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ABSTRACT

Discussed are ways to help the preschool child develop social skills within the context of the child care center. Social growth is seen to be a gradual process which is helped by consistent care provided by the same individual for the first few years of life. Guidelines are offered for recognizing a healthy social outlook and include noting how the child expresses his feelings. Stressed is the teacher's function as a model of social behavior. The development of a healthy self image is seen to involve positive experiences in the areas of competence, self care skills, group membership, sexual identification, and self defense. Getting along with others is seen to require learning difficult skills such as sharing, waiting, showing acceptable manners, expressing friendship, competing constructively, and demonstrating concern for others. Growth from individual to group concern is thought to be fostered by experiences in exchanging ideas, cooperating and pretending, playing, and eating together. (DB)

caring for children—number eight

FROM "I" TO "WE"

DHEW Publication No. (OCD) 74 –1033

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preface

The influence of a good child care center is not limited to the children who are cared for, the staff itself, or the mothers who participate. Older and younger brothers and sisters, friends, neighbors, volunteers may all gain from changes brought about by the child care center. In some instances, the neighborhood is brightened up, inspired by the attractiveness of the center, and pride emerges to spark new efforts. School teachers and principals, ministers, and local agencies also grow more helpful, more interested in children.

This comes from the friendliness of the center staff to the whole family and to the neighbors. It also comes from the quality of every aspect of the child care center—the cheerful setting, the good food, the well-organized space for activity, the children's progress in learning and self-control, the experience of helping to improve the center itself and the neighborhood, the resulting good feelings, and a contagious sense of progress.

At one child care center on a dirt road full of deep ruts and holes, with some adjacent yards full of junk and neighboring houses in a run down condition, major changes occurred. The city street department improved the road; the real estate agent repaired and painted nearby houses while resident owners painted their own; and volunteers from the police department cleaned up the junk. Yards bare and full of scraggly weeds were seeded and made neat. It all takes effort, but the response releases new energy.

Thus child care centers have the opportunity of providing massive help for the nation's children through contributing to wholesome physical, mental, and social development, and also to an improved environment for the children. The child in a good center all day will receive good food, exercise, and rest to build a healthy body, as well as assistance in correction of physical problems.

Through constant communication with teachers and aides, language is developed, vocabulary is enlarged naturally, thought is stimulated, and a healthy self-concept evolves. Use of toys and other play and work materials involves exercise and development of sensory motor skills, along with many concepts of color, size, shape, weight, balance, structure, and design. Stories and songs encourage integration of feelings, action, and ideas, while developing imagination.

Spontaneous play in the housekeeping corner or with blocks allows the child to play out his observations of the family and the community. Other children may broaden their ideas and skills through watching and joining in the play.

Neither health, nor adequate mental development, nor constructive social behavior can be guaranteed for the rest of the child's life if the following years do not also meet his needs adequately. But good total development in childhood can provide prerequisites for further growth and can help to prevent the beginnings of retardation, disorganized behavior, early delinquency, and emotional disturbance.

acknowledgments

I owe most to two groups of workers with young children: first, my former colleagues at Sarah Lawrence College, who taught the children at the Sarah Lawrence Nursery School—Evelyn Beyer, long time director of the nursery school, and Marian Gay, Rebekah Shuey, and also colleagues at Bank Street College for Teachers with whom at different times I shared teaching and research experiences. But in addition, I owe much to the directors and teachers of many nursery schools and day care centers across America and around the world. Especially exciting to me were the Basic Education schools of India, initiated by Gandhi and Zakir Hussain; and Bal Ghar in Ahmedabad, India—a unique integration of the best American nursery school concepts, Montessori principles, Basic Education, and some traditional Indian patterns, organized with a special balance of good structure and flexibility that I came to know as Kamalini Sarabhai's genius.

I am equally grateful to the creative staff of the North Topeka Day Care Center—Josephine Nesbitt and Forestine Lewis, who "dreamed up" the center to meet the needs of deprived children in their area; and among the intercultural group of teachers and directors, Sarita Peters, Mary Wilson, Jane Kemp, Connie Garcia, Chris Smith —each of whom had special talents in handling the children, stimulating and supporting their growth. Cecile Anderson has been especially generous in sharing her unique story—techniques, observations of children's favorite stories, and ways of looking at children's constructiveness and pride in achievement. Among the volunteers, Lillian Morrow was an inspiration to all of us with her sensitive, skillful, and quietly warm ways, and Carol Rousey contributed expert and helpful assessments of the children's speech and language development.

The leadership of the local OEO director, Robert Harder, and later J. A. Dickinson, stimulated staff, parents and neighbors, Girl Scouts, occupational therapy groups in local hospitals to help paint, plant shrubbery, build outdoor play equipment, provide toys so as to make possible a pleasant and well-furnished environment for learning and for total development. Shirley Norris, director of Kansas State Day Care, Anna Ransom, wise dean of Topeka day care efforts, and Mr. S. Revely, the local realtor who renovated the neighborhood houses for the Center, all gave time, energy, and warm interest to the development of the Center.

I also want to express my appreciation to the responsive mothers whose progress along with that of their children gave me a new understanding of human potentialities in children and adults of all ethnic groups in America and the urgency of making it possible for these to be expressed.

These guidelines were initiated by Dr. Caroline Chandler, former Chief, Children's Mental Health Section, National Institute of Mental Health, and were supported by PHS Grant R12-MH3266, the Menninger Foundation, and Children's Hospital of the District of Columbia. They were prepared under the supervision of Mrs. Franc Balzer, former Director of Head Start's Parent and Child Center Program.

Lois B. Murphy, Ph.D.

FROM "I" TO "WE"

Enjoying other children develops social feeling.

If a newborn infant could put his feelings into words, every sentence would start with "I." For this completely self-centered creature, everything exists solely to make him comfortable. "I am hungry." "I am wet." "I want to sleep." "I want to be held." These are the words he would say. Yet within a few short years, "I" must begin to give way to "you" and "we" if the baby is going to grow into an adult who lives happily in the world as we know it. The process is slow and difficult.

It is natural for human beings to think of their own needs first. No one likes to be held up in a traffic jam, yet we must learn to wait patiently until the cars in front move on if we want to drive a car on crowded highways. We may enjoy listening to loud music late at night, but we must discipline ourselves to listen to softer music if we want to live in an apartment house with close neighbors. Living near other people requires us to restrain our own wishes at times so that we do not make life unpleasant for them.

