

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 28, 1997

Valora Washington
W.K. Kellogg Foundation
1 East Michigan Street
Battle Creek, MI 49017

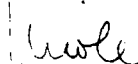
Dear Valora:

We cannot thank you enough for your participation in the White House Conference on Child Care. Your contributions during the panel discussion and your expertise made the Conference a phenomenal success and we think, helped to start a national discussion on Child Care. On a personal note, it was an honor to work with you.

As soon as we receive the transcripts and photographs from the Conference, we will forward them to you. In the meantime, please feel free to call either of us at (202) 456-6266.

Sincerely,


Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant
to the President for
Domestic Policy


Nicole Rabner
Associate Director
for Domestic Policy

*You are truly our
inspiration!*

Mary Elizabeth Ambery

407-909-0159

September 29, 1997

Ms. Jennifer Kline
Office of the First Lady
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Ms. Kline:

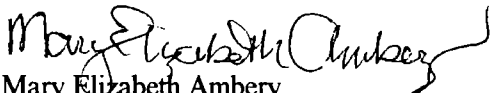
I am an early childhood teacher educator interested in attending the White House Conference on Child Care, October 23, 1997. Most recently, I have been appointed to the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) Panel on Professional Ethics in Early Childhood Education for a three year term beginning October 1, 1997. The Ethics panel is charged to promote the application of NAEYC's Code of Ethical Conduct. I am a frequent contributor to *Young Children*, *The Journal for the National Association for the Education of Young Children*. (See Enclosures.) As a writer, it is a distinction to assist in the professional development opportunities for the over-100,000 members of the NAEYC.

As a NAEYC Academy Validator, and a Child Development Associate Field Advisor, I have assisted with the accreditation of numerous early childhood programs and teachers. In the past two years, I have served as a needs assessment committee member for Florida Gulf Coast University's Professional Studies Division and initiated the early childhood teacher education program (1995-1996) for FGCU's opening in the fall of 1997. Currently, I have returned to my academic home, the University of South Florida, to complete the final writing of my Ph.D. dissertation. My commitment to early childhood professional development standards is significant.

In my work, on and off the campus, I encourage people to be innovative and loyal to their agendas that help children use all of their capabilities. It has been my experience that the best collaborative problem solving is developed, initiated, and implemented by teams of people who share diverse perspectives and versatile thinking. The child care and education issues of quality, affordability, and accessibility present varied problems but myriad potential solutions.

I can be reached at home, 407-909-0159. I look forward to future communication.

Sincerely,



Mary Elizabeth Ambery
B.A., M.Ed., Boston University; M.Ed. Salem State College; Ph.D. Candidate, University of South Florida

8112 Granada Boulevard, Orlando, Florida 32836

MAY 1997

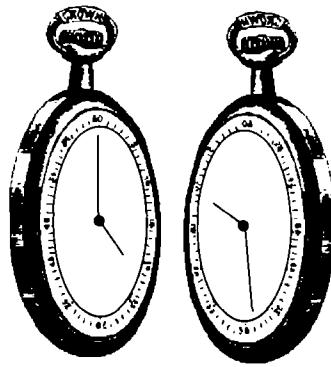
Young Children

The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children



- New brain research confirms what we know!
- Have you voted yet?
- Cross-age tutoring
- Writing to learn math
- Whose children are they anyway? Family/School Partnerships

Time for Franklin



Mary Elizabeth Ambery

The transition between the free time a child spends in creative play and a scheduled change to group activity is apt to cause friction. How can this rub be soothed and turned from a struggle into fair agreement? To what extent is respect for creative, individual play reasonable within the context of group guidance?

Creativity and play had always been considered essential elements by the staff and parents of children in The Robin's Nest, a suburban child care center. To the parents, the presence of these elements meant their sons and daughters were being nurtured and opened. To the staff, creativity and play meant activity centers, learning through play, an assumed diversity in teaching and learning styles, and challenges in child guidance.

This bright morning The Robin's Nest was hopping with activity. As children entered the center, adults signed in at the reception counter. Then there was the trip to the cubby; each child would

stuff in the naptime blanket, lunch box, and special "comfort-from-home" item—usually a fluffy animal, sometimes a truck. Good-byes were gently bid, kisses and high fives accounting for most. Tears accompanied some of the newer children's partings but not for long. When a family hurried through the front gate, exchanging a last wave with the child, a teacher quickly offered an enticing game or a look at the new discovery on the science table—today there were live ants. Each child became engaged at a center or with a cluster of children on the floor. The blocks were transformed into skyscrapers and runways and corrals.

Miss Claire, a beginning teacher, circulated through the groups of children. She stopped from time to time to ask questions and play with one child or another. The water-table toys bobbed or sank, whichever. The puppet theater curtains became capes for the puppets. The noise in the great room was that of children at work—animated voices and laughter and the whirl of toys on tables and floor.

Franklin was deeply busy

Franklin sat at the playdough center. His entire body was one with the green mass in his hands. He squeezed and pulled the dough into fluted shapes. He placed one

on the table and then, with one swing down, let the full force of his fist pound it flat. It was perfect! It was a featureless face awaiting creation! Next, he tore tiny bits of dough from the remaining wad and carefully placed them on top of the head. Eyes were rolled, pinched, and rolled again with his fingers and then stuck on the face below the hair. From a skinny snake of dough that flapped on the ends as it was rolled between his right hand and the table top, a mouth was fashioned and tenderly put in place. And as he did so, his tongue drew the same smile line. Franklin was involved.

Miss Claire was ready to clean up

Miss Claire ran her small mallet along the bars of the xylophone marking the five-minute warning to cleanup time. Assistants arose from the floor and child-size chairs. Each went to the nearest group of children announcing, "It's time to start cleaning up" or "You only have a few more minutes to play before we have to clean up." So it was that the cleanup mode was initiated. Some of the assistants elicited the help of the children; others simply picked up blocks while the children looked on. The center was in stages of activity.

The confrontation

Franklin sat working at the playdough table, still involved. The chairs around him were efficiently pushed in by one of the assistants. The playdough tools were boxed by a child. Leftover dough used by other children was collected, bagged, and shelved. Franklin held fast to the dough that was tucked under his left wrist. He worked at making ears—just right. Suddenly, Miss Claire approached him and said, "You

Mary Elizabeth Ambery, M.Ed., has spent the last three years teaching early childhood education at the University of South Florida in Tampa. She is currently finishing her Ph.D., focusing on teacher education and developmentally appropriate practices.

have to put that playdough away now. We're going outside to have a snack. It's time to clean up." Franklin continued to work.

Miss Claire took his wrist. Franklin looked up. Then he spoke. "But I'm not finished," he said. "I don't have a nose yet." He looked panicky.

Miss Claire released her grip and explained, "I know, but you can do another one tomorrow. Come on, let's go."

Franklin stood his ground. "No, I want to stay. I don't want snack. I have to finish this."

And Miss Claire stood her ground, firmly stating, "Everyone is going now, and you have to stay with the group. You can play with the playdough tomorrow!" Franklin stared at her. Tears made their way over the rim of his lower lid. He didn't say anything.

that of staff development, help teachers use learning-environment organization for the best interests of children? Beginnings, middles, and endings are important concepts for much academic and life learning.

How can teachers employ imaginative solutions to common disputes? From your professional expertise, what practices would you recommend to satisfy expectations for following schedules while honoring children's right to engage purposefully in activities and to reach closure?

How can a play setting be designed to permit

- peaceable outcomes and satisfying resolutions?
- sensitivity to a child's seriousness?
- the teacher's authority?

Tell us what you would do to assist Franklin and Miss Claire reach new cooperation. Send your ideas to Editor, *Young Children*, NAEYC, 1509 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1426.

Note: Teaching cases are real-life events. Anonymity in place and persons is maintained by omitting or changing specific identifying data. Gender, however, is never changed. The sequence and tone of events are maintained to ensure story integrity. Although there are many "case books" available through a variety of publishers, some focusing on just early childhood, you might consider capturing in print your own store of experiences, yet untold.

Encourage teachers, yourself included, to reflect through writing and retelling events. This can be especially poignant; the universality of issues is sometimes surprising. Interpreting situations and conditions in life that may be different from our own is useful, because the future could bring us a similar case. When we immerse ourselves in the solution-searching, problem-solving process, we exercise our awareness of complex circumstances that help guide tomorrow's relationships with young children.

Must "the schedule" always rule? Are there other values? Is compromise wise?

