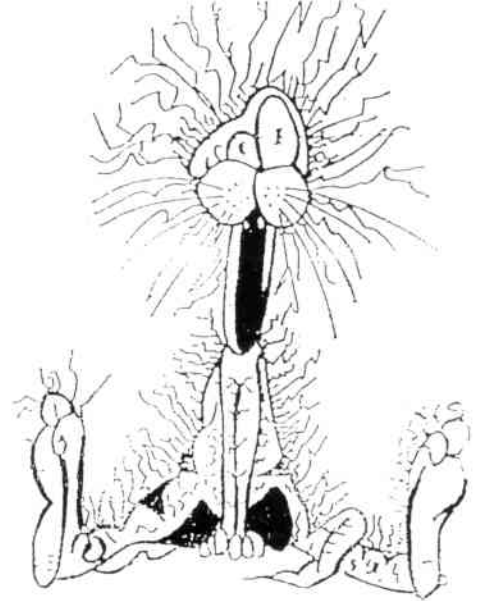


# Die **Kinderversorger**

## THE 1989 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE



BEFORE



AFTER

*An eloquent and insightful appraisal contributed by John Webster*

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**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 behandeling standaarde vir kinders in residensiële omgewings te verbeter.

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# NACCW/NVK



## Teachers and Learners

*Sunday 22 October*

I write this in the air returning from a weekend course for senior child care workers in the Border Region. Lesley du Toit and I have been working together with a group of principals, social workers, and senior managers from East London, King Williams Town, and the Ciskei.

As the two of us left there were moving expressions of thanks for what we had brought, and sorrow that we were going back home – to what I with arrogant tongue in cheek always call civilisation. This has left me wondering to whom the thanks and appreciation are really due. Who, through these past years when NACCW staff members have visited the outposts to “deliver” courses, have really been the teachers and who the learners?

It requires little skill and courage to travel from Cape Town or Durban with a few bags full of theory and experience from the collegial child care atmosphere of the big city. But it takes considerable skill and courage to attempt to translate that theory and experience into the profoundly isolated settings of the Border and Ciskei where there are no universities or teaching hospitals or well-heeled human service agencies – and where the next children's home is 200 miles away.

When one visits an institution in this area which has built one of the finest programmes to be found in the country, one is dealing with more than good learners; one has

to do here with a creative and inventive team who without the normal supports and collegial backup can nevertheless develop a secure practice.

In a real sense this makes *them* the teachers: they give *us* something to bring back to the big city where the reassurance is also welcome that in spite of poor local resources good child care can happen – and where perhaps the corollary challenges us that poor local resources offer no excuse for poor child care work.

It is an object lesson for institutions everywhere, for instance, that a children's home in this largely rural area can establish a workable family programme with families several hundred kilometres away – and go on to achieve a rate of children returned to their families as good as that of any urban institution.

In many ways the weekend courses in the Eastern Cape have been a crucible of child care thinking in South Africa, as succeeding lecturers have been confronted by the need to find solutions *within programmes* in the absence of anywhere else to refer problems. This determination to build indigenous skills has kept many a visiting teacher on his or her toes, and certainly expanded any previously held conceptions of what is possible in the field.

This then, is a tribute to the teachers with whom we have had the privilege of working out there “beyond the borders of civilisation”. Your insistence on relevant material, your application of ideas we developed together, and your commitment to good practice no matter what, have been a lesson and an inspiration, but have also enriched child care in South Africa more than any of us could have realised at the time.

## Looking over the shoulder of another profession

*As child care workers attempt to build a Code of Ethics for their profession, it is of interest to see how emergency care personnel see the issue:*

A member of the Ambulance Emergency Care Profession will at all times:

- Practise his profession with compassion, dignity and conscience.
- Conserve life, alleviate suffering, maintain the utmost respect for human life and act in the best interests of the patient whose health is his first consideration.
- Respect the rights of the patient and generally adhere to the accepted high standards of professional ethics.
- Maintain his own competence and never perform procedures or carry out treatment which extend beyond his capacity and the scope of his training.
- Maintain the honour and traditions of the profession.
- Behave towards colleagues and other health professionals in an accepted manner and respect their rights.
- Respect the confidential nature of information which is confided in him, even after a patient has died.
- Not permit considerations of religion, nationality, race, party politics or social standing, or motives of profit to interfere with his duty toward his patient; encourage equal quality and availability of emergency care to all.

