

# *Die Kinderversorger*



EDITORIAL: IMPLICATIONS OF PRE-PRACTICE TRAINING	2
PUNISHMENT IN CHILDREN'S INSTITUTIONS	3
YOUR OPINION PLEASE? THE LEGALISATION OF DRUGS	7
IF YOU DISCOVER YOUR CHILD IS TAKING DRUGS	7
NEW UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF CHILDREN	8
EDUCATIONAL DYNAMO: INTERVIEW WITH REUVEN FEUERSTEIN	12
WORLD FILE: CHILDREN'S RIGHTS, BRITAIN BEHIND IN CHILD CARE, AIDS	15
NEWSBRIEFS FROM AROUND SOUTH AFRICA	16
NACCW DIARY FOR MARCH 1990	16

**Journal of the  
National Association of  
Child Care Workers**

International Network Affiliate

**CWLA**

Child Welfare League of America

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

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

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

### Some Questions of Training

The advent of the Ethelbert Training Centre for prospective child care workers, poses some interesting questions for the profession as a whole.

This programme is the first of its kind in South Africa where fee-paying students offer themselves for comprehensive training *before* entering the profession. During the two-year course, students will be covering a wide range of topics which will give them a thorough knowledge of child care work. They will have had theoretical and practical training in preparation for their entry into the field.

#### *What advantages does this course hold for the profession?*

It will create, for the very first time, a pool of trained workers from whom prospective employers may recruit staff.

Employers very seldom have an opportunity of interviewing a number of candidates all of whom are either trained or experienced. The Ethelbert students will in future provide such a resource.

The employment of trained junior staff will allow organisations to promote existing experienced staff into middle management positions. These promotions in turn will lend depth to staff teams and contribute towards staff stability.

The training course naturally also creates an opportunity for the many young people wanting to enter the residential child care profession to acquire training before taking up full-time employment. Children's institutions are generally reluctant to employ young workers because of their need for "mature, responsible staff". The cost involved in having a trainee on the full-time staff team is a luxury few homes can afford.

These students will enter the field knowing what to do and what is expected of them. This means that after a brief period of orientation at their new place of employment, they will be fully productive members of staff.

#### *What threats do these students pose for the profession?*

Many child care workers, social workers and principals have for too long been contented with the status quo. Training of staff and the acquisition of new knowledge is a very neglected component in many children's institutions.

The availability of a group of young, trained workers will no doubt be viewed with scepticism by such persons. Those who have been content to stagnate and view their work as "looking after

children", will find it difficult to accept trained professionals into the field. Organisations which have not developed treatment programmes and those which resist parental involvement, will be equally threatened by the enquiring minds of these students.

#### *How ready are organisations to employ trained staff?*

The spontaneous answer would be "We'll welcome the opportunity". However, the answer is not that simple. Institutions wishing to employ persons who have spent a lot of money and two years of their lives in training will have to offer a remuneration and working conditions package which makes it attractive enough for future employees to work within their institution. Trained students will also want to know what career opportunities are available to them. This will include opportunities for promotion into senior posts. Management teams will be required to plan ahead and for some this may involve taking risks.

#### *Where are the male child care workers?*

Is child care seen purely as 'women's work'? If so, this short-changes the children who benefit from both men and women as adult figures in their lives. In fact it is not universally seen as women's work: male child care workers are well represented in the field, and are even in the majority, in overseas countries. Are men absent in their capacity as breadwinners? On the one hand, many of our female workers are breadwinners; on the other, child care *ought* to offer a viable career choice for those who will be breadwinners. Perhaps this new course will contribute to this.

#### *What benefits are likely to flow from this course?*

The entry of trained child care workers will do much to enhance the state of the profession. These students will have the knowledge and insight necessary to ensure that standards of practice are improved and the quality of care and treatment of children enhanced. Their employment will also reduce the need for institutions to spend up to two years training and orientating new staff. Most institutions spend hundreds of hours in "crash course" in-house training to prepare inexperienced and untrained staff for their tasks as child care workers.

The opening of the Ethelbert Training Centre heralds an exciting breakthrough in child care in South Africa. The first steps have been taken; the success of this programme and the ultimate benefits to the children depend upon the rest of the child care community sharing in this vision.

Parents do it naturally. Child care workers who deal with other people's children need to consider carefully the meaning and methods of punishment in institutions

# When We Punish

Michael Bryan

How to punish children? — a question that must have exercised the prejudices, if not the minds, of parents since time began and will continue to do so for evermore.

I cannot recall having given much thought to the punishment of my own children when they were young. I scolded them when they erred, and in more serious instances (or perhaps when I myself became thoroughly irritated) the scolding might be accompanied by a cuff and/or some deprivation of privileges. I have a vivid recollection of one such occasion when I spanked my younger son as we walked on a busy London pavement, because he had been atrociously rude to his grandmother. I was instantly accosted by a total stranger threatening to report my cruelty. If this paints a picture of inconsistency, I doubt that my approach was any more haphazard than that of most parents. It must be admitted however, that this lack of a planned approach opens doors to children's manipulation of their parents and in my case, as in most I suspect, the father finds himself playing the role of the hawk while the mother undermines his authority by being the dove (a situation that our Victorian forbears would find difficult to comprehend).

On being appointed principal of a children's home my greatest anxiety concerned the why, when and how of punishment. Thus my outlook had undergone a complete change. Punishment had been transformed from the realms of reflex reactions to intolerable behaviour — to a matter that demanded careful investigation of allegations and a considered response. The only memorable advice that I received came from two sources. A bishop on my committee said in a delightfully ingenuous way that I should love the boys. My elder son, a most gentle and sensitive creature, commented that I must be firm with them. Their advice amounts to an oft repeated ideal, which most would accept without question, that in dealing with children one should be "firm but fair". Another axiom is that one must be "consistent", so I will endeavour to amplify the meaning of these terms in relation to the treatment of children in a 'home'.

## Firmness

*Firmness* in regard to the maintenance of good order and discipline at a children's home has, for me, a very different meaning from *strictness*. The latter term implies a dogmatic, rigid and authoritarian application of rules, whereas firmness re-



RONALD SEARLE

Your psycho-analyst may say one thing, Blatworthy, but I say another. And my treatment is *firm*.

quires the intelligent upholding of principles governing a social structure such that those principles will not be breached; for when a principle is breached on only a few occasions it ceases to remain a principle. I like the concept of "rubber walls" as expressed by Dr Masud Houghghi when lecturing on *The Problem Child*, for this implies a flexibility built into the boundaries of a social structure in which the elasticity will always return them to their original position after having been stretched — but not breached.

## Fairness

Fairness is synonymous with *justice*, but needs expansion in the sense of fairness to whom? When punishing one's own children, the punishment should be acknowledged as being deserved and fair by the child, its siblings and the person meting it out. In a children's home, mem-

bers of staff will often bring offenders before the principal for punishment. Thus, it becomes necessary for punishment to be seen to be deserved and fair by the offender, the member of staff, the other children and the principal. A failure to satisfy this test of fairness can sew the seeds of trouble in the future.

## Consistency

This is the least straightforward condition. Who would deny that punishment should be inflicted with consistency, but consistency with what? Some appear to think that this should be taken to mean that punishments should be consistent with one another, but this simplistic approach lacks dynamism by denying the prospect of new and more constructive punishment, and it fails to take into account the varying circumstances surrounding similar offences. It may be interesting to note that in a military service in which punishment is an integral part of the way of life, the only offence which attracts a standard scale of punishment is absence without official leave. All other offences are dealt with through investigation of their individual merits. What is important is the consistent application of the principles governing the structure of the institution. Hence apparently similar offences may attract quite different punishments because no two offenders are the same and no two offences will have been committed under precisely the same circumstances. For this kind of approach to consistency to be wholly successful, punishments must be seen to be fair.