Miss Claire lifted Franklin out of his seat and stood him on the floor. His arms were tightly folded in front of him. Franklin moved one foot a few inches, then the other one a few inches, as if to say, "I'm not going anywhere, and you can't make me." Miss Claire directed her attention to the playdough table. She took Franklin's unfinished creation, folded it up, and stuffed it into the plastic holding bag. When she turned around to take Franklin outside, he had already made his way through the exit door.

The trajectories of two time lines collide

In this story of Franklin, a child and teacher face the problem of differing perceptions of time, closure, and independence. How can administrative systems, including

What respectful choices are available to both? Child development centers, preschools, family child care homes, even hospitals' pediatric playrooms face the constraints of adult timetables and children's quest for engagement. Is a planned transitional activity the solution for adult and child? Or are other positive solutions possible?

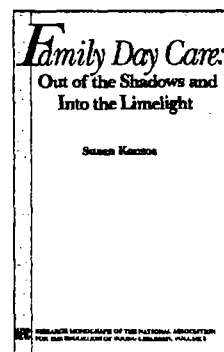
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HAVE YOU READ THIS NAEYC RESOURCE?

Family Day Care: Out of the Shadows and Into the Limelight

by Susan Kontos

A thorough, readable examination of research on family child care, the book responds to questions such as, Who are the nation's family child care providers? What services do they provide to what families and children? and What kinds of provider training are most effective? Part of the Research Into Practice series. **\$7.00—NAEYC order #144**



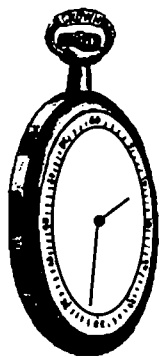
SEPTEMBER 1997

Young Children

The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children



- Moving and learning
- Sexual development
- Discipline and guidance
- Emerging curriculum



Many Readers Respond to "Time for Franklin"

Editor's note: Lots of teachers find it stressful when a child fails to join the group for the next scheduled activity. Our readers provide us with a number of good ideas for transitioning a child who wants to continue doing what he's doing when it's time for something else—in ways that encourage perseverance on the child's part, show respect for his work, and make group management possible.

* * *

It was with delight that I read Mary Elizabeth Ambery's article "Time for Franklin" in the May 1997 issue. I also must add that I experienced sympathetic pangs of anxiety surely similar to those Miss Claire must have felt when trying to move this child along.

My concern in moments such as these is that children learn three equally important concepts.

First, functioning on a schedule serves the whole group. This is a significant skill that undoubtedly will be called upon every day in nearly every situation involving others for the rest of a child's life.

Next, developing and showing respect for elders matters. This is tricky because in a child's mind "doing so because the teacher said so" doesn't necessarily translate into showing "respect," which is a very abstract idea. In other

words, a child may not intend to be disrespectful; his intention may simply be to continue enjoying what he is doing. Children need structure and to be able to predict what's next, but also they need space for their own pace and individuality. A child may have difficulty supplanting the immediate need for doing what he's doing at the moment with the adult's dearly held, longer-term view of "what's next."

Last, finishing tasks begun reflects commitment. In today's world there is great consternation over people's inability to follow through. Some see it as an attention deficit disorder; others believe that failure to pay attention or to follow through is caused by troubling memories from past traumas or thoughts of painful problems at home that interfere with concentration and project completion; still others

think that some children simply lack discipline. Franklin *wants* to follow through. Should he be interrupted? I am tempted to make his commitment to completing his clay project the priority.

One never knows all that such a completion as this might symbolize to a child. My hope is that everyone could be successful if Miss Claire would remain consistent in her expectation that Franklin follow the schedule set up for the rest of the class and respect her authority by complying with her request, while at the same time she would appreciate his need to finish his work by soliciting his help in finding a "good, safe place" where he could store his project until he was able to return to it.

It would likely work best if, while encouraging Franklin to find such a place, Miss Claire talks with him about the nature of the work he still wants to do, what it might look like when completed, and how special a piece it is to deserve his attention for yet another day. The goal in taking this approach is that the child is able to follow the rules of the classroom because his immediate feelings have been validated and addressed, a suitable compromise has been reached, and ultimately the child's commitment to follow through has been reinforced.

Thank you for this opportunity to share these ideas.

—Kendall Hinote

McNeilly Center for Children
Nashville, Tennessee

* * *

Franklin was actively involved in creative play. He had pulled the playdough into flute shapes, torn tiny bits of dough from his batch to finish his creation. He rolled and pinched the dough to make eyes and hair. Unfortunately, before he is able to finish expressing his idea,

Miss Claire, his new teacher, announces a five-minute warning for cleanup time. Like so many of our young children, Franklin rebels and says, "But I'm not finished; I don't have a nose yet." So what are Miss Claire and Franklin to do? How can this be a win-win situation?

Let's consider for a moment just how much more time Franklin needs to make a nose. Wouldn't it be OK for Franklin to have a few more minutes to finish his work? Perhaps Miss Claire could problem solve a bit with Franklin. "OK, Franklin, I'll give you a few more minutes to work on what you're making. You finish the nose and then put your playdough creature on this paper plate. We can save your work for later on today when you have more time. Please, don't forget to wash your hands before coming over for snack."

Let's consider for a moment all that Franklin has learned from manipulating his playdough. First and foremost, Franklin has learned that using playdough is a very soothing and calming experience. He has also learned that he can express his creative self through this wonderful medium. While Franklin was tearing tiny bits of playdough to form hair and eyes, he was counting and developing simple math concepts. Last but not least, while busily rolling, pinching, pounding, and so on, Franklin has developed the small muscles in his fingers and hands, which he will soon need for writing.

If Miss Claire and Franklin work out a peaceful solution to their problem, then Franklin also learns to problem solve and negotiate. Through careful observations Miss Claire will learn that by being sensitive to a child's serious nature, she can turn a power play into creative play.

—Ellen C. Hartman
Program Supervisor
USAA Child Development Center
San Antonio, Texas

* * *

We realize that children need a predictable schedule to feel secure and safe. Conversely, we recognize that each child operates on his or her own inner time clock, and the child may not be finished when the teacher says that it is time to be finished.

I would like to share some ideas that our preschool/kindergarten team has tried in reaching a compromise between *group care needs* and *individual needs*.

1. We try to be very flexible regarding our time schedule and take our cues from the children when transitioning from one activity to another (within reasonable parameters).
2. We give a five-minute warning before pickup time.
3. Each child is given two SAVE cards. This is a laminated two-by-three-inch card that reads "SAVE for (child's name)," and has a small piece of Velcro on the back. When the child wants to save a structure or an activity, he places the tagged structure in a specified area for future play. When the SAVE card is not being used, the child stores it on a Velcro board.

—Jo Ann M. Borinski
UMASS Child Care Center
Worcester, Massachusetts

* * *

At a staff meeting, I had my staff discuss how they would handle the situation between Franklin and Miss Claire. We felt that Miss Claire could have reminded Franklin what it means when she gives the xylophone tone. She could then allow him a few more minutes to complete his creation's face. If he is still not finished, Miss Claire could put it in a safe place to be finished at another time.

We felt a little flexibility and a few extra minutes would show Franklin that Miss Claire cared

about and understood his need to finish his projects. She could also talk to Franklin and explain again what the xylophone means so that when he hears it the next time, he will begin to clean up along with the other children.

—Dea Hedlund
Sitters Day Care
Slater, Iowa

* * *

Franklin and Miss Claire can reach new cooperation:

- Have Franklin take his playdough outside and work with it at the table; or
- Set the piece that Franklin was creating aside so he can continue his creation when he comes inside. (As a preschool teacher, I always allow children the opportunity to complete a project even if that means setting it aside for a while.)

—Elena Peters
Fountain Valley, California

* * *

Miss Claire should have offered to save Franklin's creation on a plate covered with plastic wrap for him to finish later that day or the next day. In destroying the creation he seemed to value, she devalued his work and, in essence, him as well.

In offering to save the work for further completion, Miss Claire would show Franklin that she values him and his work. She would also help him understand that life sometimes requires us to do our work in steps, not all at one time. Handling the situation this way would also help guide Franklin in learning that it is good to finish what we begin.