# 450 at Biennial Conference in Cape Town



Another NACCW Biennial Conference has come and gone. Since the first national conference held in 1977, the shape of our conference programmes has changed considerably. The structure originally consisted of five or six papers at plenary sessions which were small enough to enable participation and discussion as one group. Now, in 1989, there were 450 delegates and more than fifty presentations, affording delegates the opportunity to pick and choose those they would like to attend. The cost of larger attendance and the wider range of presentations has perhaps been the intimacy of earlier conferences. However, the gains have been a more individualised learning experience and a broader coverage of the issues in child care today. It was, however, evident from the feedback received that those who attended the conference last month, shared many common experiences which, in spite of the diversity in presentations, were indeed binding ones. Our Keynote Speaker was Dr Norman Powell, Assistant Director of the Masters Programme in Child Care Administration at Nova University in Florida, USA. Dr Powell had the opportunity after Conference to visit the Natal and Transvaal Regions where he addressed meetings. The Conference was opened by Helen Starke, Director of Cape Town Child

## Welfare Society.

A feature of this year's Conference was the sharing of the week with SASPCAN's Conference which allowed up-country delegates to travel only once to Cape Town to catch both conferences. Over two hundred delegates attended both. *The Child Care Worker* interviewed a number of conference attenders with the aim of sharing some feedback with our readers.

● "It was good to be together with a lot of people again. The issues that arose indicated that the NACCW is coming 'of age' in that the NACCW seems to be



Keynote Speaker Norman Powell with NACCW's National Director Brian Gannon at Conference

dealing with child care in the South African context."

● "We needed more time to discuss the strong feelings some members had about the NACCW taking a political stand".

● "Had I known that this was going to be a forum for political discussions, I'm not sure I would have attended the conference, although the discussions and papers relating to child care work made my attendance worthwhile."

● "For me it reflected the existential crisis I am experiencing — conflictual issues are coming up on all levels ... time needed to deal with these issues was underestimated."

● "Generally a very positive experience. People went home with a lot of practical material to implement."

● "I learned a lot about what other child care workers do — not necessarily in the actual sessions, but between sessions."

● "I enjoyed the variety of topics. However, perhaps too much was crammed into too little time. I would have preferred fewer sessions with longer time slots."

● "Too little time between sessions caused confusion, disruption of following sessions and overloading."

● "The pace was fast, but exciting. However, issues from previous sessions or plenary sessions tended to spill over into the smaller sessions."

● "It was unfortunate that some presentations (not all) were read. Equipment for presenters was inadequate. Rooms were too small."

● "Issues on child abuse should have been spread throughout the programme ... Overall we felt stimulated and rejuvenated."

● "We were reluctant to contribute to some discussions because we felt guilty about being a white children's home which has resources."

● "The few care workers who presented papers made a vital contribution to the conference. More child care workers should have presented papers."

● "The papers on practice were very valuable, for example, those on the handling of pocket money, the family programmes, educational work with adolescents and practice with disturbed children, among others."

● "The quality of the material presented was excellent. We look forward to the conference book."

*The Child Care Worker* would like to thank the interviewees for their co-operation with this post-conference feedback article. For a more indepth post conference evaluation, attenders will be receiving a questionnaire in the post. The information gathered through the questionnaire will be used in the planning of the Eighth Biennial National Conference!

# National Chairman's Report

## Introduction

It has never been easy stepping into your predecessor's shoes. Taking over from someone who has been a foundation member, and part of the development of the association and still maintains a keen interest, has been no easy task. I am glad I took on the challenge, and this report for the two-year period since our last Biennial General Meeting will prove to you that it was indeed difficult, exciting and rewarding.

We have once again experienced a period of turmoil and it seems as if, despite the many attempts to build bridges, more polarisation has taken place. Although the NACCW has brought people from different poles together, we have not come through this period unscathed. Many of us took up the challenges of the previous conferences but the question arises of whether we are all maintaining our efforts, or have we been lulled by the apparent calm that was brought about by the state of emergency?

Nonetheless, we have continued to provide a service and I would like to start this report by saluting first of all the children in our care, and secondly I would like to embrace all the people who are involved in the process of caring for children. I will now report briefly on some of the most important aspects related to our Association.

## Staff

I want to be unconventional and start with the important roles our staff members are playing in the rapid growth of our Association. The reason for doing this is to stress the value that we attach to their contribution and commitment and would not want them to think that we have included them in this report as an afterthought.