There have always been some who do not want to be near people. A few go off by themselves into the wilderness and become hermits. Even in big cities, we sometimes see recluses who live alone and never have a kind word or a smile for anyone. Most people pity those who cannot live with others, for joy is multiplied when it is shared.

In the early days of America it was possible to get away from other people. Many of the frontiersmen who helped settle the West left their homes in the East to acquire free land or search for gold. Some took their families and built homes away from anyone else. Others were content to be alone with their horses. They were not true hermits, for most of them enjoyed company when it came their way. At the same time, they enjoyed solitude and did not depend on other people for very much.

Today the emptiness is virtually gone from America. With the increasing population there are fewer places left where one can get away from the crowds. More than ever it is necessary for our children to grow out of the "I" world and into a "We" world. When a child enters a child care center, he is just beginning to grasp the idea that he is a separate individual in a world of many people. His social outlook is developing during these early years. Satisfying experiences with other children and understanding adults can help each child leave the selfish confines of his "I" world and become a socially responsive citizen of a "We" world.

growing up socially

A Gradual Process—One of the happiest days in a new mother's life is when her baby first smiles at her. Until now she has been his slave, running when he cries, changing him when he is soiled, feeding him when he is hungry. Now for the first time, when he is about two months old, her baby recognizes her. That fleeting smile repays a mother for all the sleep she has lost and all the steps she has run.

Actually, her baby has been aware of her from the time she first held him close. When only a couple of weeks old, he fixed his eyes on hers while he was nursing. He adjusted his posture to her way of picking him up. But this smile

is the first outward response to the person who has been closest to him. Mother naturally smiles back and shows baby how much she appreciates his effort. This encourages him to try new ways of communicating with her and receiving her approval in return. Baby is on his way toward becoming a social person.

By the time he is a year old, he shows that he enjoys imitating what he sees someone else do. He will try to brush his teeth with any toothbrush within reach or try to read a newspaper like Daddy does. He delights in repeating acts that make people laugh. He loves to be the center of attention and devises numerous tricks, from throwing his dinner on the floor to rolling his eyes and clapping his hands, just to get someone to look at him.

Mother is still the center of his universe. He watches her for clues as to what she expects. He wants to please and likes to be praised. He will offer her his cookie after he has taken a bite, or he may even take out part that he has chewed and try to stuff it into her mouth. He wants to share his treasures with the person he loves.

In trying to please Mother, the toddler will experiment with sounds that he has heard her use. Eventually his sounds will become words with meanings, and he has taken a step toward using language to respond socially.

He cares so much for his mother that he cries when she leaves. If she has to be away for a long time, he may lose his appetite and get depressed. If possible, it is better for baby to know at least two adults well. Perhaps father can feed and dress him for bed at night, or grandmother can take over on a fairly regular basis. Then if mother becomes sick, baby doesn't feel his world has crumbled.

Despite his love for his mother, the world of a one-year-old still revolves around himself. He may enjoy watching other children, but he hasn't yet learned how to play considerately with anyone. He is likely to push or even bite his playmate or sit on him. Yet he needs to find out that there are other people in the world who do not cater to him. He must learn that when he bites another baby, the hurt baby will cry, and mother, who usually approves of what he does, will scold.

Toward the end of his second year, he will still enjoy watching other children and may give another child a toy. This is a good time for him to play with older children rather than be restricted to his own age group. A child of four or five often likes to play house with the toddler as the baby. In the company of an older child, a one- or two-year-old can enjoy the social contact without having to fend off attacks that are likely to come from a child his own age. When he is two, he may be happy playing next to another child, but he probably has not yet learned to cooperate with someone else in his play.

Baby Needs People—It may seem easier to leave a baby alone until he knows how to behave with other people. Play pens and cribs come equipped with eye-catching figures that hang over his head or colorful balls that spin and rattle when they are hit. Bottle holders have been scientifically designed to hold the bottle in the correct position so that baby may eat alone. Some mothers may even reason that baby is happiest alone with his toys.

Most people who study child development do not agree. There has never been a toy manufactured that can take the place of human contact. While some time alone each day will be good for the baby, long periods of isolation can cripple his natural sociability. Infant seats that support baby's weak back and neck while allowing him to sit up and watch other people are a boon to both mother and baby. He can enjoy being close to her while she continues with her household chores.

It is particularly important for baby to be with other people as he approaches his first birthday, for this is the period when he is developing many of his social attitudes. If he is kept isolated, he may revert to his infantile habits of sucking his fingers or rocking his body. He may become so dependent on these habits that he is unable to give them up later in exchange for normal social relationships.[1]

An infant who enjoys the security and warmth of consistent care by the same person until he is two or three years old seems to be better fortified to handle life's pressures. This is

1 Susan Isaacs, **The Nursery Years** (New York: Shocken Books, 1968).

Most young children want physical contact with an adult.

a particular concern in providing care for young children of working mothers, for it points to the desirability of having the same person look after the same babies day after day, especially at feeding time.[2]

Is He Friendly or Suspicious?—Janie is a naturally friendly child. She will go off happily with any new person, trusting completely that no one will harm her. Her mother worries that some day Janie will be too trusting for her own good. After half a day at the child care center, Janie was so much at home that anyone would think she had been there for months.

Jenny is just the opposite. She shuns strangers. She clung to her mother for dear life when mother tried to leave her at the center. If mother stayed, Jenny was willing to stay—never venturing very far away. The moment mother stood up to leave, Jenny flew to her side and screamed to go with her. It was a week before Jenny would allow her mother out of her sight, and it was two months before she left her mother willingly in the morning.

Why are two little girls the same age so different in their attitudes toward others?

Each child has his individual pattern of social, as well as physical, development. Some of it depends on his home life and his relationships with the people who live with him. Children in large families learn how to get along with others through normal brother-sister play and tussles. An only child, on the other hand, may have to learn his lessons in social living through hard experiences on the playground or in the classroom. Twins who always have one another to lean on may be slow in responding to others because they do not need anyone else.