## Importance of philosophies and principles

Given the desirability of consistency in punishing in the terms just described it becomes important to define the philosophies and principles by which a children's home is to be governed, because they will determine what customs and code of conduct should prevail. If it is desired, for example, to maintain the tight control that prevailed in Dickens' time, then a multiplicity of rules strictly applied will be the order of the day. Whether such a system would survive today is very doubtful. Children in care are exposed to all kinds of outside influences, particularly at school. English-speaking society no longer expects institutions to be ruled by martinets wielding rods of iron, and children no longer respect authoritarianism even as they did as little as a generation ago. Times have indeed changed, and any organisation attempting to emulate this old style of management would be courting rebellion, anarchy and disaster — to say nothing of a very bad press.

In the home where I have served, as in most, an important objective has been to make it as little like an institution as possible and as much like a normal and good family home as the setting permits. We believe that a good homely environment best serves the desire to develop the children's individual abilities and potential to the full.

Home is a place where we can relax, be ourselves and let our hair down from time to time, always provided that we consider others and refrain from behaviour which will infringe upon their freedoms or give offence. Home is not a place where a rule book is brandished whenever anyone goes in the slightest bit astray. Thus, in a children's home attempting to reproduce a truly homely setting, there will be a minimum of rules, because these are usually devised and imposed by those in authority. Instead there will be customs and traditions, some of which will have developed by common consent, and most of which may be termed unwritten laws.

To maintain discipline and good order in this kind of home is not easy. Above all, it demands qualities of leadership from the staff which command respect. Not all will possess these qualities in sufficient measure so that the need for an overlay of an authoritative system (which in effect demands respect for them) will still remain.

The essential difference between the "authoritarian" and "homely" systems described above are that in the former all the inmates are treated as being the same, which some even today will praise as being 'fair'; in the latter, a real attempt is made to acknowledge and develop the individuality of the children.

## What is punishment?

Punishment is no more and no less than one of a set of tools with which we attempt to socialise children, to help them become unselfish, responsible and respected adults. It is by no means the only tool, nor even the most effective in our armoury. In fact, its application may often result from a failure to apply other more positive tools to influence children's behaviour for good. Nevertheless, it would seem a feature of our culture that punishment is an automatic retribution for unacceptable behaviour. This is not so for all cultures. In India, for example, children are indulged by their elders and seldom scolded. Who are we to say that the Indians are wrong and we are right?

Very good arguments can be put forward to illustrate that punishment as automatic retribution for wrong-doing is a patently unsound approach to bringing up children. My opinion is that punishment

as automatic retribution for wrong-doing infers prejudice and a lack of thought on the part of those in authority. It denies the prospect of forgiveness, and the concept of *teaching* which is implicit in the Latin root of the word discipline.

## Types of punishment

The range of punishments which may be imposed at children's homes is limited. Inevitably, therefore, quite different offences may attract the same or similar

## Home is not a place where a rule book is brandished whenever anyone goes in the slightest bit astray.

punishments. The range includes the following:

- Corporal punishment.
- Gating or "grounding"
- Confinement to a specific area (no longer permitted by a strict interpretation of the letter of the Regulations under the Child Care Act, 1983).
- Deprivation of privileges.
- Fining (not recommended in the Manual on Children's Homes distributed by the Department of Health Services and Welfare, but a good choice in some instances, nonetheless).
- Extra work.

## Corporal punishment

Probably the oldest form of punishment and still in frequent use at South African schools for boys. The idea of flogging is deep-rooted. From the Bible: "He that spareth the rod hateth his son". An old proverb: "Gold must be beaten and a child scourged". In *Don Juan*, Lord Byron took it for granted:

"O ye who teach ingenuous youth of nations  
Holland, France, England, Germany or Spain;  
I pray ye flog them upon all occasions,  
It mends their morals — never mind the pain".

In Great Britain, which has been one of the models for this country's educational system, it is being phased out. Perhaps the best-known school never to have introduced it is Bryanston, which was founded in 1928. I well recall that as boys we did not consider this as an attractive feature at all; in fact rather the reverse. Another example is Canford, founded in 1920, this novel practice being based on ideas of the headmaster of a much older

and better-known public school, Oundle. In my view corporal punishment only has a valid place in the disciplining of young children and perhaps in rare instances for boys at primary school level. For example, a young child which persists in toddling towards the swimming pool will be dealt with more effectively if the scolding is accompanied by a smack. This uses 'fear' in much the same way as we house-train a puppy. Similar treatment for older boys is entirely inappropriate and can even set in train regression to childish patterns of behaviour. Educationist John Holt (*Why Children Fail* and *How Children Learn*) supports this view, referring to very young children's need for "symbolic consequences" where the real consequences would be unrealistic.

There are so many strong arguments against corporal punishment and one of the most compelling is that it affords opportunities for exploitation by the sadistic, and we must not delude ourselves into believing that sadism no longer exists among educationists. A master at my prep school delighted in tweaking the short hairs above pupils' ears if he believed they were not paying attention. One day the strongest 13-year-old in the school punched him in the stomach. The master never again indulged in this or any other cruel habit. One case involved my younger son, who revealed one Sunday morning that a master had picked him up by his head during a P.E. class. On discovering that at least three other boys had been similarly mistreated, I am proud to have initiated action which led to the master being severely reprimanded. One of the victims, the son of a lawyer friend, would develop "symptoms" every Thursday morning to avoid attending swimming classes. It transpired that the master required the class to swim a width of the pool under water. My friend's son's failure to achieve this resulted in the master holding his head under water for several seconds. Believe it or not, at a meeting with the headmasters of both the junior and senior schools the former asked, "Is there really a difference between a boy being hurt on the rugby field or being hurt by a master?"

Other arguments against corporal punishment include that:

- violence begets violence — today we call this the effect of 'modelling';
- its effectiveness is only based on fear, which according to Kohlberg would maintain a very primitive level of moral growth;
- the receiving of cuts can enhance status. This I know to be so, for I enjoyed considerable renown in my first year as a naval cadet by virtue of receiving more cuts than any other boy. I have ad-

ministered cuts on a small number of occasions, and in retrospect remember just one instance in which I believe my choice of punishment was absolutely right, because the boy's behaviour seemed to have transformed from that moment. That, however, was the exception that proves the rule that corporal punishment is archaic and should have no place in children's homes catering for teenaged boys.

The protagonists of corporal punishment may produce arguments in its favour but the advantages offered amount to little more than quick, visible "results" and hence a lack of inconvenience to those responsible for imposing punishment. If we are seriously and genuinely concerned with the *development* of children in our care, inconvenience to ourselves should be of little or no account.

## Gating or "grounding"

This is a punishment detested by children to a degree that adults would think disproportionate. Therein lies its strength, making it suitable for serious offences. It should, of course, be imposed with due discretion if it will prevent a child from visiting his parents.

## Confinement to a specific area

Despite the prohibition in the Regulations under the Child Care Act, 1983, this

means of tightening gating is appropriate in certain instances. It affords better control and earlier detection of another offence, and can be used if it is suspected that the offender will attempt to abscond for example. What is today called 'time-out' is similar in that it removes a child from a situation which he is handling poorly, both for his own sake and for that of the group he is disturbing.

## Deprivation of privileges

Children today have so many privileges that temporary deprivation of one or more can have little effect. Thus, this punishment is used for relatively minor offences for which being deprived of watching television, for example, can be a suitable inconvenience.

## Fining

Although not recommended by the Department, there are institutions in the USA where this is a primary means of punishment. Children in homes do not receive much pocket money, but for some it is supplemented by parents and hosts which negates the effectiveness of fining. Careful consideration must be given to the possibility that fining may cause stealing.

Fining has been a primary means of punishing those who smoke without permission at my home. Smoking is seen as

an anti-social stupidity rather than a crime, and the rationale for fining has been that money which can be burned cannot be needed!