—Linda Lawson
Supervising Teacher
The Child Development Center
Spartanburg, South Carolina

* * *

From the viewpoint of a retired teacher who was in kindergarten education for 20 years, I believe that keeping to a rigid schedule is not the most important priority in an early childhood curriculum. The key factor is taking care of the individual differences in temperament and personality of each child. Allowing for individual responses is more important than keeping to a schedule. As a master teacher at Plymouth State College Laboratory School in New Hampshire, this was my philosophy.

Franklin, who was so engrossed in working with the clay, could be allowed to finish his creation and make a choice whether to have a snack or not. Miss Claire could have appointed a helper to stay with Franklin while he finished his project. Then the teacher would have had a great opportunity to save and admire his finished product and commend him for his perseverance. Thus, the angry confrontation between Franklin and Miss Claire could have been avoided, and Franklin would be satisfied.

We know there are circumstances that require immediate compliance with the cleanup signal, such a fire drill or a waiting school bus. But, a classroom climate that makes learning possible is influenced by a teacher who

- really loves children enough to treat them with respect for their individual differences,
- is enough at ease with herself so she can listen to what children say and interpret what they are feeling, and
- considers teaching a privilege and, in a sense, a divine mission.

Kahlil Gibran writes in *The Prophet*, "If he [the teacher] is indeed wise he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your own mind."

—Beatrice W. Turner

* * *

I am presently teaching a CDA (Child Development Associate) course for Burlington County College. This past Saturday our focus was on professionalism. I had the class read the article "Time for Franklin" from *Young Children*. The class divided into small groups to discuss it, and each group wrote its response to the situation. The article engendered much discussion both in the small groups as well as in the total group as the students shared their responses.

I use articles from *Young Children* in almost every class I teach. I appreciate the wide variety—some that are applicable to beginning teachers and others for those of us who continue to add to our early childhood knowledge base.

The class is excited about finding out how other people will respond to this situation. Thank you for providing such great learning opportunities.

—Linda W. Webster
Brown Mills, New Jersey

P.S. Here are some of the students' responses.

Our group agreed that not so much direction should be given to Franklin. He had a high level of concentration on his project, so much so that he was willing to give up his snack. Then he cooperated with the teacher.

Miss Claire needs counseling on developing sensitivity to children's creativity. She should not have placed her hands on Franklin's wrist and been domineering. She gave him the impression that his work was worthless by stuffing it in the bag and telling him he could do another face tomorrow. She could have explained more gently the need for his joining the group and kept his project intact to be finished at a later time.

As the teacher Miss Claire could have allowed more time for this child to finish his project by having the rest of the children do fin-

ger play songs in the circle for another five minutes. Or if it were not possible to delay snacktime until Franklin finished, he could have been allowed to join another class and finish the project while his classmates went out for snack.

—Barbara Trueland, Ruth King,
and Andrea Rowand

We all can learn more about how to make transitions smoother for those children who become so engaged in activities that they have a hard time breaking away and going into new activities.

The article about Franklin did not state whether this incident is an ongoing conflict, but if this is so then we suggest that the child be given notice earlier to have more time to finish so that he gains the satisfaction of being able to complete the project to his liking.

As a group, we also think that maybe the teacher could have kept his project intact so that, if he finished his work and time allowed, he could go back and finish later. By folding up his work and putting it away, the teacher made Franklin feel that all the hard work he put into his project was for nothing because he did not receive gratification.

Most important, each child is an individual and must be treated as such. We believe it is the teacher's responsibility to take into consideration the needs and feelings of each child. Different methods of transitioning need to be used to find out what works for the group as a whole and for each individual.

—Tammy Nabozny, Dana Moran,
and Jennifer Fitzpatrick

We feel that Franklin wasn't given a warning or was so involved that he didn't notice the warning. The teacher didn't get down to the child's level and explain that she would save his work and he could finish it the next day. Teaching a child to start something and not finish it sets a terrible example for a child.

Miss Claire needs to get to know her children through their eyes—

to be more empathetic—and her teaching will be more successful. She also could try speaking to the child in a less defensive way. Letting a child achieve a goal is the biggest achievement a teacher can give him. As Miss Claire continues teaching this class, she will come to realize whom she must look right at and ask directly to clean up, who will be the ones who *will* clean up after only a more general announcement is made, and who will need special conversations and make special arrangements with her before he, too, will cooperate.

—Andrea Durante and
Barbara DeLuca

The article "Time for Franklin" focuses on the transition between the free time a child spends in creative play and a scheduled change to group activity. As a child care professional you should be prepared to handle conflicts during the day that can disrupt THE SCHEDULE. We believe that the child's values are more important than following the schedule to a tee.

We are not saying don't follow a routine, because a routine reassures children by providing a structure to each day. But the structure should allow for a five-to seven-minute delay to make for a smoother transition. Learning to handle routines and transitions in your classroom helps your class run smoothly so the children will be relaxed and happy.

Offer children choices but vary the activities so that these do not conflict with the schedule for the day. For example, you wouldn't begin an art project involving paint before a school trip scheduled soon after. Rather, talk with children about the trip and save the art for a block of time after they return.

SCHEDULE WISELY, NOT FOOLISHLY!

—Kathy Lewis, Tinna Hidell, and
Kristie Zaccaria

* * *

Wanted: Classroom Teachers to Write Articles for Young Children . . . Really!

Blakely Fetridge Bundy

One teacher discussed using a water table successfully in her primary classroom. Another described how she introduces math concepts to her preschoolers at the snack table each day. A third recounted her experiences teaching the same class of children for two years, following them from kindergarten to first grade. These stories became articles published in *Young Children* during the past year. Perhaps you, too, have a story to tell our readers. The editors of *Young Children* are looking for short articles written by practicing teachers and directors. Won't you consider submitting one?

You may have noticed that *Young Children* publishes a wide variety of articles in each issue. There are scholarly works written by academics with a Ph.D. But each issue also contains shorter pieces written by practitioners for practitioners—teachers, directors, family child care providers, and others who work directly with young children. Many teachers have great stories to relate about projects or ideas that have worked well in their own classrooms. *Young Children* provides an opportunity to share these successful experiences and suggestions with other teachers.

Sometimes teachers worry that their idea may not be original or that their article might be too short or not scholarly enough. While these are common fears, they may be unfounded, especially the "too short" or the "not scholarly enough" concerns. As for originality, if you have never seen or heard of your idea in any classroom, or if you know that many teachers are struggling with a problem you have solved, others probably would like to read about what you did. The editors of *Young Children* urge you to sit down and write that article now!

We are looking for short articles, from three to six typewritten, double-spaced pages (please do not submit handwritten articles). Send four cop-

ies so reviewers will each have a copy. Write in your own words, as you might write a letter to a friend. Describe a problem you solved, a curriculum idea that was particularly successful, or an experience that helped you grow as a professional. In your article, answer the questions who, what, when, why, and especially how. Describe the steps you took. Tell us specifics. How did the people involved—children, parents, your colleagues—react? What was particularly successful? How did you overcome any problems you encountered? What would you do differently next time? How can others duplicate what you accomplished?

We will consider any topic, as long as you tell us about your experience with clarity and, especially, with enthusiasm. Be sure to look through back issues of *Young Children* and note how other teacher/authors wrote their articles. Of course, *Young Children* receives many article submissions and each article must go through the process of peer review before it is chosen for publication, so there is never a guarantee that an article will appear. But it is definitely worth a try.

There's plenty of help available. If you'd like to discuss your article with a consulting editor, mention this fact in your cover note. Send your article to *Young Children*, NAEYC, 1509 16th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1426. Also look for workshops conducted by consulting editors at local and regional AEYC conferences. Or bring your finished article or ideas to the NAEYC Annual Conference in Anaheim in November. Editor Polly Greenberg will hold several sessions for potential authors during the conference, and consulting editors will be available to talk to you on a one-on-one basis about your particular article or idea.

The hardest part is actually sitting down and getting started. We urge you to give it a try!

Blakely Fetridge Bundy, M.Ed., is executive director of the Winnetka (Illinois) Alliance for Early Childhood and a writer, photographer, editor, and former consulting editor for *Young Children*.

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JANUARY 1996

Young Children

The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children



- Responding to linguistic and cultural diversity
- Help children be more constructive, socially
- Make parent involvement a reality!
- Listening, phonics, and literacy
- Are you using a project approach?

A Story about George, Circle Time, and the Polar Bear

Mary Elizabeth Ambery

Real teacher stories from preschool, kindergarten, and primary teachers have a unique advantage as problem-solving venues. Through teacher voices from the front lines, familiar situations can be described, and through voices from reflective teacher readers, solutions can be heard and considered.

