hate he had felt for his brother which had led to his death).

Conclusion

Our interview must go beyond the simple diagnostically oriented or mental status examination. It should reach out to discover the picture of the world the child has in their mind. To this end the interviewer needs to keep in mind that both parties bring aspects of themselves to the interview — aspects which may help or hinder the interview. In the interview we need to provide a setting which conveys to the child a sense of safety which allows the child to use the situation in a uniquely personal way so that we may get to know what is important for them.

The child needs to feel that the interviewer is a person who listens and who does not impose their own ideas, a person who does not make the child feel stupid or bad: someone who can accept the child's feelings and ideas as something important, yet who is not overcome by them and is still able to think independently about them. All of these factors contribute towards a feeling in the child that their reality is taken seriously, and that they are being understood in depth.

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Night-time Nonsense

Good care work is being one step ahead of the kids — anticipating both the needs and the high-jinks!

"You're psychic! How did you know we were going to sneak out tonight?"

There was admiration in the question, but Marty was serious "It was the little things, Marty, that made me wary."

1. There was a general air of excitement and secrecy in the cottage — I could *feel* it. Phrases like "I just can't put my finger on it ...", "something's cooking" and "what's going on?" were going through my mind and I was aware of my uneasiness.

2. There was a change in some of the children's behaviour. There was a grouping of children who shared a common secret, an eagerness to do nothing that would draw my attention to you, and no arguments about bed-time or lights out.

3. I heard your talk — the things that were laughed about, the jokes you were telling, and I recognised what were they focused on.

4. Then I watched those who *weren't* involved in the group. I knew that Colin didn't like to get into serious trouble and he was disengaging himself from your group. I saw that Neil was trying desperately to get into your favour and was all over you ...

Those few clues were enough for me. My "psychic" warnings kept me more alert than usual for a little longer after bed-time. So I was there when you made your move. You don't know, Marty — and I'm not going to tell you — how through the long nights you are all on my mind — the times when I have known you are OK and we've all slept in peace; the times my quiet walking down the dark passages has led to my tapping on a door where sobs destroyed the illusion of peace and safety; the times like tonight when I was one step ahead of you!

Psychic? No, just doing my job, the experience I gain from knowing you, and my willingness to spend time with you — because I'm a child care worker.

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