## Extra work

This is criticised for the danger that work (which one would like to be highly valued) may become negatively associated with punitive authority, but in my view is without a doubt the finest multi-purpose punishment, which can be applied creatively for the good of the offender and for all who live in the home. The availability of suitable tasks of home husbandry and schoolwork is endless. I suggested this once to the principal of my younger son's high school only ten years ago, when the boy was being caned on average twice a week. His response appalled me: "We can't get the children to do that. The parents would object; that's work for the labourers."

The major disadvantage is that this punishment can inconvenience the supervisor as much as the offender, but this may be offset by selecting the timing to suit the former.

Its benefits can often be increased by the supervisor working alongside the offender, thereby leading by example and affording an opportunity for meaningful interaction. This may detract from its unpleasantness, but there's no harm in even punishment work becoming satisfying.

\* \* \*

In the foregoing I have purposely omitted to mention two methods of 'punishment' to which I wish to draw special emphasis, because I consider them to be among the most powerful and effective of all. I refer to *overlooking* and *admonishing*, both of which depend for their success on influencing and developing the offender's conscience.

Some will argue that children in homes have had their conscience so blunted in their early upbringing that to attempt to appeal to them is like sowing seeds on barren ground. However, if these children are to become mature and responsible adults, I believe it is essential that those caring for them should endeavour constantly to develop their sense of values or whatever the modern equivalent is for "conscience". It is worth mentioning that both of these again imply that a staff member has *earned* the respect of the child, that the child sees the staff member as representing the society of which he or she wishes to be a part.

## Overlooking

This could be classed as a non-punishment, but it differs markedly from *ignor-*



MIKE WILLIAMS IN PUNCH

"Hello ... Is that Child Welfare? Look here, they've shut me in my room again!"



ing because the offender must be made to know full well that his offence has been overlooked by intent. We often send very powerful messages by what we do *not* say.

## Admonishing

I can but illustrate the powerful influence this can have on a child's conscience by recounting an experience from my own childhood. At the age of 12 on a dark winter's night my headmaster caught me smoking while I was walking to my dormitory in a detached cottage. I had stolen cigarettes from a master's cupboard as had many of my colleagues. We sat up all night discussing how I should answer the inevitable question: "Where did you get the cigarette from Bryan?" I concluded there was nothing for it but to make a clean breast of it. The headmaster investigated the whole affair fully with great skill and each and every thief and smoker stood revealed. None was punished with anything other than being admonished, but I learned two important and lasting lessons. Firstly, I learned the value of honesty, and secondly, I have remained a non-smoker to this day. I believe that both of those benefits derived from a most persuasive appeal to my conscience which I will remember with absolute clarity for the rest of my life.

## Imposing punishment

Society has a right to demand a penalty from those who break the law. Hence, retribution has always been a proper component of punishment, but retribution should not be automatic nor should it be the primary consideration. The primary consideration in punishing children should be to build their sense of what society expects from them, together with their ability to balance their behaviour between their own needs and those of society.

To satisfy the requirement of retribution punishment must hold out the prospect of unpleasantness and inconvenience. It must never be vindictive or try to humiliate the child or make him angry. A show of well-controlled anger by the punisher, however, should not come amiss and may even be a good example. Of utmost importance are the investigation of an offence and choice of punishment. The following 'points to ponder' are offered by one whose failures are too numerous to be counted.

- Listen for all you're worth to the defendant's case and help him to clarify it.
- Beware the more skillful rationalisation of adults. These, and the need to uphold their own authority, can lead to real difficulties.
- Try to remain objective and impartial

until the merits of the case have been assessed.

- The punishment should fit not only the crime, but also the circumstances and the offender. Very rarely will two similar offences occur under precisely the same circumstances. Similarly, what may be a harsh punishment for one child may be much less so for another, e.g. gating a boy who seldom goes out will not be harsh or effective.

- A stiff punishment that is soon over is preferable to one which drags on for a long period.

- With longer punishments, consideration should be given to the possibility of earning remission.

- Try to remain consistent with the principles by which the home is governed.

- Agree on the punishment with the plaintiff if a member of staff before giving judgement.

- Try to obtain acknowledgement from the defendant that the punishment has been deserved and is fair. Asking, "What punishment do you think you deserve?" is invariably evaded.

In brief: listen well and be firm, fair, compassionate, consistent, and finally, show good humour.

If the job has been done well, the mutual respect between punisher and punished will have been maintained or even enhanced. If badly, feelings of resentment and rebelliousness will have been fostered. As a final safeguard, children should have the right to appeal to the management committee if they consider that punishment is not being imposed justly.

## Serving punishment

Punishments must be performed properly. Sloppy or incomplete performance occasioned by a lack of supervision can lead to contempt of authority. Once a punishment has been served the offender should start afresh with his slate wiped clean. Some of my charges' most vehement complaints have related to staff who constantly drag up past offences. This gives the impression of lasting resentment at their every misdemeanour, and treatment of the present offence as if it is a culminating one in a long series.

## Conclusion

Having the authority to punish other people's children is an awesome responsibility, which is often abused — though not necessarily by malintent. No one bearing this responsibility can hope to discharge it correctly at all times. The most that can be expected is that they will always endeavour to do their best. Perhaps the best advice is to be found in the words of the hymn, that we should be "slow to chide and swift to bless".

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## Preliminary Notice

## JOINT CONFERENCE OF SASPCAN / S.A. SOCIETY OF SOCIAL WORKERS

University of the Witwatersrand  
19-20-21 July 1990

The themes of the conference are:

- Trans-cultural Issues in Child Abuse
- Empowerment of Individuals and Communities

Enquiries and further information: Lesley Stephenson, Organising Secretary, P.O.Box 327, Wits 2050. Telephone (011) 716-5091. Fax (011) 339-7835.

## PLANNED PARENTHOOD ASSOCIATION OF S.A.

Courses offered by the Planned Parenthood Association (Cape Town) for child care workers on Teenage Sexuality

The courses aim to equip child care workers with the skills needed to deal with issues related to teenage sexuality in their working environment.

Dates: 7, 14, 21, 28 September 1990  
(09:00-12:00)

Cost: R50.00 per delegate (bursaries available)

Enquiries and reservations: Please contact Cathryn Devenish or Erica Greathead on telephone 685-3017 at Planned Parenthood Association.

A new series on social opinion: What do YOU think about ...

# The Legalisation of Drugs?

**Robert P. Hey of *The Christian Science Monitor* introduces the discussion for us — and we ask you to write and tell us your opinion on this controversial suggestion to solve drug problems**

Debate in America has escalated over a long-taboo drug issue: Should now-illegal drugs be made legal? A recent statement in support of legalisation by US District Judge, Robert Sweet, has called attention once again to the issue.

The debate seems certain to grow. Many experts think pressure for legalisation will increase until government shows clear evidence of declining drug use among most segments of the population, and of greatly decreasing drug-related violence.

On the legalisation side of the debate are a small but growing number of public figures, law professors, and others, including Baltimore Mayor Kurt Schmoke and former Secretary of State, George Shultz. Most personally dislike drugs, want their widespread use ended, and think that the way to succeed is to treat drug use as a public health issue and not a legal one. Keeping drugs illegal causes crime to increase and hinders treatment, they hold — but does not decrease drug use. "I just don't think that law enforcement is the way to deal with the drug crisis", says Gene Stephens, a professor of the college of Criminal Justice of the University of South Carolina. "I don't think it can succeed".

On the other side are much larger numbers of elected officials and drug experts. They say that if illegal drugs like heroin, cocaine, and marijuana were legalised, the number of addicts would rise dramatically because drugs would be cheaper and far more accessible. Further, they add, fewer addicts would enter treatment because none would be required to seek treatment by a judge, as many are required to do now. Finally, society would lose its moral argument in seeking to persuade people not to use drugs.

"All the upheavals (legalisation) would cause", laments William Bennett, the US drug policy director and one of America's most forceful opponents of legalisation. He says the proposal "is just not in the real world".

What makes the concept of legalising drugs so appealing, he told reporters at a Monitor breakfast meeting, is that "it's simple. It sounds easy to do", but in fact would prove counterproductive.