"Best practice" is always easier to read about than to implement. Sometimes professional dialogue, even if back and forth in a professional journal, can help bridge the gap.

After you read "A Story about George, Circle Time, and the Polar Bear," maybe you can help turn this classroom into an environment more conducive to positive learning for George and other children.

Market Street Preschool provided a full day of child care from 7:00 in the morning to 6:00 in the evening. All of the children came from families in which parents worked full time outside the home. Not all children stayed from opening to closing, but some did, and the logistics of a family's work shifts were not always early childhood friendly.

Ms. Margaret's 3-year-old room was bedecked with traditional winter images. There were frosty scenes on dark blue construction paper speckled with white paint "snow" drops. The door was covered with the ever-popular paper

Santa faces, complete with beards and mustaches, blue eyes, and black pipes. Paper snowmen—covered (more or less) with cotton balls, carrying paper replicas of red shovels, and sporting paper top hats—stood at dutiful attention in a line over the windows. This morning it would be time to make the polar bears. The white paper shapes had been neatly stacked together with cards of black buttons and lengths of red ribbon. The order in the room was crisp, clean, and secure—a place for everything, and everything in its place.

George was in the housekeeping area rearranging the play food. He had moved it from the pantry to the refrigerator and back into the pantry. He was in the process of relocating the pans to the sink when the announcement came that it was now circle time. Ms. Penny and Ms. Marie,

the two preservice teachers, and Ms. Jane, the classroom assistant, were busily supervising cleanup. George clanked the last pan into the sink and ran to the circle rug. Chris was already there, and the two knocked into each other and collapsed in laughter on the floor. Ms. Jane, already seated, said, "Come on, boys. Sit down right." Chris sat up. George crawled behind Ms. Jane and headed back to the housekeeping area.

Ms. Margaret entered the circle and started singing the days-of-the-week song. By this time everyone—everyone except George—was joining in. Back in the housekeeping area, he was rearranging the pans again. Ms. Margaret eyed the pantry while she sang and nodded for Jane to retrieve George. Penny and Marie led the bear-hunt chant. Almost back to the circle, George suddenly escaped Ms. Jane's grasp and ran to Ms. Penny's side. The bear hunt was over.

Sharing time began with Barbara showing everyone her Care Bear. George looked out the window. He sat cross-legged and played with his fingers. Then he played with the laces on his shoes; they magically came untied. Several more children showed their treasures. George wiggled his feet, making his shoelaces dance. Others, seeing George, wiggled along; some kicked their feet into the air. Ms. Jane started singing *Five Little Frogs*; the children instantly picked up on this favorite. Sev-

Mary Elizabeth Ambery is assistant professor at the University of South Florida/Florida Gulf Coast University. Her current research interests include the relationship between teacher self-concept and best practice, and case-based methodology within the context of outcome-driven teacher education curriculum.

eral children, including George, bounced into a frog squat.

Ms. Margaret hushed the group. "No! This is *not* the way we act in circle time. We'll have to stop. We're going to make our polar bears now—if everyone can behave." George lay down.

Ms. Margaret waited a minute, then said, "Good. Some of you will come with me and Ms. Penny to the big table to make the bears, and the rest of you will have a turn at the easels with Ms. Jane and Ms. Marie. Who would like to make polar bears?" Every child's hand shot up. She quickly selected 14 children to match the 14 preset places at the table. George was not picked. He sat with six other children on the rug, waiting. Ms. Margaret selected four more children for the easels. Turning to Ms. Marie, she announced, "George is having a hard time today. If there's room later, when we rotate some of the others who also want to paint, maybe he'll be ready." Ms. Margaret turned away. Marie glanced at Penny and shrugged.

George stood up. He looked around. He lay down. He log-rolled to the edge of the rug. The other boy waiting with George looked on. George log-rolled again, arcing to a different edge. He sat up and pulled a toy car out of his pocket. Ms. Jane called the other boys over to paint. George looked up. He gazed at the big table where everyone was busy gluing red ribbons. George ran his car across the rug. Ms. Margaret picked it up and put it into her apron pocket, shaking her head. George stared at the rug.

Time passed. Some of the painters were on their second picture. Button eyes were distributed. Five minutes turned into 10, then dragged into 15. The polar bears were being cloned. Several painters exchanged chairs with bear-makers. George was log-rolling

again. Ms. Margaret told all of the children to finish their work; it was playground time. Most children had successfully completed their polar bears. Some had been able to make a bear *and* paint pictures. George stood up. His laces were still untied. He looked at the polar bears being carefully lined up down the center of the table. He went to Ms. Margaret's side. Hope spread across his face. "Ms. Margaret," he ventured, "I want a bear."

"Oh, George, we're going outside now. We're finished with this," Ms. Margaret replied. And raising her hands in the air, she smiled and said, "All of the bears are gone!"

* * *

In this situation there are several problems, perspectives, and layers of potential change. Just for the moment imagine yourself, in your present adult role, as a player in the case. As you are imagining George's feelings, recall the activities of the other children, along with Ms. Penny, Ms. Marie, and Ms. Jane; they are all dynamic players in the learning environment. How do you see this scene? What are the developmental needs of the children? What is worth knowing and doing in interest center-based curricu-

lum? How are teacher bias and power and the empowerment of children at issue? For children with special learning or developmental needs, how can teachers show sensitive respect for learning styles while maintaining the flow of routines? Are there changes to be addressed over time? training issues? ethical issues? programming issues? Are there some easy, short-run solutions for the teachers, Ms. Jane, and George?

Your experiences with young children are a vital resource for all of us. They validate our intentions, enlarge our educational vision, and energize our practice. Now that you have imagined some alternative outcomes for the case at Market Street Preschool, jot them down on a postcard or in a letter. Your fresh ideas about "A Story about George, Circle Time, and the Polar Bear" will be reviewed and may appear in a future issue of *Young Children*. Send your developmentally appropriate thoughts to NAEYC, ATTN: Polly Greenberg, 1509 16th St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1426.

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Caregivers and teachers: Learn to pinpoint and fix what's wrong!

**The What, Why, and How of High-Quality Early Childhood Education:
A Guide for On-Site Supervision
(Revised Edition)**

***by Derry G. Koralek, Laura J. Colker,
and Diane Trister Dodge***

The perfect book to help you pinpoint weaknesses in center-based and family child care programs for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children. Great ideas for how to help caregivers and teachers fix what's wrong and learn a lot about child development in the process. NAEYC order #336/\$7



MARCH 1996

Young Children

The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children



• Ten years of NAEYC accreditation!

• Vivian Paley's approach • Children are movers & doers

• Integrate art

• Appreciate art

From Our Readers

Readers Respond to Rescue George!

After reading the article "A Story About George, Circle Time, and the Polar Bear" in *Young Children*, January, 1996, I felt I must write.

The Market Street Preschool needs to seek alternative methods to become a developmentally appropriate classroom for its students. George must have had a very negative feeling about school that day, as the preschool appears to run an extremely structured program for three-year-olds.

According to my developmental beliefs, children need to develop within a safe, secure environment that allows them to trust in the structure but also provides flexibility for individual differences. The children also must feel an ownership in the classroom and activities. At sharing time Barbara could have been asked if her Care Bear would like to share a dance, and then all the children could have done a quick little bear dance. What was wrong with the frog squat during circle time? Three-year-olds need to use more than one sense during their learning experiences. George should have been praised for remembering how a frog moves and then pulled directly into the activity by helping the teacher lead the frog squat while doing the "Five Little Frogs." Then another adult could have sat beside George and helped him to stay actively involved while other students were given a chance to be a frog squat leader with the teacher.

Why all the precut art activities? How about a variety of materials with some examples of bears and talking to the children about what polar bears look like? Why so many students working on the same activity at the same time? The children all should have been involved in center activities of their choosing and then given opportunities to freely move in and out of an art area. George should not have been punished and expected to demonstrate staying still when he was already way beyond his

developmental limit for staying still. Even a time-out should have been no longer than 10 minutes before George would have been guided into a learning activity. For George to have been told that "all the bears are gone" is like waiting patiently in line for your favorite ice cream and then being told it has run out.

George appears to be a child who needs some positive, individual, adult attention and opportunities to develop his positive self-esteem and social behaviors, rather than being shown and told that his behaviors are bad. As he is positively guided by caring adults into successfully handling social situations, George will become a vital part of his classroom and learn to love learning. Any of the above ideas would help George to develop positive learning behaviors.