A child who is constantly scolded and made to feel he does everything wrong may have a difficult time developing socially. He may be so afraid of displeasing the adults around him that he keeps to himself where he can't get into trouble, or he may take the opposite route and go out of his way to create trouble. Like the isolated child, he too may return to infant pleasures and develop habits that will satisfy him, but put barriers in his way to making social contact with others.

A child, like Jenny, who cannot face up to leaving mother, may have become very anxious at a young age when mother was ill and had to be away in the hospital for a long time.

Physical traits may also affect a child's social responsiveness. A child with sensitive ears may be frightened by a teacher's loud voice and retreat to some quiet, inner world in which he feels safer. A child with poor eyesight may have difficulty identifying people by sight and may choose to ignore them rather than risk making a mistake.

Where a child lives may also influence his social development. A country child may have strict parents who do not believe in "sparing the rod," yet he may feel very little restriction because he is free to roam widely in the open fields near his home. To him all people may seem friendly and nature is kind. The city child may have permissive parents who give him a great deal of freedom at home, yet he must be so protected from traffic and other dangers of city life that he may be suspicious in new places.[3]

Recognizing a Healthy Social Outlook—It doesn't take a knowledge of psychology to know who is likeable and who is disagreeable. Generally, we like the people who are pleasant to be with. As carefully as the teacher in a center tries to treat all the children alike, she can't help feeling closer to sunny Maria, who greets her in the morning with a smile and a hug, than to moody Ernestine, who turns from her with a scowl.

Ironically, Maria probably does not need teacher's attention as much as Ernestine does. The person who can show affection spontaneously is healthier socially than the one who stiffens and looks the other way.

How can teacher be sure that her children are normal in their social responsiveness? Every one displays unpleasant behavior at some time. Even friendly Maria has thrown water on the floor in anger because teacher told her it was time to leave the water table and go outdoors. There also are occasions when surly

2 Margaret Mead, "Working Mothers and Their Children," Manpower Magazine (June 1970).

3 Gardner Murphy, Lois Barclay Murphy, and Theodore M. Newcomb, **Experimental Social Psychology** (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1937). Reprinted by Westport, Conn. Greenwood Press, 1972.

Mirror play can help a child realize that he is a distinct person, different from every other child.

Ernestine will snuggle up on teacher's lap for a story. What can teacher look for in each of her children to measure their social development?

She can watch how each child responds to other children. Does he talk with them? Does he offer something to another child or try to get something from him? Does he help others? Does he have a special friend? Is he willing to share? Does he criticize, advise, correct, imitate, or cooperate with other children? Can he laugh at a joke?

What is he like with adults? Does he smile at them? Does he show his feelings by making statements like, "I like you," or "What's your name?" Does he enjoy physical contact with an adult? Does he try to imitate what teacher does?

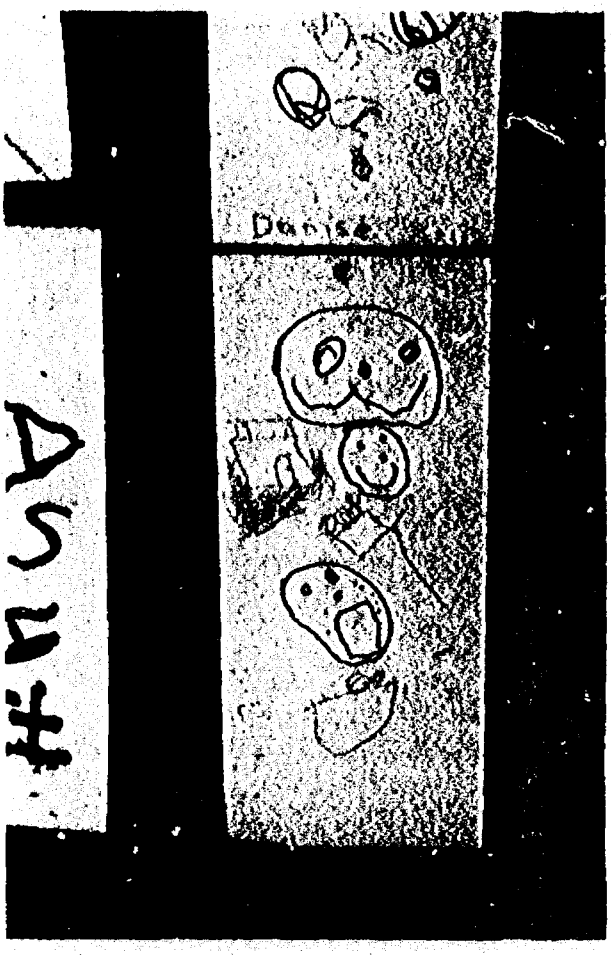
Is he able to show pleasure and enthusiasm? Does he call out "See what I can do!" when he masters jumping off a bench or kicking a ball? Does he run gaily to teacher to show her the ladybug he found? Can he throw himself into the actions of a singing game? Can he enjoy listening to a story?

Is he a cooperating member of the group? Does he generally follow the rules of the center and accept the limits of behavior set by teacher? Every child is likely to slip once in a while. It is hard to remember to turn off the outdoor voice after coming inside or to walk instead of running. It is hard to remember not to bop another child who bumps you by accident (but to tell him to watch where he is going). When reminded of the rule, does the child accept the reminder and change his behavior willingly? Does he feel that he belongs? Does he use words like "my friend," "my teacher," or "my school?"

Can he let off steam by pounding on clay or punching a ball instead of a person? Will he defend himself if someone else attacks him? Can he compete in races according to the rules and lose sportingly? Does he try to talk out his angers and frustrations before losing his temper? Can he express his feelings through painting or drawing?

Is he learning to wait his turn? Does he allow someone else to play with a favorite toy for a while? Can he enjoy a story that another child selected?

No child behaves perfectly all the time. If teacher can observe a child and answer "yes—most of the time" to these questions, she can be



When a child sees that his work with his name on it is good enough to hang on the walls of his room, he feels proud of his accomplishment.

pretty sure that the child's social development is normal. If she can answer "yes—some of the time," she will know that the child is making progress, but may need some additional help in getting along with others. If teacher must answer "no" to most of the questions, she knows that she has a child who requires a great deal of help for social development. His poor social behavior may even be a clue to some serious emotional problem that may require psychiatric therapy.