"If you want to see the number of people using crack (cocaine) go from one to 10 million", Dr Bennett adds, "make it as available as alcohol".

No support now is believed to exist in Congress for drug legalisation, as Rep. Charles Rangel (D) of New York quickly pointed out after Judge Sweet's speech. One of Congress's leading experts on drugs, Rep. Rangel is chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control.

But support for legalisation likely will build across the nation and perhaps gain a foothold in Congress, if government drug-fighting programmes are unsuccessful, experts say.

For example, government should resist the temptation to spend large amounts of money on drug education and treatment programmes until it knows which ones are effective, warns Edwin DeLattre, Bradley Fellow in Applied Ethics at the American Enterprise Institute. Too many programmes now don't work, he says. If these programmes were prematurely expanded and proved ineffective, he says, proponents of legalisation likely would label the concepts of education and treatment failures, and would gain much more popular support for legalisation.

Opponents say the idea of legalisation runs counter to several current trends in America: Declining drug use except in inner cities among minorities, rising worker concern about drug use among their colleagues, and growing opposition among Americans both to drug use and to the violence that attends the drug trade.

From *The Christian Science Monitor* of December 22-28, 1989.

Send your opinion to *The Child Care Worker*, P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735 to reach us by the 10th March 1990

If you discover your child is taking drugs



■ Have all the information at your fingertips.

■ Take a balanced, calm view. Avoid over reaction or tearful recriminations.

■ Obtain as much information as is possible from your child about the extent, duration and circumstances of the drug abuse.

■ Check if your child is wanting help to handle the drug problem. If so, offer all the support you can and arrange to see your GP or any suitable helping professional.

■ Parents must work towards standing together at this time. Avoid unearthing long-standing disagreements between spouses; mutual support is what is most needed.

■ Take a clear, strong position that drug abuse is unacceptable and know the reasons why. Point out to your child his or her behaviour, moods and deterioration.

■ Insist on a discussion with an expert to clarify knowledge and attitudes. You and your spouse should be willing to be involved in any treatment recommended.

The very first lecture in the NACCW's Basic Qualification in Child Care (BQCC) course has always introduced students to the ten principles of the International Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a thirty year old statement which underlies our philosophies of child care. In November 1989 the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and this now becomes an important and very much more comprehensive (54 articles) international document for all involved in work with children. *The Child Care Worker* is publishing this month and next month the entire text of the Convention which, it is hoped, will thereby become well-known by both adults and children, who will wish to promote and motivate for its ratification by South Africa.



# A New Convention on the Rights of the Child

## PREAMBLE

The States Parties to the present Convention

- Considering that, in accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,
- Bearing in mind that the peoples of the United Nations have, in the Charter, reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights and in the dignity and worth of the human person, and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,
- Recognising that the United Nations has, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the International Covenants on Human Rights, proclaimed and agreed that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth therein, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status,
- Recalling that, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the United Nations has proclaimed that childhood is entitled to special care and assistance,
- Convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the

necessary protection and assistance so that it can fully assume its responsibilities within the community,

- Recognising that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding,
- Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity,
- Bearing in mind that the need to extend particular care to the child has been stated in the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 and in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child adopted by the General Assembly on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (in particular in articles 23 and 24), in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (in particular in article 10) and in the statutes and relevant instruments of specialised agencies and international organisations concerned with the welfare of children,
- Bearing in mind that, as indicated in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth",
- Recalling the provisions of the Declaration on Social and Legal Principles relating to the Protection and Wel-

fare of Children, with Special Reference to Foster Placement and Adoption Nationally and Internationally; the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules); and the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict,

- Recognising that, in all countries in the world, there are children living in exceptionally difficult conditions, and that such children need special consideration,
  - Taking due account of the importance of the traditions and cultural values of each people for the protection and harmonious development of the child,
  - Recognising the importance of international co-operation for improving the living conditions of children in every country, in particular in the developing countries,
- Have agreed as follows:

## PART I

### Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless, under the law applicable to the child majority is attained earlier.

### Article 2

1. States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.
2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.

### Article 3

1. In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.
2. States Parties undertake to ensure the child such protection and care as is necessary for his or her well-being, taking into account the rights and duties of his or her parents, legal guardians, or other individuals legally responsible for him or her, and, to this end, shall take all appropriate legislative and administrative measures.



3. States Parties shall ensure that the institutions, services and facilities responsible for the care or protection of children shall conform with the standards established by competent authorities, particularly in the areas of safety, health, in the number and suitability of their staff, as well as competent supervision.

## Article 4

States Parties shall undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognised in the present Convention. With regard to economic, social and cultural rights, States Parties shall undertake such measures to the maximum extent of their available resources and, where needed, within the framework of international co-operation.

## Article 5

States Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided for by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide, in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance in the exercise by the child of the rights recognised in the present Convention.

## Article 6

1. States Parties recognise that every child has the inherent right to life.  
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

## Article 7

1. The child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have the right from birth to a name, the right to acquire a nationality and, as far as possible, the right to know and be cared for by his or her parents.  
2. States Parties shall ensure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in this field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless.

## Article 8

1. States Parties undertake to respect the right of the child to preserve his or her identity, including nationality, name and family relations as recognised by law without unlawful interference.  
2. Where a child is illegally deprived of some or all of the elements of his or her identity, States Parties shall provide appropriate assistance and protection, with a view to speedily re-establishing his or her identity.

## Article 9

1. States Parties shall ensure that a child shall not be separated from his or her parents against their will, except when competent authorities subject to judicial review determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures, that such separation is necessary for the best interests of the child. Such determination may

**“ ... shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis ... ”**

be necessary in a particular case such as one involving abuse or neglect of the child by the parents, or one where the parents are living separately and a decision must be made as to the child's place of residence.

2. In any proceedings pursuant to paragraph 1 of the present article, all interested parties shall be given an opportunity to participate in the proceedings and make their views known.  
3. States Parties shall respect the right of the child who is separated from one or both parents to maintain personal relations and direct contact with both parents on a regular basis, except if it is contrary to the child's best interests.  
4. Where such separation results from any action initiated by a State Party, such as the detention, imprisonment, exile, deportation or death (including death arising from any cause while the person is in the custody of the State) of one or both parents or of the child, that State Party shall, upon request, provide the parents, the child or, if appropriate, another member of the family with the essential information concerning the whereabouts of the absent member(s) of the family unless the provision of the information would be detrimental to the well-being of the child. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall of itself entail no adverse consequences for the person(s) concerned.

## Article 10

1. In accordance with the obligation of

States Parties under article 9, paragraph 1, applications by a child or his or her parents to enter or leave a State Party for the purpose of family reunification shall be dealt with by States Parties in a positive, humane and expeditious manner. States Parties shall further ensure that the submission of such a request shall entail no adverse consequences for the applicants and for the members of their family.

2. A child whose parents reside in different States shall have the right to maintain on a regular basis, save in exceptional circumstances personal relations and direct contacts with both parents. Towards that end and in accordance with the obligation of States Parties under article 9, paragraph 2, States Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country, including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect the national security, public order (*ordre public*), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognised in the present Convention.

## Article 11

1. States Parties shall take measures to combat the illicit transfer and non-return of children abroad.  
2. To this end, States Parties shall promote the conclusion of bilateral or multilateral agreements or accession to existing agreements.

## Article 12

1. States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child.  
2. For this purpose, the child shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.

## Article 13

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice.  
2. The exercise of this right may be subject to certain restrictions, but these shall

only be such as are provided by law and are necessary (a) for respect of the rights or reputations of others; or, (b) for the protection of national security or of public order (*ordre public*), or of public health or morals.

## Article 14

1. States Parties shall respect the right of the child to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.
2. States Parties shall respect the rights and duties of the parents and, when applicable, legal guardians, to provide direction to the child in the exercise of his or her right in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child.
3. Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals, or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

## Article 15

1. States Parties recognise the rights of the child to freedom of association and to freedom of peaceful assembly.
2. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of national security or public safety, public order (*ordre public*), the protection of public health or morals or the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.