Thank you for providing us as educators an opportunity to respond to the article.

—Carolyn M. Patterson
Head Start Teacher
Grove City, Pennsylvania

My heart cries for children like George who have few advocates. His situation troubled me—it needs a book, not a postcard on best practices for teacher training. And George, needs *choices, meaningful curriculum, connections, teachers who understand active learning/discovery learning*—i.e., exploring with all senses: manipulating, transforming and combining materials, discovering relationships, acquiring skills with tools, equipment, body. The activities need to promote self-esteem, provide interaction, and be irresistible. Themes need to provide support not restraint; start with the familiar; be based on each child's interests; be supported through concrete examples; and allow for spontaneity. In that classroom children should have been encouraged to go with the frog—they were into it—at least hop to the art table where polar bear had left snow, etc., for children to make a home for a polar bear . . . stories to

motivate . . . pictures to motivate—thoughts about them—appropriate for three's—look at child development! Activities for those not picked: ice in a tub with plastic polar bears—or just ice! Pretend snow, real snow, shaving cream—choices, choices, choices, etc., etc.

—Judy Witmer
Instructor, Early Childhood
Education, Parent Education
Mercer Island, Washington

I disapprove of the whole idea behind Market Street Preschool's approach. This is a place where three-year-olds spend most of most days because "all of the children came from families in which parents worked full-time outside the home." That means that this should be viewed as a home away from home, and every minute of each day should be as family-like as possible.

In an optimal home, three-year-olds come and go and play, play, play. They have dozens of decision-making opportunities—this room or that room, this activity or that activity—and *special optional projects*: "Do you want to help stir the soup?" Why was George made to interrupt his play in the housekeeping area to come to circle time? He could have been invited to come when he was ready and, if he never came, that would be acceptable, too. Circle time should be short and very involving, with movement activities included. Why did George have to be at the polar bear table or the easel? Why was George labeled as "having a hard time today" when all he was doing was moving and futzing around?

I don't mind if all the children make clone bears *if they choose to*. But *no* child of *three(!)* should be made to feel badly because he acts like any at-home three-year-old would act.

—Mamie Burgess
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Young Children



Are you a
Children's
Champion?
Will you Stand
for Children?

Help children
develop
environmental
awareness

Thinking about
the physical
environment
in classrooms

Do you have
lots of male
involvement?

Ramona Davis

Mary Elizabeth Amberry

Real teacher stories from previous investigations and present teachers have a unique advantage as problem-solving experts. Through their years from the front lines, problem equations can be identified and through years from reflective teacher leaders solutions can be heard and considered.

"Stories are...in almost every respect about them to be more... Stories are professional dialogue... read of facts and events in a professional journal... can help bridge the gap."

After your read: A Story about George, Tim and Tom, and the Porch Door? maybe you can help these kids continue on an interesting more conducive to positive learning for George and other children.

[illegible][illegible]

Ramona Davis is director of Bright Beginnings Preschool and Child Development Center in Graham, Texas.

Young Children • May 1996

Do you use Young Children articles in your ongoing staff development activities?

Cathy Yancey

I see this scene as one in a possibly autocratic environment. The scene in this story needs to be dramatically redirected. The developmental needs of the children are to have self-esteem, to have exploration through play, and to have positive social contact with teachers and other children. This teacher, Ms. Margaret, has an autocratic way of dealing with her class and is obviously biased against George. Also, the empowerment of some children is very low.

Ms. Margaret needs to empower the children in her group, which is essential for children who are learning to be adults who

will need to function in society. She and the other teachers need to foster a democratic environment and let the children show their independence. Since there are three teachers in this classroom, more positive attention to some children could be advised, especially to George. When circle time was happening, George could have sat in a teacher's lap, and when the children were acting like frogs, the teacher shouldn't have gotten upset. She should be glad that they want to participate in a positive manner. When it was time to do a craft, instead of letting George roll around and get into trouble, one of the teachers could help George get started on a bear or a picture by redirecting him.

Erin Harvey

In this type of setting there are many areas for teachers or caregivers' personal development.

First, each child needs to be dealt with as an individual. Is the child here all day, possibly not getting enough sleep or attention from his or her parents? How well does the child interact socially? Does the child have any developmental problems?

Curriculum should be developmentally appropriate as well as stimulating for the child. **Crafts need to encourage creativity and personal expression, not just produce "clones."**

When there are not enough spaces for all the children to craft at the same time, appropriate centers or activities should provide involvement for all the other children. **A child should never be expected to sit, not doing anything, for 10–15 minutes.** At the age of three it is virtually impossible. There also needs to be equal rotation so that some chil-

dren don't get to do it *all*, while others don't get to do *any*. **Ample time should be allotted so that every child can be involved, if he wants to be, before moving to the next group activity.**

As for the personal development of the teacher, **we all need to be aware of what motivates us, at all times.** Honesty in personal evaluation is needed to ensure a loving environment for all involved. Knowing that personalities will clash, we need to take the time and make the effort to correct our behavior when it is not what it should be. **Ms. Margaret needs to take a look within herself to see why she feels the way she does about George.** Taking his car away from him, when he was on the carpet, was unnecessary, as was the smile on her face when she informed him that there weren't any more bears to be made.

Today George learned that he was not important to those around him. Let's hope that this lesson is not repeated at home and, in the future, at the center.

Kerrie Ribble

Compassion and imagination, were lacking in this classroom. **If George was having a difficult time, there should have been more of an attempt to get him involved in an activity. An idle, bored child with nothing interesting to do will seem to be having a bad day by getting into trouble.** A teacher should give all a chance to participate in all the activities planned for that day.

Circle time is not for sitting. If that is what is planned and you have an anxious child, think of a way to make it fun by moving around—stand, jump, sit, laugh, and roll.

Edith Sconce

I think that maybe circle time was too long for George, and since there were four teachers/assistants there, maybe one of them could have worked with him individually. It was way too long a time for George to sit on the carpet. I also feel that everything has a place, but first you need to show children where that place is.

You can also give a little leeway for children. Not everything has to be so difficult. George should have gotten to do his polar bear since there were so many teachers/assistants there. One of them could have stayed inside.

Julie Casey

My thoughts are that the way they handled George was completely wrong. There are much better ways to handle a child like that. First, making a huge deal about him not sitting perfectly during circle time was too much for this three-year-old. And when it came craft time, they shouldn't have punished him for being rowdy at circle time but should have given him an activity to do instead of making him sit on the carpet for 15 minutes. That was outrageous. Then, not allowing him to do a craft because time was up was heartbreaking. It was not his fault that the time was up. Basically, I feel that giving him something to hold his interest would have been a better idea, and they should have allowed him the opportunity to do the craft the same as everyone else.

JULY 1995

Young Children

The Journal of the National Association for the Education of Young Children



- Various views about dealing with violence
- Education and guidance for 5/8-year-olds
- Improve your preschool/primary science and math!
- Singing with infants and toddlers

***Editor's note:** We all know many wonderful, wonderful public school teachers and some excellent public schools. And we all also know that some schools are managed in an authoritarian manner. Teacher educators often talk about the difficulties they have placing student teachers in developmentally appropriate settings. What would you do in the situation described here?*

The Case of Seymore: How Long Does It Take for a Beginning Teacher to Be So Shaped by the Pressures of a School That Best Practice Gets Lost?

Mary Elizabeth Ambery

The use of teaching cases, real teacher stories, for problem solving among involved professional groups has a long history and unique advantages. The reflective process through others' quandaries affords practitioners the opportunity to compare paradigms, seek to understand, and collaboratively solve problems. In the case of Seymore, several perspectives are offered for consideration and reflection.

Ms. Windsor's student teachers had been at their field site for almost six weeks. It was an urban elementary school located in a neighborhood, partly residential and partly commercial. The faculty parking lot was always

Mary Elizabeth Ambery, M.Ed., is visiting faculty at the University of South Florida-Tampa and a doctoral candidate in early childhood education. Her current research interests include the relationship between teacher self-concept and best practice, case-based methodology within the context of outcome-driven teacher education curriculum.

gated. A puzzle of interconnected buildings housed the school's kindergartens through fifth grades for the eighth district.