Helping Social Growth—Children learn a good deal by doing what they see older children and grownups do. This is particularly true in the areas of social behavior. If the folks in Caleb's home help one another and are thoughtful of neighbors, Caleb is likely to be considerate of others too. The opposite is also true, because children copy unpleasant behavior from grownups as well. When Marcos' mother beat him with a belt because he

played with her lipstick, he learned that it is all right to beat up another child who takes something belonging to him.

In a child care center it is the teacher whom the children will imitate. She must set the example for acceptable social behavior. When Martin and Tina got involved in a sand-throwing fight over the only spade in the sandbox, teacher remained calm. "If Martin had the spade first, you must let him dig with it for a little while," teacher said. "You come with me, Tina, and we'll see if we can find something else for you to dig a big hole with."

Teacher took Tina by the hand and walked with her to the toy shed where they found a tin cup as a substitute for the spade. Returning to the sandbox with Tina, teacher told Martin, "Tina would still like to use that red spade, so after you have used it a while longer, it will be Tina's turn to use it and you may use her cup. I'll tell you when it is time to change."

By finding a reasonable solution to their conflict, teacher showed the children that there are better ways to solve problems than hurting one another. Her friendly help in finding a substitute made up somewhat for the loss Tina felt in having to give up the attractive spade.

Sometimes adults react to children's anger with anger of their own. Teacher could have grabbed the spade from Tina's hand and told the child to go find something else to play with. With no ideas where to look for "something else" and a feeling that teacher had turned against her and sided with Martin, Tina's anger could have grown into an uncontrollable tantrum that could have disrupted the entire group.

If the children are going to copy teacher's behavior, they must look on her as a person they can trust. She may be firm and insist on obedience to the rules, but she must enforce them fairly. Children are extremely aware of injustices to themselves. "No fair" is a phrase children learn early and use often. After teacher tells Martin and Tina they must trade digging tools in a little while, she must be sure to tell them when it is time. If she forgets, or assumes that because Tina has stopped crying she has forgotten the red spade, she is making a serious mistake. Children do not forget as many promises as we think they do. When teacher forgets a promise, the children learn that her word is not trustworthy. If she can't be trusted in this incident, then other things she says are probably not true as well.

Many young children seem to crave physical contact with an adult. Visitors to a child care center for the first time often are surprised how quickly some of the children will approach a stranger and immediately climb on his lap or playfully pull his hair or rub his arm. These children need the warmth of a supporting adult to help them take their place in a group of children their own age. If teacher welcomes the child who needs physical contact to a place on her lap or a seat next to her, she is giving that child security and eventually the child will be able to leave her protection and become more independent.

Who Am I?
Two little ears to hear with,
Two eyes to see and see,
I'm so very happy with all of me.

A Healthy Self-Image—The simple question, "Who am I?" has no simple answer. From the world's point of view each one of us is insignificant—just one of three-and-a-half billion human beings. Yet, we must feel important to ourselves if we are to live a happy life.

How we feel about ourselves affects how we feel about others. We can accept others as they are, respecting their good qualities and overlooking their shortcomings, if we respect ourselves. We must value our own accomplishments and be convinced that we have something worth while to offer to others. We must be careful not to inflate our abilities, but must learn to appreciate them honestly. We must have confidence that we can do what we claim we can do, and we must understand where our limits lie. With faith in our good judgment, we can reach our own realistic decisions about matters that influence our lives.

People who can honestly answer the question "Who am I?" have developed a healthy self-image that will help them through many difficult times.

Those who do not truly know themselves are likely to "bite off more than they can chew" and become discouraged. They may blame "the boss" or "bad luck" for their lack of success. Some turn to crime as a means of getting back at a harsh world.

The person who has known nothing but failure all his life has developed a negative self-image. He is convinced there isn't anything

he can do well, so he doesn't try to do anything constructive. In running away from his responsibilities, the chronic failure may turn to drugs or alcohol as a way out.

Experiences in early childhood hold the secret to what kind of self-image a person will develop. Children who feel secure in their families and who receive approval for their achievements will continue to view themselves in a favorable light. Long before they can talk, they recognize their own names. They know where they stand in the family and will protest if they think they are not getting their share of attention. These children come to a child care center with a great deal of self-confidence.

There are children in child care centers who are not so sure of themselves. Sometimes a child in a very large family, where the parents are too ill or tired to give him the attention he needs, may not be clear about who he is or what his role in the family is. Children brought up in orphanages often suffer in the same way, for they have always been just one unimportant person in a crowd of others. Nobody had bothered to single them out as a special individual.

In the child care center many games can help make each child aware that he is distinct from every other child. Teacher wants to be sure that each child knows his own name and eventually the names of the other children. Games like "Who is it?" or "Who is hiding?" encourage the children to call one another by name. Action songs with words like those quoted above help a child to become aware of the parts of his body and of himself as an important person.

Each child should have his own cubby where he hangs his coat and keeps any other possessions. The child's picture and name often are attached to the cubby so that he knows it is really his. Teacher makes a point to use the child's name when she talks with him. Remarks, like "Harry is wearing bright green socks today," or "Darlene is the first one to put her blocks away," will give the children a feeling that they are worthy of the group's attention.

Mirrors are important in the child care center so that children can look at themselves often and see that they are different from everyone else. Some teachers play games with mirrors so that everyone has a chance to see himself.

Children love to find themselves and their friends in photographs. If colored slides are taken during a field trip or party and shown a week later, they not only strengthen the children's self-images, but also encourage the children to recall a past experience. Children should not be rushed through this experience. Each picture should be shown long enough for every child on it to identify himself and to talk about the circumstances.

When Mrs. DeCruz showed her group the photos she took on a visit to the zoo, the response went like this:

"I see me! I see me!"

"Look! I'm giving the bear a peanut."

"There's Valerie. Her got ice cream on her dress."

With each photograph the children relived their visit and at the same time developed a clearer idea of themselves in a social setting.