## Article 16

1. No child shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his or her privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his or her honour and reputation.
2. The child has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

## Article 17

States Parties recognise the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. To this end, States Parties shall:

- Encourage the mass media to disseminate information and material of social and cultural benefit to the child and in accordance with the spirit of article 29;
- Encourage international co-operation in the production, exchange and dissemination of such information and material from a diversity of cultural, national and international sources;
- Encourage the production and dis-

semination of children's books;

- Encourage the mass media to have particular regard to the linguistic needs of the child who belongs to a minority group or who is indigenous;
- Encourage the development of appropriate guidelines for the protection of the child from information and material injurious to his or her well-being, bearing in mind the provisions of articles 13 and 18.

**"A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance ..."**

## Article 18

1. States Parties shall use their best efforts to ensure recognition of the principle that both parents have common responsibilities for the upbringing and development of the child. Parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, have the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of the child. The best interests of the child will be their basic concern.
2. For the purpose of guaranteeing and promoting the rights set forth in the present Convention, States Parties shall render appropriate assistance to parents and legal guardians in the performance of their child-rearing responsibilities and shall ensure the development of institutions, facilities and services for the care of children.
3. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that children of working parents have the right to benefit from child care services and facilities for which they are eligible.

## Article 19

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while

in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

2. Such protective measures should, as appropriate, include effective procedures for the establishment of social programmes to provide necessary support for the child and for those who have the care of the child, as well as for other forms of prevention and for identification, reporting, referral, investigation, treatment and follow-up of instances of child maltreatment described heretofore, and, as appropriate, for judicial involvement.

## Article 20

1. A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.
2. States Parties shall in accordance with their national laws ensure alternative care for such a child.
3. Such care could include, *inter alia*, foster placement, *kafalah* of Islamic law, adoption or if necessary placement in suitable institutions for the care of children. When considering solutions, due regard shall be paid to the desirability of continuity in a child's upbringing and to the child's ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background.

## Article 21

States Parties that recognise and/or permit the system of adoption shall ensure that the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration and they shall:

- Ensure that the adoption of a child is authorised only by competent authorities who determine, in accordance with applicable law and procedures and on the basis of all pertinent and reliable information, that the adoption is permissible in view of the child's status concerning parents, relatives and legal guardians and that, if required, the persons concerned have given their informed consent to the adoption on the basis of such counselling as may be necessary;
- Recognise that inter-country adoption may be considered as an alternative means of child's care, if the child cannot be placed in a foster or an adoptive family or cannot in any suitable manner be cared for in the child's country of origin;
- Ensure that the child concerned by inter-country adoption enjoys safeguards and standards equivalent to those existing in the case of national adoption;
- Take all appropriate measures to ensure that, in inter-country adoption, the placement does not result in improper

financial gain for those involved in it;

- Promote, where appropriate, the objectives of the present article by concluding bilateral or multilateral arrangements or agreements, and endeavour, within this framework, to ensure that the placement of the child in another country is carried out by competent authorities or organs.

## Article 22

1. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure that a child who is seeking refugee status or who is considered a refugee in accordance with applicable international or domestic law and procedures shall, whether unaccompanied or accompanied by his or her parents or by any other person, receive appropriate protection and humanitarian assistance in the enjoyment of applicable rights set forth in the present Convention and in other international human rights or humanitarian instruments to which the said States are Parties.

2. For this purpose, States Parties shall provide, as they consider appropriate, co-operation in any efforts by the United Nations and other competent intergovernmental organisations or non-governmental organisations co-operating with the United Nations to protect and assist such a child and to trace the parents or other members of the family of any refugee child in order to obtain information necessary for reunification with his or her family. In cases where no parents or other members of the family can be found, the child shall be accorded the same protection as any other child permanently or temporarily deprived of his or her family environment for any reason, as set forth in the present Convention.

## Article 23

1. States Parties recognise that a mentally or physically disabled child should enjoy a full and decent life, in conditions which ensure dignity, promote self-reliance and facilitate the child's active participation in the community.

2. States Parties recognise the right of the disabled child to special care and shall encourage and ensure the extension, subject to available resources, to the eligible child and those responsible for his or her care, of assistance for which application is made and which is appropriate to the child's condition and to the circumstances of the parents or others caring for the child.

3. Recognising the special needs of a disabled child, assistance extended in accordance with paragraph 2 of the present article shall be provided free of charge, whenever possible, taking into account the financial resources of the parents or

others caring for the child, and shall be designed to ensure that the disabled child has effective access to and receives education, training, health care services, rehabilitation services, preparation for employment and recreation opportunities in a manner conducive to the child's achieving the fullest possible social integration and individual development, including his or her cultural and spiritual development.

4. States Parties shall promote, in the spirit of international co-operation, the exchange of appropriate information in the field of preventive health care and of medical, psychological and functional treatment of disabled children, including dissemination of and access to information concerning methods of rehabilitation, education and vocational services, with the aim of enabling States Parties to improve their capabilities and skills and to widen their experience in these areas. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

## Article 24

1. States Parties recognise the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health and to facilities for the treatment of illness and rehabilitation of health. States Parties shall strive to ensure that no child is deprived of his or her right of access to such health care services.

2. States Parties shall pursue full implementation of this right and, in particular, shall take appropriate measures:

- To diminish infant and child mortality;
- To ensure the provision of necessary medical assistance and health care to all children with emphasis on the development of primary health care;
- To combat disease and malnutrition,

including within the framework of primary health care, through *inter alia*, the application of readily available technology and through the provision of adequate nutritious foods and clean drinking-water, taking into consideration the dangers and risks of environmental pollution;

- To ensure appropriate pre-natal and post-natal health care for mothers;

- To ensure that all segments of society, in particular parents and children, are informed, have access to education and are supported in the use of basic knowledge of child health and nutrition, the advantages of breast-feeding, hygiene and environmental sanitation and the prevention of accidents;

- To develop preventive health care, guidance for parents and family planning education and services.

3. States Parties shall take all effective and appropriate measures with a view to abolishing traditional practices prejudicial to the health of children.

4. States Parties undertake to promote and encourage international co-operation with a view to achieving progressively the full realisation of the right recognised in the present article. In this regard, particular account shall be taken of the needs of developing countries.

## Article 25

States Parties recognise the right of the child who has been placed by the competent authorities for the purposes of care, protection or treatment of his or her physical or mental health, to a periodic review of the treatment provided to the child and all other circumstances relevant to his or her placement.

*In next months issue we will publish the remainder of the Convention*

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

### National Association of Child Care Workers

Please note that the old Cape Town telephone number (790-3401) of the National Office is no longer in use by the NACCW. This is now a private subscriber's number and should not be dialed on NACCW business.

The new telephone number for all matters relating to *The Child Care Worker* journal, to the NACCW's publications and to membership and mailing lists is (021) 88-3610 (mornings 08:30 to 13:00).

Until a new telephone number for the NACCW National Office is arranged, please direct all other enquiries to your nearest Regional Director whose number you will find on page 2 of all issues of this journal.

The postal address for the NACCW and *The Child Care Worker* will continue for the time being as P.O. Box 23199, Claremont 7735.

# THE EDUCATIONAL DYNAMO

## An interview with Reuven Feuerstein

Leah Abramowitz

*Leah Abramowitz is a social worker at Shaare Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem and a freelance writer. This article is reprinted from Jewish Action 1989.*

Israel, in its first 40 years, has many achievements to its credit that have gained it international acclaim. Right up there along with its ability to survive, its Ingathering of the Exiles, its flowering of the Desert and its flourishing of Yeshivot, are its innovative and highly successful educational programmes, geared for culturally deprived youngsters, organically retarded adolescents and psychologically impaired children.