### National Director

I would like to use this opportunity to pay tribute to Brian Gannon whose name has become synonymous with the NACCW. Brian presents a report at the National Executive Committee meetings and I can assure you that it is an ongoing impressive list of appointments, consultations and training sessions. How our National Director manages to fit his multi-faceted

tasks into a normal working day amazes me — the truth is that he does not know what a normal working day is like. Brian, I want you to know that we all agree that you are special and unique, and from all of us a big thank you.

### Regional Directors

Reading through his report and the Newsbriefs in *The Child Care Worker*, I am equally impressed with the activities of Di Levine in the Transvaal, and Leslie du Toit in the Natal/Eastern Cape Region. I also want to assure you, Lesley and Di, that your efforts are appreciated and we want to thank you for making it possible to achieve our aims. At the same time we would like to welcome our new appointees, namely Marcelle Biderman-Pam as Assistant Director in the national office, Vivien Lewis as part-time Regional Director for the Western Cape Region, and Ros Halkett as Assistant Regional Director for the Natal Region. I would also like to wish them the very best from all of you.

### Administrative staff

Our heartfelt thanks also goes to our staff in the national and regional offices who provide important backup service to our National and Regional Directors. Genevieve Kritzinger and Dennis Neilon in the National Office, Val Lodge in the Transvaal, and Glynis Lee in the Natal offices.

## Training

Teaching those involved in child care to be competent and effective, is still the NACCW's major input. The BQCC, the Technikon courses, as well as the residential weekend courses, are still being offered and our student population is still growing. We have expanded our courses in Port Elizabeth to weekly sessions. We are proud of the fact that the BQCC course is now being offered in English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and Zulu.

## National Activities

In response to a need, a National Workshop on Street Children took place in Cape Town on 7-9 July 1988. As you may already know, the NACCW has been asked to serve as an umbrella body for the projects involving street children.

This was followed by the National Workshop on the Problem Child on 17-19 August 1988, which was hosted by the Natal Region and presented by Dr Masud Hoghughli from Aycliffe School in England.

## Future plans

A course for principals and senior staff is in the final stages of preparation. Residential weekend or weekly courses are envisaged for child care workers in the Kimberley and George areas.

## Publications

Our monthly journal, *The Child Care Worker/Die Kinderversorger*, is still regarded as a priority and this journal, which has achieved local and international acclaim, is still serving as a link between the different members of our profession. I want again to thank Brian Gannon, as well as the Editorial Board, for maintaining the high standard of this publication.

The proceedings of the last conference have been published in the book *Today's Child, Tomorrow's Adult*, which is a constant reminder of the quality of papers that are presented at our conferences. Please allow me to use this opportunity to thank all the presenters at that conference.

We have also been given permission to republish the final edition of Dr Masud Hoghughli's book *Assessing Problem Children*, and this has been sold at a reasonable price to many of the participants of the National Workshop on the Problem Child.

## International

We have continued to extend our links with our colleagues in especially England and North America. The contacts Brian Gannon made, as well as the involvement of our colleagues in the ILEX programme, have paved the way to more opportunities. The presence of Dr Norman Powell at this conference will serve to cement our Association's links with the Child Welfare League of America and NOCCWA.

Our overseas colleagues, Professor Mike Baizerman from the University of Minnesota, who was a consultant at the National Workshop on Street Children, and Dr Masud Hoghughli who led the National Workshop on the Problem Child, continue to be helpful in providing systematic approaches which have influenced the work we do with children. We have reported earlier that we have applied for affiliation to FICE, the International Federation of Educative Communities, a United Nations linked organisation, based in Zürich. I would like to add that this is closer to becoming

a reality. The progress that has been made can be attributed to the fact that we have proved to be an independent, non-racial, professional organisation.

#### Future challenges

We have learnt of the large number of child care institutions which have been, or are, in the process of being built for black children. This will expand the number of people involved in child care, and I want to welcome the existing staff to the growing family of child care workers. I also want to assure the senior staff members involved in the planning, and responsible for the appointment of staff and the implementation of child care programmes for children, that we will be more than willing to assist in any way they may need us.

#### Conclusion

Although our National Treasurer will report on the Education Trust and The Children's Foundation, I would like to thank The Children's Foundation for their most needed support.

In conclusion, I would like to pause briefly on two questions, that is, "Are we a political organisation? Is the NACCW still relevant?"

To the first question I have no doubt in my mind that we are a professional and *not* a political organisation, but that we do have a responsibility to address any unjust situation related to child care which arises from the political situation. I would like to add that we cannot divorce the political situation from the reasons why many children are in care. As an Association we are firmly committed to the provision of high standards of care and treatment of children in residential settings.