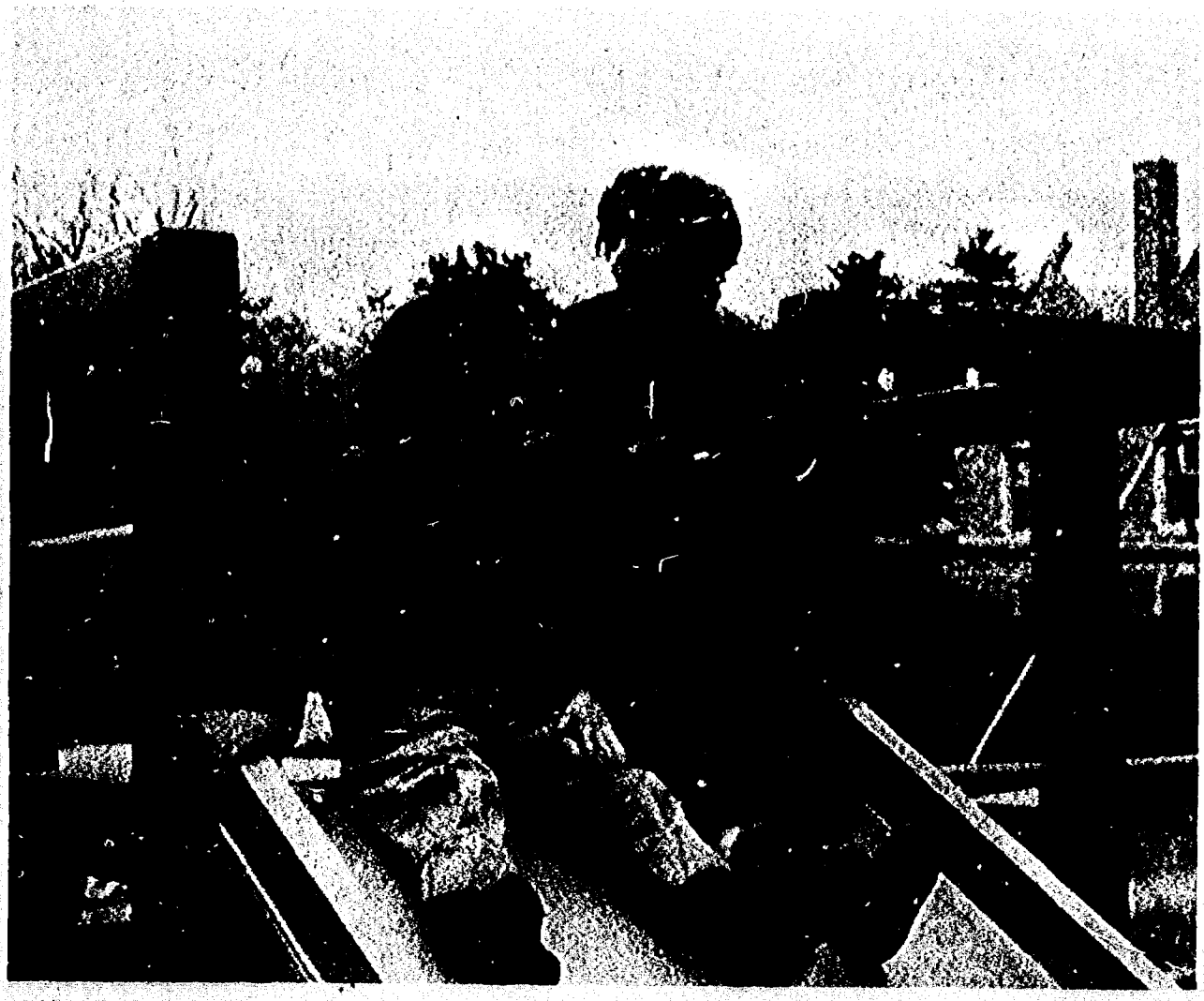
There are so many ways in a child care center to bolster a child's self-image that there is not room to list them all here. Birthday parties, games and conversations about each child's favorite color or favorite foods, listening to a child's description of some event, seeking a child's opinion of a story or the placement of a piece of furniture—all these are ways of helping a child think of himself as a unique individual.

Competent Person—"Look, Boo, look! She's putting my pictures on the wall. I made them and she's putting them on the wall." Little Marian grabbed her brother by both arms and jumped up and down with excitement. She couldn't believe that a picture she had drawn would be good enough to hang in the director's office.

Marian was a newcomer to the child care center where her brother, whom she called Boo, attended. She couldn't settle down with her group at first and spent most of her time wandering around the center looking for Boo. The staff was concerned about Marian because she had little interest in the things the other children were doing and seemed overly dependent on her brother.

One day her wanderings took her to the director's office. Mrs. Holmes talked with her a few minutes, then seeing that Marian did not want to return to her group, she gave her several sheets of paper and some crayons and suggested that she draw some pictures. When she finished, Mrs. Holmes printed "Marian" in black letters at the top of each picture and hung them on her wall.

Dressing oneself develops a sense of independence.



A child who feels comfortable with his group may carry a warm attitude toward new people in new situations.

Marian was so proud of her accomplishment that she pulled everyone to Mrs. Holmes' office to see her work. After that Marian became more confident with the other children. Instead of backing away from painting or play-dough, she would jump at the opportunity to "make a present for Mrs. Holmes."

Marian's taste of success had improved her self-image. She now had assurance that she could do a valued job.

Good child care centers and schools are decorated with samples of the children's work. This practice not only makes a room bright and gay, but gives the children a feeling of pride that their work is good enough for other people to look at and admire.

Teacher must be careful to display every child's work at some time. Abilities vary greatly among children of the same age group, and she cannot hang only the best. It doosn't matter if Francesca's jack-o'-lantern has three eyes and no mouth. It is something she did by herself, and if she can feel proud when she sees it hanging on the wall, she might try harder next time to make her work more realistic.

Looking After Myself—Part of growing up is learning to look after ourselves. The job of parents and teachers is to prepare a child to get along without them. Looking after oneself involves getting dressed alone. When a child can put on his own shoes and socks, zip up his pants, or button his coat, it gives him a greater sense of independence and, at the same time, relieves teacher of many time-consuming chores.

Sometimes adults are so anxious to see

children become independent that they forget that immature muscles cannot do certain tasks. Most three-year-olds may be able to put on their shoes, but not many three-year-old fingers are skillful enough to tie the laces. Youngsters who can put on a coat without difficulty may need help getting into snow pants and boots.

There are many important jobs young children can do. Some teachers post work rosters each week assigning tasks. Jimmy feeds the fish; Sally puts out the napkins for the snack; Orlando waters the plants; and Jennifer sweeps up the crumbs after lunch.