Professor Reuven Feuerstein is the father of a unique school of thought specialising in this population and which has developed several highly effective methods for working with "lost causes". Today his Hadassah-Wizo-Canada Research Institute treats 50-60 young adults and children daily from all over Israel, and even from all over the world. His Instrumental Enrichment Program has been adopted in 1 500 classrooms internationally; his LPAD Assessment Tool has been adapted for use in many countries all over the world and tens of thousands of educators learn his techniques in workshops and seminars every year.

A robust, white-bearded, vigorous man, Feuerstein maintains complete control of his growing empire, and personally sees to every detail in the planning and implementation of his multi-faceted Institute. In his ever present black beret, he propounds his basic philosophy, indeed his credo: the propensity of the child to change. A strong belief in human modifiability lies behind most of his projects and gives even the most depressed or dejected parent hope that his child can be helped.

And indeed people stream to his centre from all walks of life, from all points on the globe and with long histories of disappointing diagnosis, predictions of irreversible damage, recommendations for institutionalisation and negative prognosis for the future. A 19-year-old, good looking youngster, son of a leading

educationalist in Israel, was considered incapable of learning to read and write. His speech was restricted to one word responses and he tried to avoid social contact of any kind. When he was referred to the Institute he shied away from his interviewers and couldn't take the most basic tests.

However, with patience and time, a change took place. He was absorbed in a special residential annex of the Institute and given specific tasks to accomplish. He was diagnosed and assessed and after only a year was able to read, write, perform responsible tasks around the home and make himself a useful member of society.

Similarly, a young, seemingly retarded girl of 14 was brought to the Institute after her brother saw a feature article on Dr Feuerstein in a newspaper. She was the youngest of six siblings and lived with her widowed mother, who made no demands on her and allowed her to operate on the level of a four-year-old child. It was generally assumed that she was unable to learn or even perform menial household tasks. She sat around the house all day, not even watching television.

The girl displayed similar passive be-

haviour when she was brought to the centre for diagnosis and showed clearly that she didn't like being there. Her mother, who accompanied her everywhere, was also unhappy with the referral, forced upon her by the older children in the family. Even so, Dr Feuerstein saw there was scope for improvement in the teenager. He began to see her on a regular basis, always with the mother accompanying and staying outside on a bench all day.

The girl began to co-operate after only four sessions and showed much interest and satisfaction in some elementary achievements. It was then decided to wean her away from her mother, which was more difficult for the mother than the daughter it soon became clear. Once the mother was convinced to allow the girl to come on her own and stay overnight, she made remarkable progress. She only regressed to infantile behaviour when she'd go home for visits.

After only a month, the girl was a different person. She picked up reading and writing in a very short time; she became gregarious and friendly and began to learn other skills. The mother was helped to change her relationship with her "baby" by a social worker. For a time the girl was placed with a foster family in a *moshav* (farm settlement) to learn different family patterns of living. She is now able to attend a regular high school and reports back to the Institute only periodically.

Feuerstein is adamant that "intelligence is not carved in cerebral marble". In fact he prefers to relate to "the plasticity of the human brain". Except for the most severe cases, subnormal intelligence can be improved. He brings cases after cases of people with IQ's of 80, 60 or even 40



who with appropriate training, can now perform at near-normal or even above average levels. Over the past 30 years he has developed his theory of structured cognitive modification.

He began his work shortly after his *aliyah* (immigration into Israel), as director of psychological services in Youth Aliyah, working with youngsters who had been traumatised by the Holocaust or who came from Islamic countries and were culturally deprived. Both types of Youth Aliyah candidates had problems of adaptation. Most of the assessment tools available then were of little value in determining the children's intellectual strengths and weaknesses. In fact Feuerstein relates how a whole boatload of orphans from Europe were considered retarded because their IQs were low. "Had we relied on those tests we would have condemned those children to the closed world of special education and limited opportunities for life. They would have been labeled 'different' and even more unfair, some of them would have been sent back to their countries of origin".

Reuven Feuerstein is outspoken about the damage that comes to children isolated in special institutions. He feels that the framework is harmful and restrictive and is happy to relate that the seven homes which were established in the early 1950's for underachievers, were all closed down by 1964, at his recommendation, and were replaced by group treatment units, special classes in regular schools and "Mechinot" (preparatory classes for integration into Israeli society). He is also critical of the reliance psychologists place on standard assessment tools. In traditional intelligence testing, the examiner offers no help, no hints, no explanations, no feedback of any kind. The purpose of the test is to find out what the person knows. Feuerstein's purpose is to find out what a child *can* learn, and his methods are drastically different. The testing session at his Institute is actually "a tutorial" that lasts four to five hours or more.

Early on, the psychologist developed an assessment programme called the Learning Potential Device, which does not test past learning, but rather measures the ability to learn and change. From a wide battery of exercises, e.g. organising dots, spatial relations, analysing sequence, etc., the examiner not only achieves a modifiability index of ability, but also pinpoints the areas of deficiency. Feuerstein and his associates have depicted 21 areas of cognitive impairment. For example, impulsivity, or the tendency of low scoring IQ children to approach tasks in an unsystematic, trial-

and-error fashion; failure to make comparisons; inadequate spatial orientation; episodic grasp of reality; and failure to recognise problems, are some of the specific difficulties which have been identified.

Another central concept in education, developed by Prof Feuerstein, is Mediated Learning. Dr Feuerstein believes that children learn basic cogni-

## Reuven Feuerstein is outspoken about the damage that comes to children isolated in special institutions.

tive skills and cultural principles in their early years from parents or other adult mentors. "In mediated learning, a caring adult interposes herself or himself between a child and the world. The adult guides the child in appropriately responding to and learning from stimuli and thus in learning these underlying cognitive skills."

A lack of mediation, whether in the intellectual, emotional or motivational aspect, interferes seriously with the smooth transfer of culture. Children in the modern age are deprived of this mediatory service and lack "an episodic grasp of the world so that the past and present — both personal and social — remain unconnected". They become uprooted and orphans of self-identity, simply because so many parents today don't have time to talk to their children. Similarly, teachers are less and less educators and more specialists concerned with giving over knowledge.

Prof Feuerstein's deep commitment to religion is closely tied up with his concept of mediatory transfer of values and tradition. The centrality of the family in Judaism and the *halachic* (according to Jewish law) respect for maintaining culturally decreed customs, made him an early proponent of the melting pot approach to *aliyah* rather than integration and assimilation. He has seen the ravishes of Westernisation in Youth Aliyah (youth immigrating to Israel without their parents) and works to prevent similar psychological damage in today's fledgling generation. Feuerstein honed his special theories on learning potential over a lifetime of involvement with remedial education. He was

born into an orthodox household in Rumania and speaks warmly of his late father, a powerful man with a "soft interior", who worked as a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) and whose advice was sought out by all the wiser and richer residents of their community. Reuven had nine siblings, most of whom live in Israel today, and many, like he, are in the helping professions, perhaps due to their father's influence.

Feuerstein learned to read at the age of three. At the age of eight he was already teaching Hebrew to other children at Heder. He specialised in the slow learners and still remembers that he was able to get the town "Chaim Toom" (the village idiot), a youth of 14, to read where many others had failed. Even adult laymen who had never learned to read in the Torah became his grateful students. When the Germans came to power in Rumania, Feuerstein was already studying psychology at the university of Bucharest and teaching in a Jewish school for special children under Hugo Nadler. He was also active in Zionist youth work, and this landed him in a labour camp in Transylvania. After his release, he continued to teach and prepare Jews for *aliyah* through the underground Rumanian Zionist organisation. He gathered Jewish children whose parents had been sent to concentration camps off the street and organised a framework for them.