The school was culturally diverse, rich with languages and customs and with opportunities to work with children having a broad spectrum of learning styles. Celebrating uniqueness, however, was strictly bounded by external order. Lines were not only expected, but rewarded. Children were carefully herded from location to location, in line, silently. Silence was rewarded, too. In fact, silence was as important in the hierarchy of social lessons to be learned as was lining up. After all, young children had no reason to be talking in an outdoor corridor or walking in small groups to lunch. An elementary school where prosocial behavior was defined as conforming behavior trapped the children in an unforgiving maze of rules regulated by the teachers and administrators. Disci-

pline held the uncomfortable meaning of punishment.

A system existed for everything. In the first grade, language arts filled the prescribed 45 minutes, followed immediately by arithmetic for 45 minutes, followed by social studies or science. The teacher's rationale of keeping students on task justified the rigidity of the schedule as a ritual. Disruptions of any sort, teachers explained, caused children to become unfocused. Some instruction lasted for two hours straight—in the name of classroom control. Often, there were no individual toilet breaks allowed until the group went en masse to the rest rooms. Children received no stretch-time breaks to get the pins and needles out of their fast-asleep feet, not to mention minds.

From the strict hierarchy to the teaching methods to the antique notion of rote learning, this traditional system was for student teachers a set of sub-

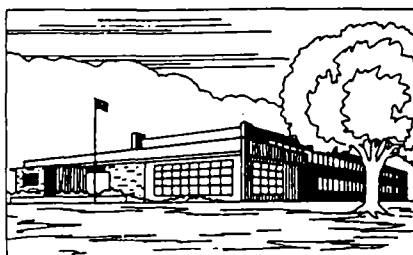
systems that, although in need of modification, was not theirs to change—yet. Fitting in as participant observers was challenging, but essential. It was a vital means to holistic awareness that would enhance their sensitive responses to children.

Student teachers participated in the school two mornings a week. Their activities with the children, abbreviated by lunch at 10:15 A.M., in some cases, yielded them a surprisingly high number of bonding experiences. The strain of compressed time helped them focus on a myriad of social interactions—child-child conflict, child-adult stress, peer pressure—a true reality check that afforded them real-life immersion in the day-to-day web of school dilemmas and children's learning discoveries. They noticed that children who had been labeled as LD (learning disabled) or ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) functioned not as they expected. Some of these children played word or letter games with intensity for 20 to 30 minutes. If other children joined the game, their concentration did not waver. They played to the end and asked for more.

What was the problem with these children? the student teachers asked. Why did they have to sit in a study carrel, isolated from the rest of the class all of the time? Why didn't the teacher ever call on anybody in a study carrel? Why were these children being punished? Why were they all boys? The questions channeled back to "the system." For Ms. Windsor, field ex-

An elementary school where prosocial behavior was defined as conforming behavior trapped the children in an unforgiving maze of rules regulated by the teachers and administrators. Discipline held the uncomfortable meaning of punishment.

perience supervisor from the college, it was getting difficult to help the student teachers separate the children's development issues from the school's reward network. They had raised really important questions—questions, she thought, that ought to be addressed, aired again, discussed, and researched. Standing in the



walkway between school buildings, however, was no place to talk about these observations. They might be overheard.

On this particular morning, it was almost 10:30 A.M. when two of the student teachers (among several pairs assigned to this school), Lee and Rose came up to Ms. Windsor on her field visit as she was about to enter the library. They had started to ask about an activity they were planning to do with their class when

down the walkway came their cooperating teacher Ms. Greene and her first-grade class on the way to lunch. Several children opened and closed a half-raised palm in a silent wave to Ms. Windsor's interns. The scene's most striking feature was the careful gait the children maintained as they hugged the right edge of the sidewalk in a perfect line. They faced front ("Attennnn...tion!"), and when the sidewalk jogged slightly to the right to avoid a support pole, so did the line. Ms. Greene nodded a greeting, turned backward, never missing a step, and called to a child several feet away, "Make the right choice, Maria!" Then, turning on her heel and shaking her head slightly, Ms. Greene announced, "I don't see you making the right choice!"

Ms. Windsor and her interns exchanged glances. "What did Maria do?" she asked them. They shook their heads, shrugged their shoulders, and whispered, "It's like this all the time."

The line had already passed by on its course to the cafeteria. Then, Lee turned around and said, "Oh my gosh, there's Seymore." Rose turned, and Ms.

Lines were not only expected, but rewarded. Children were carefully herded from location to location, in line, silently. Silence was rewarded, too. In fact, silence was as important in the hierarchy of social lessons to be learned as was lining up.

Why did the LD and ADHD children have to sit in a study carrel, isolated from the rest of the class all of the time? Why didn't the teacher ever call on anybody in a study carrel? Why were these children being punished? Why were they all boys?

Windsor took a few steps to the side to get a better look. Seymore was trying to disappear behind a pole. His head was down. His body trembled with silent sobbing.

"Is he yours?" Ms. Windsor asked.

"Yes," Lee replied. "His class just went to lunch. Maybe Ms. Greene told him to wait there?" It took a moment to get the story: Seymore had been left behind. Ms. Windsor snapped her head toward the cafeteria. The teacher and her line had vanished.

"What should we do?" asked Rose, both she and Lee appearing immobilized. It's the first time it was really noticeable. Had it already started? Had it probably started before this? It was like a stiffness that develops when bicycle handles are squeezed too hard or a cold glass of iced tea is held too long. It was astonishing that it had started so soon—the slow-motion disease of inertia.

"Go over to him," Ms. Windsor ordered.

"But . . .," they both said, looking at her hesitantly.

"I'll go with you. Find out what's happened! It's OK," Ms. Windsor offered.

They hurried over to Seymore. Lee put her hands on his shoul-

ders and bent down. Soft tones, muffled words. Rose approached Seymore and put her hand on his arm. Ms. Windsor stood back and looked up the walkway. Where was the teacher? Surely she would reappear and retrieve her student. Lee interrupted the waiting and said that Seymore's clothespin had been taken away. She didn't know why. But now, according to the system, he would not get his sticker after

understood how he felt. She told him that this loss was not a disaster. Tomorrow he would have another chance with the clothespin. They walked on. He was not convinced.

On entering the cafeteria, they found Ms. Greene with her line halfway into the kitchen archway. She had a perturbed look on her face and spoke first. "I was going to come back for him. I told him to wait there." By this time, Seymore had gained control of himself. His face regained the flat expression of a much older person, one who has walled-out the world.

"Well," Ms. Windsor said, "we were headed this way." Once outside the cafeteria, Lee and Rose started talking about Seymore. He was one of the children, they observed, who often got into trouble. He had some learning difficulties. Were they searching

Student teachers participated in the school two mornings a week.

lunch. This meant he would not be able to add to his goal of 35 and would not be able to pick from the class treasure chest that was available once a month for good-behavior prizes. The treasure chest held stickers, key chains, pencil toppers, toy cars, fancy shoelaces, plastic rings—all important and valuable trinkets.

Ms. Windsor took Seymore by the hand. He looked up at her. Tears lined his cheeks. The four headed to the cafeteria. Ms. Windsor told Seymore that she

for excuses for the teacher's action? Ms. Windsor raised the issue of supervision and told them to never leave a child behind. She told them about "best practice." They did not really need these pronouncements.

Lee looked at her and said, "I would never do this to a child." Rose chimed in and said she thought the whole clothespin-behavior-mod-thing was stupid. Some children, she explained, actually hide their pins while they are in the lunchroom. When

Ms. Windsor and her interns exchanged glances. "What did Maria do?" she asked them. They shook their heads, shrugged their shoulders, and whispered, "It's like this all the time."

By this time, Seymore had gained control of himself. His face regained the flat expression of a much older person, one who has walled-out the world.

asked to give up the pin for an infraction, they say that the pin has already been taken away. Back in the classroom, when sticker time rolls around, "Voila!" the pin reappears. Good trick!

Seymore has not learned the tricks yet. Maybe by the time he reaches second grade he'll know how to play the game better. Maybe he won't cry any more. Maybe he will learn how to disappear behind a pole. Maybe rewards won't be used as punishments. Maybe his second-grade teacher won't abandon him on the way to lunch.

* * *

The issues of best practice, guidance of young children, teacher supervision, power and rewards are important concerns. Student teachers are forced to think about these issues through their field experiences. How possible is it to keep them from the self-preservation chill of inertia when a child is in need of the simplest of attentions? We discuss the delicate balance of distance and interaction as a participant observer. We teach about developmentally appropriate practice. Theory-into-practice is a classic problem. How long does it take one beginning teacher to be so shaped by the pressures of the school that best practice gets lost? How often, do you suppose, does a Seymore story happen?