One teacher found many useful services that three- and four-year-olds could perform around the center.[4] They included:

Washing dishes after they had been used

Cleaning out the aquarium

Loading sand in a wheelbarrow and shoveling it under the swings after a rainy day

Cutting up fruits and vegetables for snacks

Carrying simple messages to another teacher

Sanding and waxing blocks and stapling different grades of sandpaper to them to make music blocks

Puttying up holes in the woodworking tables

Hammering nails back into the benches so that clothes will not snag

Oiling squeaky tricycles

Some of the jobs require more adult supervision than others, and some are more suitable for four-year-olds than younger children. Teacher should not assign tasks that take too long, as young children lose interest. Just because Richie tackles a pile of dirty dishes with much vigor and splashing, he is not necessarily up to washing every dish. The fun soon gives away to boredom if he is expected to complete too large a job. Rather than assigning dish washing to just one child, teacher can keep interest high by assigning four or five children to take turns and share the chore.

4 Joanne Hendrick, "The Pleasures of Meaningful Work for Young Children," Young Children, Vol. XXII, No. 6 (Sept. 1967).

The purpose of child help is not to relieve adults of unpleasant chores but to give children the satisfying experience of doing a job well.

People who can look after themselves also know how to protect themselves, and teachers can contribute to a child's well-being by making him aware of dangers. "When you ride the tricycle that fast over the bumpy grass, José, you are likely to turn over and hurt yourself." Teacher uses words that point out the danger without making José stop riding. It may take a tumble to convince him that teacher is right, but the lesson he learns about protecting himself may be worth a bruised elbow.

A child who is able to look after himself also knows the limits of his own energy. Mike and Christina were playing "doggie" with a group of children. They romped around on all fours, barking and growling at one another. Suddenly Mike dropped out and went to sit on the bench next to teacher. He was hot and sweaty. He knew he had had enough exertion and needed a rest.

Teacher noticed that Christina, too, was flushed and overexcited. Unlike Mike, she was not mature enough to protect herself. She kept on in the strenuous game until she appeared close to tears. "Christina," said teacher, walking over and touching her shoulder. "It's time for this tired puppy to come and sit with Mike and me. You can play again when you have cooled off."

An Important Member of an Important Group—"Do I belong to you?" Bela wanted to know, looking up at her mother.

"In a way," smiled Mother. "We belong to each other because we are members of the same family." Reassured, Bela ran off to play with her friends.

Bela was not asking to belong to her mother in the sense of being owned, like a pet dog. She needed assurances that she was an important member of her family group and that she could count on support from its members if life were to become threatening. Everyone, adults as well as children, except for a handful of hermits, needs to feel he belongs in a group of people who understand and approve of him.

The family is just one such group. Most people belong to several groups. There are the kids in school and the boys in the scout troop and later, in life, the people at work. Our neighbors

make up a group that we belong to, and the people who share our religious beliefs make up another. We go through life moving from one group to another.

In addition to these smaller social groups, we share special traditions of our culture. It is important for each child to believe that his own traditions are valuable and beautiful. In child care centers where the children represent several different cultures, there are numerous opportunities to enrich the lives of each child. With the help of parents and older brothers and sisters, a program of music and dancing of the ethnic groups represented in the center might be presented. Juan will puff up with pride when his father sings a song in Spanish, and Yuki will feel important when her mother models a Japanese kimono. They will learn that other cultures have something to offer as they watch and listen to the songs and dances.

A tasting party of ethnic foods might be a way of introducing young children to new eating experiences and at the same time helping them to understand that every culture has something valuable to offer. It is also important that foods known to the children be a part of the regular meals at the center.

For a young child, the child care center is often the first group outside the family that he has contact with. It is important that he feels he belongs, for his experiences in this group may color his attitudes toward people later in life.

A Happy Boy or Girl—Lavere was very proud of his father and his father's work as a fireman. He bragged to everyone about what a brave man his father was and how his father took him for a ride on the fire truck.

Several of the children did not have fathers living with them, so teacher invited Lavere's father to visit the child care center and talk with the children about what a fireman does. He spent an hour with the children, letting each one try on his fire hat. He invited the boys and girls to visit the fire station.

After he left, several of the boys played fireman. Lavere had a toy fireman's hat, and the others created their own hats. George turned a pot upside down on his head; Jay borrowed the dish pan; and Carlos dumped the crayons out of a basket and used that. With their hats on, they built fire trucks with large blocks and rode to put out fires.

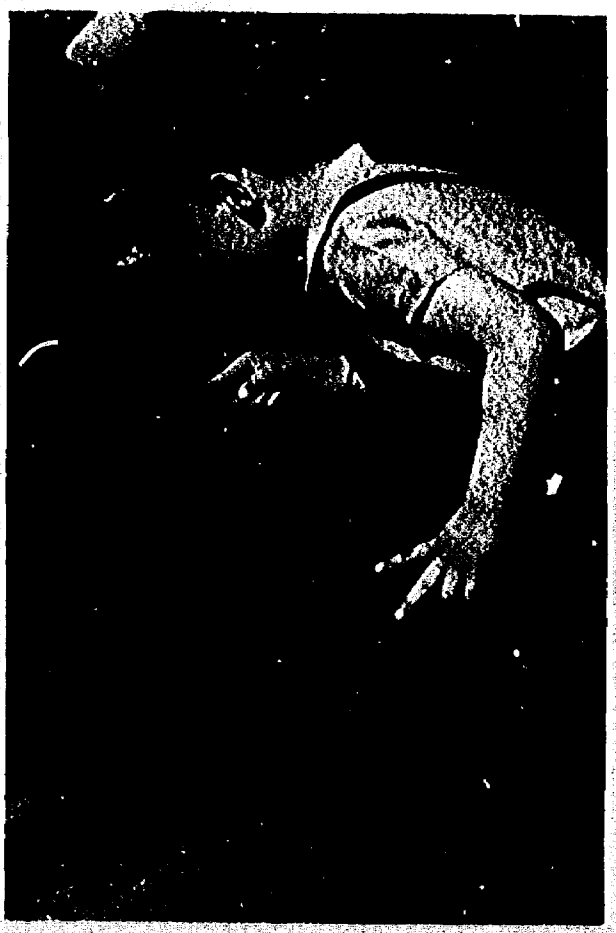
When children are happy with the sex they are born with, they grow into better adjusted men and women. If they admire adults of the same sex, they are more likely to accept being girls or boys.