In 1944 he was again arrested and miraculously escaped to Israel. Here he joined a religious kibbutz, studied in a teachers' seminary and began working with Holocaust survivors and the Children of Teheran. Feuerstein's life took a pivotal course when in 1948, just as the War for Independence was breaking out, he contracted TB. His case was considered hopeless, but Feuerstein was able to overcome the disease, thanks to his will power and the grace of God. He was sent to Switzerland to recuperate and quickly found himself once again involved in *aliyah* work, sending hundreds of European youngsters to the new country of Israel. He also began taking advanced courses in psychology and became the student of Carl Jung and Piaget. By the time he returned to Israel in 1955 he had his advanced degree, a great deal of theoretical knowledge and emerging ideas how best to help disadvantaged children in his homeland. Youth Aliyah gave him his first opportunity to test out his theories on learning modifiability and develop his Instrumental Enrichment tools on a large scale. He began placing emotionally disturbed children in groups among normal children, giving them special preparatory programmes to let them "catch up". In



1958 two pioneer youth villages were established in Ramat Hadassah and in Kiryat Anavim where this method is still being used after 30 years. "Thousands of productive citizens of Israel have been educated in these centres", says Feuerstein proudly, "and many educators and psychologists from all over the world have done their training there as staff workers". All in all he estimates 15 000-20 000 youngsters have been educated in his frameworks.

The programme also involved foster home placement and eventually residential homes for young adults, especially the retarded, were added. Today Feuerstein's chief emphasis is on Down Syndrome children. He has written extensively on the advantages of performing plastic surgery on such youngsters to put off the adverse reactions their appearance elicits in general society. His division on Down Syndrome has helped hundreds of families place their children in regular schools. He has begun a vocational training programme to prepare these youngsters for remunerative semi-skilled workers and as caretakers of the elderly. Part of his vocational programme includes training for independent living classes whereby post teenagers are taught good grooming habits, how to travel by bus to work, interaction with co-workers and buying, cooking and housekeeping skills.

Whatever has been done under Feuerstein's direction has always been carefully recorded and researched. Data on the effects of his programme have been published and the empirical conclusions recorded. The Research Institute that he now directs (popularly called the Feuerstein Institute) was started with a small grant of \$2 000 in 1965 and today has developed into an empire of 30 workers, two buildings bursting at the seams with activities, conferences and clinics. Feuerstein himself has written or collaborated on 750 articles; approximately 15 scientific papers are published annually and eight books have already been written on his method. He and his staff, moreover, participate in conventions or train teachers, psychologists, social workers and policy makers all over the world. Feuerstein estimates that 1 200 teachers are trained every year to propagate his programme in one of the many universities which now teach Instrumental Enrichment and the related programmes.

Twenty-five countries have already adopted the Feuerstein Method, including China. In Venezuela all education majors must study his Instrumental Enrichment Program. In Israel itself the army and prisons use aspects of IE. American Indians have adopted his cul-

tural transmission programme and other ethnic groups are interested in the Mediated Learning Experience.

Feuerstein sees application of the method for children at risk and adults after trauma as their need for interpreting the world in light of upheaval or deficiency as especially great. "Through mediating, people can be changed", he firmly believes.

Feuerstein explains the Mediated Learning Experience in greater detail. "We all learn from direct exposure to stimuli", says the psychologist, taking a healthy gulp from his ever present Cola bottle. "We see a tree, and declare, 'How nice that tree is'." The interpretation of each stimulus is given early in life by an adult who interposes himself between the child and the world, creating in the child not only an understanding of that particular tree, but more important, a disposition to learn about trees, people, morals and anything.

Feuerstein worries that in this day and age when so many children are plunked down in front of a TV and expected to learn about the world from the set, the normal, natural transmission process will be warped. Today people have to be retaught how to mediate the world to their children and teach them to be better learners. He feels strongly that poor mediation leads to poor ability to learn

at all and limits modifiability.

In Jewish heritage, the mediating tradition is strong. However, even in a Yeshiva (religious school) framework, too often the rabbi's role as mediator is secondary to his role as transmitter of knowledge.

Thinking back across the years of his own dedicated work with deprived and disturbed children, Dr Feuerstein is too busy to rest on his laurels. He is planning new and ever wider spheres of treatment. He does dream of the day when he can devote himself more to his wife, four children and growing cadre of grandchildren. "I would like to take a Sabbatical and just learn in a Yeshiva." He is convinced that the changes he has been able to institute, which now are considered basic, depend first and foremost on a belief system. "First of all, there has to be faith in the intrinsic value of each and every child; then there has to be a firm belief in the human ability to change." One begins with a need. Then, according to Reuven Feuerstein you look for a solution. "If you're committed to your fellow man, you won't let him down." Luckily for hundreds of youngsters around the world, Dr Reuven Feuerstein has a well-developed belief system; he also has the talent and will power to see his dreams into action.



The NACCW, together with the Institute of Child care, has developed a new two-year part-time distance teaching course for principals and senior management staff of children's institutions. The course, scheduled to start in July 1990, will include: child care legislation and public policy, both South African and international; principles of organisational management; history and principles of residential care, education and treatment; staff administration and leadership; staff development, supervision and evaluation; finance, budgeting, fund-raising and public relations; and principles of programme design and implementation.

In addition there will be residential mid-term seminars each year and a practical semester when students apply their own developed program in their work situation. A commitment similar to that required for an external degree will be needed by the 20 students who may enrol each year. Enquiries may be directed to the course co-ordinator, Marcelle Biderman-Pam at 7 Fiskaal Street, Camps Bay 8001. Telephone 021-438-4006.

## The Diploma in Child Care Administration



## WORLD FILE

A digest of news and child care information

### Convention on the Rights of the Child

"Children comprise nearly half of the world's population but their right to survival, protection and development have long been marginalised and overlooked ... children cannot secure their rights for themselves. It is up to responsible, concerned and far-sighted adults to act on their behalf."

Children are especially vulnerable to having their rights violated. According to the *State of the World's Children* published by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), each day more than 38 000 children die from lack of food, shelter, or primary health care. More than 10 million children are refugees due to war and conflicts and as many as 80 million children live in the world's streets.

In November 1989, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Its 54 articles establish an international legal framework for the civil, social, economic, and political rights of children. While international laws protecting the rights of children can be found, piecemeal, in over 100 declarations and international treaties, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child will, for the

first time, compile these laws into one document which will codify these rights as international standards. Upon ratification by 20 countries, the Convention will become a comprehensive, legally binding document in those countries.

The convention outlines the social, political, economic, cultural and civil rights of children. Article 3 is fundamental to the Convention, stipulating that the *child's interest* must be the primary concern in all acts regarding children. Several provisions protect children from exploitation, including sexual and economic, and set conditions for the recovery and reintegration of children who have been victims of cruelty or exploitation.

The Convention also includes provisions never before recognised in an international treaty, requiring countries to:

- do everything possible to ensure child survival;
- pursue "full implementation" of the child's right to the highest level of health possible by working towards abolishing traditional practices, such as preferential treatment of male children, providing primary health care, and the education of mothers and families about breast feeding and family planning;
- work towards achieving universal primary education, and take measures to reduce drop-out rates and encourage regular school attendance.

As in all treaties, the Convention on the Rights of the Child includes provisions for implementation. Countries are asked to make children's rights widely known to both children and adults. The treaty calls for a Committee on the Rights of the Child to be established in those countries which ratify the Convention.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child is supported by over 60 organisations in the United States, among them: American Red Cross International Services, CARE, Christian Children's Fund, Church World Service, Foster Parents Plan, National Association of Junior Leagues, Results, Save the Children, the US Committee for UNICEF, World Hunger Year, and YWCA of the USA.

After its adoption by the United Nations, countries must decide individually whether to ratify the Convention in accordance with their own legal and political processes.

### Britain lags behind

Mrs Margaret Thatcher's claim to lead the party of the family is demolished by a European Commission study of the social and economic action taken by each member state to underpin family life.

Britain is found to lag behind most other EC countries, with no Minister for the Family, a lack of child care facilities and parental leave, little financial concessions for parents and the diminishing value of child benefit.

The draft report, drawn up by officials responsible for family affairs from all 12 countries, focuses on the need for the EC to study the impact of its policies, affecting issues such as sex equality and freedom of movement, on the family and on young children. It also calls for more help for single parent, large or deprived families and efforts to reconcile work and family life. The report will be debated at a ministerial meeting later this year.