Using teaching cases in staff development

Teaching cases, true stories about conflict-laden situations, provide compelling opportunities to examine the dynamics of

perspective taking, roles and relationships, turbulent and uncertain environments, and paradigm shifts that yield solutions. Because the role of a teacher is diffused, both inservice and preservice teachers are continually faced with dilemmas that stretch professional capacities to



Ms. Windsor took Seymore by the hand. He looked up at her. Tears lined his cheeks.

help children reach their potential. For groups of teachers, the elementary school team leader, the department chair, guidance counselor, or administrative staff directing professional development, addressing sensitive problems with children and families within the context of the learning environment means acknowledging that each party involved seeks first to be understood. To hone our professional sensibili-

ties about the diversity of families, special learning and developmental needs of children, and the potential influence of teacher-to-teacher dialogue, teaching cases supply a rich complement of freeze-frame moments for thinking and rethinking educational consequences.

Observation and authentic assessment, in turn, require acceptance that learning is as complex as is context. If we agree that the more we observe young children, the more we see, let us recognize the importance of sharing our collective, creative understandings.

In the case of Seymore, for example, how can we view this multifaceted problem? Here are some questions that may guide a second look at this problem or similar problems in the workplace:

- Who are the players in the story?
- What characterizes their perspectives on their roles in the setting? (Professional and personal values and beliefs may contribute to understandings.)
- What are the dynamics of the relationships? (Power, position, control, institutional rules may be factors?)
- What are the present conflicts and from whose reality perspective?
- What are some possible short-term or long-term resolutions?

To hone our professional sensibilities, teaching cases supply a rich complement of freeze-frame moments for thinking and rethinking educational consequences.

- Who may be helpful in facilitating promising resolutions?
- How can evaluation of those selected resolution plans be revisited over time?

In any group problem-solving endeavor, it may be helpful to recognize that existing circumstances may allow for selective developmentally appropriate practice as well as control over consideration. Meeting the needs of young children takes time. Meeting the needs of staff takes time. To respectfully address teachers' sometimes delicate feelings of ownership over practice and to encourage their maximizing developmentally appropriate practice options in challenging circumstances, it is often helpful to listen and to dialogue according to a consensus model in which each person is empowered to veto. The synergy of constructing multilevel solutions through examination of real-life cases is the very best in early childhood professionalism.

For further reading

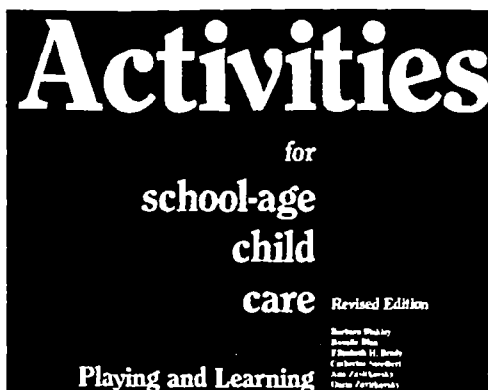
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Have you read these two NAEYC books?

Activities for School-Age Child Care

by Barbara Blakley, Rosalie Blau, Elizabeth H. Brady, Catherine Streibert, Ann Zavitkovsky, and Docia Zavitkovsky



More and more child care centers and public, parochial, and other private schools are adding after-school programs. Try out hundreds of ideas for children from ages 5 to 10 *plus* discover how to work with parents, staff, and community.

NAEYC order #214/\$6

Young and Old Together

Carol Seefeldt and Barbara Warman



Offers teachers a rationale and concrete suggestions for bringing the generations into the classroom. This comprehensive and constructive manual will help ease the growing gap between these natural allies— young children and their elders.

NAEYC order #347/\$7

TO: Jennifer Klein for FILE
FROM: Jon Poling
RE: Meeting with Dr. Kerby Alvy

On November 19, 1997 you and Dr. Kerby Alvy of the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring. Dr. Alvy discussed the history of his work and outlined the CICC's priorities to improve parenting and parenting education in the United States.

Dr. Alvy gave us information on the Center for the Improvement of Child Caring. In addition, he gave us some brochures and pamphlets that the CICC distributes to people. He told us that he would be sending us a letter that outlined the contacts he has worked with from different agencies and he requested that we pass on some information to the First Lady.



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Burbank, California

Duane Champagne, Ph.D.
UCLA American Indian
Studies Center
Los Angeles, California

LaVerne Davis, Ed.D.
GTE Telephone Operations
Long Beach, California

Dr. William S. Epps
Second Baptist Church
Los Angeles, California

Cal Farmer, Ed.D.
Industry Education Council
Long Beach, California

Rabbi Lawrence J. Goldmark
Board of Rabbis of So. California
Los Angeles, California

Sharon Juergens
AT&T
Oakton, Virginia

Dr. Eileen Williams Lindner
National Council of Churches
New York, New York

William Perel
Beverly Hills, California

Laura Peterson
Challengers Boys and Girls Club
Los Angeles, California

Teresa Samaniego
KABC-TV, Channel 7
Los Angeles, California

Jonathan Silver
Family Network
New York, New York

Mark C. Sterba
Toyota Motors North America
Long Beach, California

- **Presidential Council or Commission (see February 1997 Position Papers)**
- **White House Conference on Effective Parenting and Parenting Education**
- **Interdepartmental Committee**
- **Training Thousands of Parenting Instructors: National Parenting Instructor Training Center**
- **Informing Parents about Parenting Education Opportunities: National Parenting Information Service via telephone, the Internet, television and radio**
- **Further Research on Effective Parenting and Parenting Education: National Research Center**
- **Parenting Education as a Necessary Welfare-to-Work Facilitation Service**
- **Presidential Certificate of Appreciation for Parents Who Complete Parenting Education Programs**



CENTER FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF CHILD CARING

11331 VENTURA BOULEVARD, SUITE 103 • STUDIO CITY, CALIFORNIA 91604-3147
(818) 980-0903 • FAX: (818) 753-1054

Effective Parenting Campaign to be Launched

Parents in five Southern California counties, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Ventura and San Bernardino, will be the first to benefit from a new Effective Parenting Campaign from the non-profit Center for the Improvement of Child Caring (CICC), one of America's leading parenting education organizations.

The overall campaign, which includes television and radio messages, features a new parenting guidebook, The Power of Positive Parenting; 100,000 free copies will be distributed to parents in the five counties. A copy can be obtained by writing CICC at P.O. Box 41259, Los Angeles, California, 90044, or through CICC's World Wide Web site, www.ciccparenting.org.

The entire campaign is based on the fact that raising children has always been a challenging and demanding job. Meeting the many needs of children has always required self-sacrifice and the skillful guidance and nurturing of all phases of child development. Raising children today is even more challenging, as more parents have to work, schools are setting higher standards, and children have to learn to relate to others from diverse cultural backgrounds.

In addition, pressures to engage in sex at early ages, the availability of dangerous drugs, and the threat and reality of gang violence make it all the more necessary for parents to be adequately prepared to protect and guide their children from birth through adolescence.

The Campaign helps parents by providing guidelines or standards for effective parenting and by recommending child rearing practices that have proven to be successful in raising healthy and confident children. This information is contained in the new guidebook, which is written by clinical child psychologist, Dr. Kerby Alvy, a national and internationally respected authority on parenting. Dr. Alvy is also the founder and director of the 23 year old CICC, a community service, training and research organization.

The guidebook also connects people to CICC's other helpful parenting books and videos, as well as to the parenting skill-building seminars and classes that CICC conducts in cooperation with local schools, agencies, civic, cultural and religious groups.

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AWARD-WINNING ■ RESEARCH VALIDATED ■ PARENT TESTED

CULTURALLY-AFFIRMING ■ EXTENSIVELY UTILIZED

EFFECTIVE BLACK PARENTING

A dynamic and culturally
relevant skill-building program
for raising proud and confident
African-American children



CENTER FOR THE
IMPROVEMENT OF
CHILD CARING



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

October 28, 1997

Dr. Susan Aronson
605 Moreno Rd.
Narbeth, PA 19072

Dear Dr. Aronson:

We cannot thank you enough for your participation in the White House Conference on Child Care. Your contributions during the panel discussion and your expertise made the Conference a phenomenal success and we think, helped to start a national discussion on Child Care. On a personal note, it was an honor to work with you.