Sometimes little boys like to dress up in mother's clothes or play with dolls, while many little girls are happy when they are hammering nails into a board or loading and unloading a dump truck with sand. Adults may worry that the boy will grow up to be a "sissy" and the girl a "tomboy." Playing the roles of both mother and father is natural for young children of both sexes. There is no need to worry and insist that boys play only with cars and "boy things" and that girls play house all the time. However, if children continue to dress and act like members of the opposite sex, they face the possibility of living a life that is out of step with the mainstream of society as we know it today.

By nature, women play the dominant role in a young child's life. It is usually mother who is there while father is off at work. Most teachers of young children—in child care centers, kindergartens, and elementary schools—are women. For this reason, it is desirable, whenever possible, to bring men into the classroom. It is difficult to find full-time male teachers. Therefore, some centers hire male college students as part-time aides. Others encourage visits from policemen, doctors, dentists, and other men that the children might have some contact with. Fathers, as well as mothers, should be urged to visit their child's group and spend some time playing and talking with the children.

Men's clothing should be a part of the dress-up collection in every child care center. Tools representing the occupations of the fathers of the children allow all the children to play at doing what is still frequently referred to as men's work.[5] Tommy can be a carpenter with a hammer; Lois can be a painter with a wide brush and a can of water; Luis can be a bricklayer with a trowel and some real bricks. Workman's coveralls and a selection of working hats—a gas

5 Ruth E. Hartley and Robert W. Goldenson, **The Complete Book of Children's Play** (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1963).



Boys and girls like to play the roles of their mothers or fathers.

station attendant's cap, a construction worker's hard hat, a fireman's hat—will help the children act out the role of their fathers.

Some items that father uses around the house could be included in the housekeeping corner. For instance, there could be a shaving set, a shoe shining kit, a lunch box, a lawn mower, and a snow shovel.

Standing Up for Myself—Most parents feel strongly that children should learn to defend themselves at an early age. When Johnny comes crying to mother because Tony punched him, mother is likely to tell him sternly, "Don't expect me to fight your battles. Stand up for yourself." Johnny probably is bewildered because mother also has told him it is wrong to hit other children. Now when he has been hit, she expects him to fight back.

Johnny's mother knows it is important for him to be able to defend himself, just as it is important for him to learn not to attack others. However, she can help Johnny understand that he often can protect himself without hitting. He can push Tony away and play with someone else, or he can warn Tony, "I'll have to hit you if you do that again." Many children tussle and roll on the ground together like puppies in a kind of play that looks more like fighting. Mother can explain that maybe punching was Tony's way of asking Johnny to wrestle with him. If Johnny doesn't enjoy that kind of play, he can make his feelings clear to Tony by saying, "I don't want to play like that. Let's run to the fence instead."

There are many ways a child can stand up for himself without violence. When he has learned to do so, he has self-confidence. He can be himself without fear that others will pick on him or make fun of his ideas.

Children who have such self-assurance do not seem to be as annoyed by things that might upset a less confident child. They are more relaxed in new situations and generally cooperative members of a group.

Children need help in learning how to wait. Waiting is easier when they know their patience will be rewarded by (a tasty meal) or (by fun).

Everything that builds a child's value of his own worth gives him ammunition for defending himself. While mother's immediate reaction may be to tell Johnny to "fight your own battles," her appreciation of his accomplishments day after day is what gives him the stuff to do it. She lets him know that she thinks he is a capable boy who can look after himself.

Teachers can give the same kind of support by praising each child's efforts and noticing improvements in skills. However, they must be ready to offer the protection of an adult when it is truly needed. If Johnny is attacked regularly by the class bully, teacher may have to keep the two children separate.

getting along with others

Sharing—"Mine" is one of the first words children learn to say. Possession is so very important to them that they try to possess everything in sight, whether it actually belongs to them or not. Helping children learn to share is an important responsibility of a child care teacher.

All the children were sitting at tables tearing out bits of paper to paste onto a collage. Norman tore his out quickly and soon had a sizable pile of paper shapes in front of him. David worked slowly and when the pasting began, he quickly used up his small supply of paper bits. However, when he began to draw from Norman's large pile, Norman angrily picked up all the pieces and threw them in the wastebasket. He would rather give up pasting any himself than share with David.

Difficulty in sharing is normal at the age of two and three years, but at five years it is a sign of social immaturity or inexperience. Children who cannot share are frequently the ones who insist on being first in line or in winning every game they play.

Sharing is particularly difficult for children who have not had very many possessions at home. When they see the large variety of playthings at a child care center they want to keep them all for themselves whether they are using them or not. Teacher must explain in a warm manner that the toys belong to all the children, and every one must have an opportunity to play with them.

Often a time table for taking turns will work with three- and four-year-olds. If both Philip and Lynn want the wheelbarrow, Lynn might agree to push the doll carriage for five minutes while Philip plays with the wheelbarrow. Then on signal from teacher, they will trade.

This arrangement, however, does not work well with two-year-olds who are too young to understand the meaning of taking turns or of time words like "five minutes" or "in a little while." For younger children the wiser course is to have several of the same toys available so that too much sharing is not required.

When the children learn that teacher's word can be trusted and that they will get a turn with their favorite toy, they will be more willing to share.

Waiting—Learning to wait is as difficult for a young child as learning to share. The two are very much alike because the child who must give up a pleasing toy to another child is, in fact, waiting for his chance to play with the toy again.

As unpleasant as waiting is for adults as well as children, it is something we must accept if we are going to get along with other people. All of us have been annoyed at the impatient person who elbows his way to the head of the line while we are waiting to buy a movie ticket or board a bus.

Waiting is easier if we know we will get a reward in the end. . . . if we are sure there will still be a seat in the theater for us and if we know that the bus won't go off and leave us behind. For children, too, waiting is easier if they are certain of a reward.

When baby cries for a bottle of milk, he is hungry and impatient. He doesn't like waiting, and he lets everyone know it by his shrill cries. However, if feeding after feeding, day after day, he receives gratifying food, he learns that waiting pays off. As he grows older he is willing

to hold his cries until his food appears, for he knows it will come soon.