The officials were alarmed at the extent to which families are under threat because of changes in lifestyles with the decline in the traditional "family" of two parents and two, three or four children.

Britain, along with Denmark and West Germany, has the highest number of divorces, one-parent families and unmarried parents. In all three, one household in ten with a young child is now a single-parent family. In addition, one out of every four couples in England and Wales is divorced, compared with one in every three in Denmark and one in five in France. In Britain, the study points out, there is not only no Minister for the Family, but family policies are split between seven departments.

Policies taken by other EC countries include education allowances paid to a parent solely

concerned with bringing up a young child in West Germany, Luxembourg and France. France has also a system of "family contracts" to make sure the wishes of families are considered when changes are made to the local environment. Although maternity leave varies enormously, only Britain and Ireland have neither a formal parental leave system nor one planned.

*From Sheila Gunn, Brussels*

### HIV Awareness impacts on Teen Sexual Behaviour

A study conducted by Seltzer, Rabin and Benjamin among sexually active teenagers, generally from socio-economically underprivileged and poorly educated families, showed that the publicity about AIDS has resulted in a favourable change in the sexual practices of these teenagers. The participants, 100 female teenagers, all knew that AIDS is a disease that can be transmitted by sexual intercourse. 59% of the girls said they had changed their sexual practices since hearing about AIDS; 41% had fewer partners; 23 by having less frequent intercourse and 38 by using condoms. However, the survey highlighted the fact that few of the girls tried to obtain more information about their sexual partners, i.e. had they been sexually active with drug abusers, possible personal history of IV drug abuse, numbers of previous sexual contacts and other risk factors.

The article emphasises that risk factors pertaining to sexual partners, as well as their sexual histories should be explored. The study illustrates that informed AIDS publicity, education and safer-sex practices promote some behaviour change in teenage sexual practice.

Reported in *AIDS SCAN* November 1989

## TRANSVAAL

**Orientation Course**

Twenty child care workers attended our Orientation Course held annually for new staff members. Topics covered included understanding child neglect, professional child care development and some aspects of skills training.

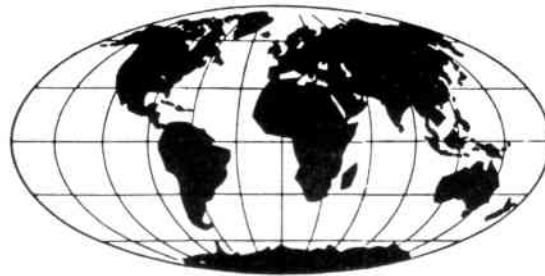
**BQCC**

Module 1 of the BQCC is now attended at three venues in the Transvaal. At a workshop held in February the organisations attending the BQCC discussed the importance of staff supervision and in-service training as an integral part of ensuring the practical on-the-job application of the BQCC. A contract between the NACCW and the concerned organisations will define mutual training responsibilities. A closer working relationship with the organisations will aim to close the gap between theory and practice.

**Residential Care in the New South Africa**

Arising out of our January workshop which examined future directives for child care in the coming decade, a work group was established to discuss questions such as: what models of child care are appropriate to serve large numbers of children in a third world situation; how do we integrate our services in a manner that serves children's interests; and how do street children fit into this picture?

A meeting of the group has been held and it was decided to hold a morning workshop on "Fear — of the future, of the unknown" (see newsletter for further information).



## Newsbriefs

The view was expressed that committed organisations should adopt a pro-active style in introducing change. Children's homes closest to "grey areas" were in the front line of such change.

**Learning Needs Analysis for Staff of Organisations Serving Black Communities**

There has been some concern expressed about whether the learning and training needs of our black and coloured organisations have been adequately met within our existing structures. A workshop has therefore been planned to examine this issue in depth. Now is your opportunity to make your needs known! We have asked Hillary Aber, the co-ordinator of the Adult Education Centre at the Wits Centre for Continuing Education to run this workshop for us. The workshop takes place at Othandweni Children's Home, 739 Mofolo South, Soweto on 13th March from 09:15-12:00.

**Problem Profile Approach**

The first workshop for the Problem Profile Approach will be held on

15th March. This intensive training programme is being offered jointly by NACCW and The Children's Foundation. This approach is valuable in a variety of settings. Any organisation that has not received full information may contact the NACCW office — telephone (011)484-2928.

**Child Care Workers' Support Group**

The second meeting of the year will take place on 22nd March at Arcadia Children's Home. All child care workers are welcome to attend.

**Congratulations**

Congratulations to Dudu Mofokeng, the matron at the Othandweni Baby Unit, who has obtained her BA degree.

**NATAL****Problem Profile Approach**

The year in Natal started on 22nd January with a week-long course for trainers in Masud Houghugh's Problem Profile Approach. The course was run by Lesley du Toit and attended by trainers from the

Transvaal, Cape, Border and Natal. The volume of work covered kept trainers working until early evening on occasions, though there was a lighter side to affairs when some of the training group rode the dodgem cars at the funfair. Course members were enthusiastic about the PPA and returned to their provinces eager to teach the same.

**Seniors Weekend**

This took place in Kingwilliamstown on 17 and 18 February. The programme focused on Lifespace Treatment and Management and Issues for Managers. The weekend was well attended and beneficial to all.

**Residential Social Workers' Group**

The first meeting of 1990 was held on 16 February at St Theresa's Home. The session provided an opportunity to welcome social workers new to field of residential care, and resulted in the development of a programme for the year. A special welcome to Mrs Horak, the new Superintendent at Excelsior Place of Safety.

**Child Care Worker Forum**

The Forum met on 16 February. All agreed that the End of Year Social was a great success. Concerns and issues addressed included poor attendance at the meeting and the reasons and solutions for this were debated.

Attention was given to the need for a constructive programme for the year and also for connections to take place with Forums from other provinces.

## March 1990 Diary

**TRANSVAAL**

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| 05 09:00-12:00 BQCC Pretoria Louis Botha Children's Home   | 15 Problem Profile Workshop Time and Venue to be decided |
| 06 09:00-10:30 Social Workers' Group NACCW Offices   | 19 09:00-12:00 BQCC Pretoria Louis Botha Children's Home |
| 07 09:00-12:00 BQCC Johannesburg TMI   | 21 09:00-12:00 BQCC Johannesburg TMI                     |
| 07 09:00-12:00 BQCC East Rand Norman House   | 21 09:00-12:00 BQCC East Rand Norman House               |
| 12 09:00-12:00 BQCC Pretoria Louis Botha Children's Home   | 22 09:30-12:00 Child Care Workers' Support Group Arcadia |
| 13 09:15-12:00 Learning Needs Analysis for staff of organisations serving black communities Othandweni Children's Home | 26 09:00-12:00 BQCC Pretoria Louis Botha                 |
| 14 09:00-12:00 BQCC Johannesburg TMI   | 28 09:00-12:00 BQCC Johannesburg TMI                     |
| 14 09:00-12:00 BQCC East Rand Norman House   | 28 09:00-12:00 BQCC East Rand Norman House               |
| 14 12:30 Executive Committee NACCW Offices   |  |

**NATAL**

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|--|
| 06 09:00 BQCC 1 St Philomenas                            |
| 07 09:00 BQCC 4 St Philomenas                            |
| 13 09:00 BQCC 1 St Philomenas                            |
| 14 09:00 BQCC 4 St Philomenas                            |
| 16 09:00 Residential Social Workers' Group St Philomenas |
| 20 09:00 BQCC 1 St Philomenas                            |
| 21 09:00 BQCC 4 St Philomenas                            |
| 22 09:00 PPA Training Course                             |
| 23 09:00 NACCW Regional Meeting St Therasas              |
| 30 09:00 Institute of Child Care Meeting Ethelbert       |

For NACCW courses and activities in your area contact your local Regional Director whose address and telephone number can be found on page 2 of this issue