I must admit that I have difficulty in answering the question of whether the NACCW is still relevant, but that is only because I believe there is a need for a long overdue, thorough evaluation of what we are offering. A new dimension in residential child care — a punitive one — has been brought into being by the coming into existence of children's prisons.

I am of the opinion that this is a situation that everyone in the helping professions should protest against. When I visited a children's prison in England, I felt proud to report that we do not have prisons for children in South Africa. I need not say more. This is but one of the areas which need our attention, and I have no doubt that we are, and will be, relevant if we allow the needs of children, and the staff caring for them, to determine the services that we can offer.

— Ashley Theron

## Youthwork as Play

Mike Baizerman

"Man only plays when in the full meaning of the word he is a man, and he is only completely a man when he plays"  
— Schiller.

"Life to be human must be lived as play" — Wm. A. Sadler.

Play is thought of as a mode of personal freedom (Sadler, 1969), as "freedom expressing itself". Play as freedom is a primary form of openness (which) provides man with a constant source of new ways to develop, new ways of encountering genuine existential existence. To the existential psychiatrist, Binswanger, "freedom emerges within the boundaries of love". Thus are joined freedom, play and love.

Play, as presented, defines an ideal of childhood and adolescence, often only in retrospect, however. It can be the ideal of youthwork, one approached repeatedly through doing youthwork with a certain orientation and style. The clue lies in the idea that play as freedom is a primary form of openness, of possibility.

Play gives man the opportunity to explore "the world of genuine human possibilities", the "still not yet" (Hope) (Bloch, 1970). "Central to these possibilities is finding personal significance spontaneously" (Sadler, 1969). Play as spontaneity has a "genuine futurity in itself", as Bloch (1970) says of "hope". Youthwork is oriented toward normalcy in the present and as it is projected into the future and comes to be as a new present. So it is that man makes (constructs) himself through living his freedom as making choices, grounding and transforming possibilities into actions.

Youthwork is playful in intent, style and practice in that it is an open moment pregnant with possibilities which youth make into words or actions, a glance or a blow. This openness is seen and heard in the presence of a youthworker whose very availability says "hi" or "hi, how's it goin'?" "Come let's play!" is an invitation to be together and to do together, whether through talk, sport, love-making, a walk or whatever. Crucial is the invitation, not the resulting form of the play. Basic are the unpredictable

results and the means by which these came to be, i.e. how the play was played. Such play is outside of our ordinary work lives (Sadler, 1969), unless we are youth or youthworkers. Then, the two can merge and the reality of play can be the work reality.

Play need not be spirit or games, finite or infinite. What is must be is emergence, the seeing what is coming into being. In youthwork, the games strive to be infinite, with no rules which lead to an end, win or loss, success or failure. "Life is a game" is better wrought as life is play-process, how one does life, indeed matters. In play, one's whole being is present and available; for whatever. This whatever comes out of "the meeting" with another, in M. Buber's term. To him "all real living is meeting". Let us render this as "all real living is play, all real play is meeting, all real play is living through meeting".

A playful youthworker does not know what her day will be like, except that it will be open and full of possibilities as surprises, as happenings, as a talk or a walk or a wait. In this attitude of play, the youthworker does not try to "figure out" the youth or pre-form his response. Both of these actions would objectify the youth and disallow her to become, by forcing over her an interpretive cloth which covers her with us, our interpretations, our understandings, our realities. Instead, the youthworker works at being playful, i.e. not in control of the person. "Let it become", *not* "Que sera, sera", i.e. what will be, will be. Concern is not with acceptance, what will be, will be, but with possibility, i.e. maybe it could be or "what if ...?"

A youthworker at play never knows fully any youth with whom she works; each moment with a youth can be a surprise created by that youth, something unexpected, spontaneous, and new. This is play as birth, bringing forth something never before, during that first-ever moment. It may not be new on earth, not be new for that person and/or not be new for that person in that situation. But it is new for that moment with them together.

Play is real time, not work time. Real time is being with a youth, while work time is doing paperwork, sitting at a desk or attending a staff meeting (usually without attending to what is going on). This insight into real time as being-with-kid time shows how experiencing time is not clock time, how *duree* is not *chronos*, how lived time is on a different timepiece. Play is real time, is *duree*, is a way to delay death by going outside of ordinary time to live for awhile.

What more can one ask?