As soon as we receive the transcripts and photographs from the Conference, we will forward them to you. In the meantime, please feel free to call either of us at (202) 456-6266.

Sincerely,


Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant
to the President for
Domestic Policy


Nicole Rabner
Associate Director
for Domestic Policy

**LifeSkills Press**

BOOKS FOR THE FAMILY LIBRARY

Jon -
Write nice
Thank you.

To: Ms. Jennifer Klein
From: Alison Asher
Re: The First Lady
Pages: 3 including cover

Dear Jennifer:

Do you remember me. . . the author of *Soaring Into The Storm*? I am sorry we were not able to connect for a lunch date when I was in town last time. I would to meet the lovely voice I have heard on the telephone so often.

I will be in town just briefly on Monday and Tuesday September 29 and 30. While I won't have time to offer you lunch this trip I would like to simply deliver the hard copy of the following fax to your desk and have an opportunity to say hello very briefly. If this will work for you on either Monday afternoon or Tuesday afternoon, please let me know. Otherwise I will simply send it via a message service. I will be at the Hotel Sofitel once again. The number there is 202-797-2000.

Since last we spoke, *Soaring Into The Storm* has received several awards, is being distributed by St. Judes' Hospital to families with children facing catastrophic illnesses, is on it's way to South Africa to help with the healing from the era of apartheid, has become a best seller locally, has formed a foundation to distribute the proceeds to families overcoming adversity and the stewardship of the environment, and is being pursued by large publishing houses for national and international distribution.

Just think, it was only five months ago that you and I were looking at one of the first copies (created in our kitchen and originally sold from our laundry room). This could only happen in America. One of the most exciting things that have happened is that Nobel Peace Prize winner, Archbishop Desmond Tutu reviewed *Soaring*, was moved by the text, and invited me to meet with him personally. The contents of this private interview will be included in the next book, *Flight Of The Dragon*, which focuses on transforming anger.

I will be in DC to meet with the Nelson Mandela Children's Fund and Stand for Children concerning possible funds from the proceeds of *Soaring*. Please let me know if I might drop the following letter by while I am in town.

Yours Sincerely,



LifeSkills Press

BOOKS FOR THE FAMILY LIBRARY

The First Lady
Ms. Hillary Rhodam Clinton
The White House

September 29, 1997

To My Dear First Lady,

Thank you so much for personally attending the funerals of Princess Diana and Mother Teresa. It did my heart a great deal of good to see the expression of love on your face as you greeted others during both occasions. I felt very proud to have you representing America to our extended families in Britain and India.

As you had spent time with both of these remarkable women, I am certain you felt each one of these losses on a personal level. Traveling great distances under these kinds of circumstances can be terribly exhausting. I just wanted you to know that I (and many others) understand that you did not have to honor Princess Diana and Mother Teresa in person, but you did, and your attendance was deeply appreciated.

Your focus on the global village seems so very poignant at times like these. Perhaps if we had perceived Princess Diana more as a mother and less as a 'star' fewer photographers would have intruded upon her privacy, thus increasing both the quality and quantity of her years. Correspondingly, perhaps if we perceived our governments less as institutions and more as people from many families who are simply working together, we might be less likely to criticize and be more willing to participate.

I had originally intended this correspondence to be a note of appreciation concerning another matter. I would like to thank you for accepting my book *Soaring Into The Storm* into the First Lady's Literacy Initiative, and for signing your name under the quote from Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis when you were in Seattle (I am having that page framed).

I am enclosing a one-page text from a children's book I am releasing next year for your enjoyment. It is entitled "There is no Them."

I hope you have recovered from your travels and are enjoying this beautiful time of year.

With fond well-wishes for you and your family,


Alison Asher



LifeSkills Press

BOOKS FOR THE FAMILY LIBRARY

There is no Them

By Alison Asher ©

(A children's book ages 3-10)

**There is no them
there is only us**

**They all left last Saturday
on the two ten bus**

**From the dawning of time
until time out of mind
They needed us divided
but united we stood**

**And when they hobbled away
last Saturday
they didn't look too good**

**Oh but they were horrid
when they lurked around here
seething in the shadows
slithering in our fears**

**But everywhere they pointed
every *them* we should fear
turned out to be just us. . .
It's just us in here!**

**Now let's beware of how this started
Beware we don't repeat the past**

**Beware of those who don't love others. . .
(Don't you just hate the ones like that?)**

© Alison Asher 1994

October 6, 1997

Ms. Alison Asher
Life Skills Press
P.O. Box 11808
Bainbridge Island, WA 98110

Dear Alison:

Thank you very much for your thoughtful letter and touching poem. I appreciate your letter and am pleased to hear about the success of Soaring Into the Storm as well as the work you are doing on your next book.

I am very sorry that we were not able to meet when you were last in town, but I look forward to meeting you sometime soon.

Sincerely yours,

JK

Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy

THE WHITE HOUSE

September 10, 1997

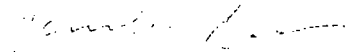
Barbara Clinton
Director of the Center for Health Services
Vanderbilt Medical Center
Vanderbilt University
Nashville, TN 37232

Dear Barbara:

Thank you very much for your letter and for sharing your invaluable advice on the White House Conference on Child Care. We greatly appreciate your guidance and expertise as we continue to develop the themes and the direction of the Conference.

We look forward to working with you in the future as we continue to plan the conference.

Sincerely yours,



Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant to the
President for Domestic
Policy



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37232

TELEPHONE (615) 322-7311

Center for Health Services • Vanderbilt Medical Center • Direct phone 322-4773

August 19, 1997

Jennifer Klein
Special Assistant to the President
for Domestic Policy
2nd Floor West Wing
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Ms. Klein:

Thank you very much for the invitation to participate in a planning meeting for the White House Conference on Child Care which will be held this fall. I enjoyed the meeting, and wanted to share with you some of my reflections since.

The meeting I attended on June 30 included many people more active in the provision of child care services than I. The meeting's discussion focused on the need for additional supports for quality child care services.

I am concerned about the rural communities with which I work in Tennessee, Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia, and Arkansas, which are similar to other rural and disadvantaged areas across the country.

Here, child care availability continues to be sporadic, scarce, or nonexistent. As welfare reform measures fall into place, more and more children are left at home with the television set as their baby-sitter. Luckier ones are left with grandmothers or neighbors. As you may know from the studies done on Kith and Kin Child Care (Mary Lerner of the Packard Institute on the Future of Children is an excellent resource here), these settings tend to be safe and generally do not expose young children to danger. However, anecdotal information points to the dangers children confront when they are in unregulated settings with care being provided from sometimes ambivalent or even unwilling relatives.

In rural areas, families are expected to continue their reliance on Kith and Kin providers and other informal care giving networks. While this is the oldest form of child care, and is highly trusted by families, it is unregulated and not "intentional" on the part of the provider. In fact, a 1990 study of the incidents of this kind of "relative care" revealed that 30% of Hispanic preschoolers and 42% of African-American school age children received their care in these settings.

Jennifer Klein
August 19, 1997
Page 2

A 1994 study of family and relative child care found settings like these which are host to one to two children to be less nurturing and stimulating than is appropriate for young children. This is because the caregivers are mainly motivated to help the mother, and their basic interest is not in child development or child care.

How these Kith and Kin providers can be supported is an interesting question. A Rhode Island study revealed that the Kith and Kin providers were not interested in training, but they responded positively to invitations for "get togethers". Although 73% of the parents of children in this kind of care believed that training for these providers would be helpful, they were hesitant to suggest it. The Rhode Island study also revealed that books were present in only 42% of the homes and paper for drawing and writing available for the children in only 35%. Children's drawings and decorations were not on the walls in 85% of the homes. Television was available in 94% of the homes. Only 51% had outdoor play areas, but 92% of the children seemed clean and well cared for physically.

Thank you, and I would be happy to provide additional information if you feel it would be helpful.

Sincerely,


Barbara Clinton, Director 

BC:ae



NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37232

TELEPHONE (615) 322-7311

Center for Health Services • Vanderbilt Medical Center • Direct phone 322-4773

August 19, 1997

Jennifer Klein
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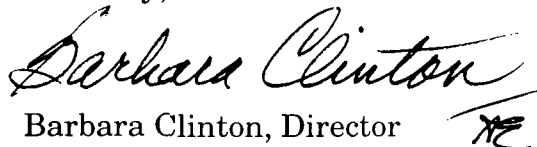
Jennifer Klein
August 19, 1997
Page 2

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