What happens to the baby who does not receive such constant care? What if no one pays attention to his hunger cries and the feeding hour passes without any reward? If this happens very often, the child will not be willing to wait for anything, for he has no assurance that waiting will bring a reward.

In a child care center, teacher can add to a child's sense of pride with remarks like, "Waiting is such a hard thing to do, it shows what a big boy you are, John, to be willing to wait until Jeff is off the swing."

At the same time, teacher must realize that overly long waits are too much for young children to cope with. She must arrange her schedule to keep waiting to a minimum. She can do this by sending the children by twos or threes to the bathroom before lunch instead of expecting them to stand patiently in line while waiting to use the toilets and washstands. Singing or listening to records helps pass the time while lunch is being served.

Manners—Luz and Debby were sitting side by side pasting different colored leaves onto outlines of trees drawn on large sheets of paper. Debby had the bottle of glue and was happily covering her entire tree with daubs. Luz needed the glue.

"Gimme dat paste," Luz demanded.

"Her didn't say please," Debby protested.

"Please," muttered Luz begrudgingly.

Debby gave up the paste, then immediately began to cry in a forlorn way as if she just realized that by responding to the magic word "please" she had lost a treasured possession.

Such exchanges between three-year-olds indicate that while they have been taught by conscientious mothers and teachers to use the proper words, they still do not comprehend the deeper meaning of good manners. Words like "thank you," "please," and "you're welcome" are mere mechanical responses until they are understood as part of a sincere consideration for others.

In some child care centers, teachers will take the snack away from a child who refuses to say "thank you." The fact that eating in front of someone who has nothing to eat also is poor manners does not seem to occur to the teachers. One of the surest ways to teach children good manners is to set the example of good manners. If adults always used appropriate words in talking with children, most children soon would follow this style of speaking. There would be no need for harsh reminders to say "please" or "thank you."

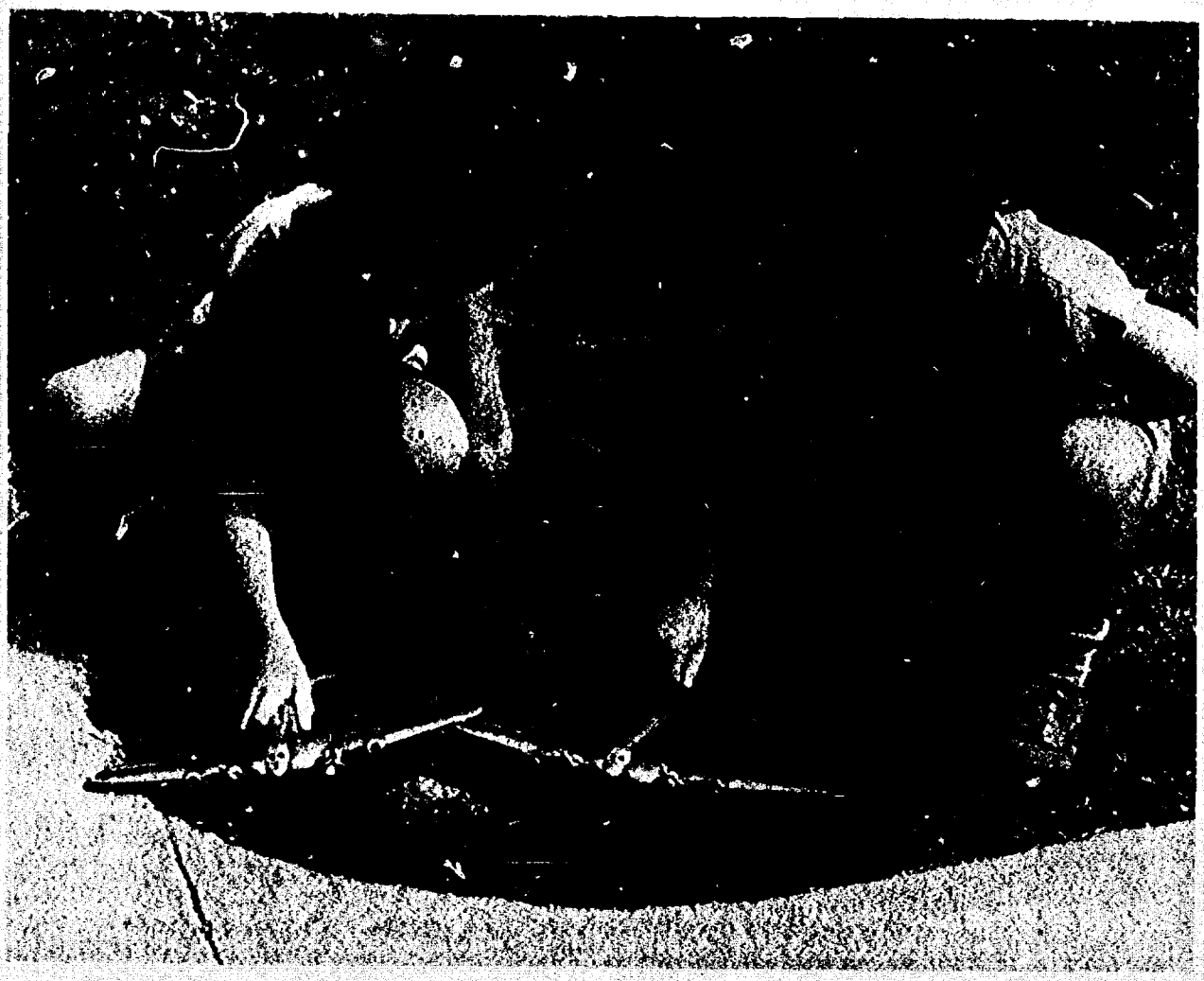
Friendship—"I won't be your friend," Priscilla shouted, kicking at teacher when she told her it was time to stop cutting out pictures and wash her hands for lunch. Young children readily talk about friends and friendship even though they are just beginning to experience friendship.

When Patty, Douglas, and Allen dressed up in play clothes and squeezed into the cubby hole under the climbing platform there was much talk about friendship. "Will you be my friend?" Patty asked Douglas. "No," he replied. Putting his face up to Douglas', Allen asked the same question, "Will you be my friend?" "Yes," said Douglas, "I'll be your friend." Then as Allen turned away, Douglas picked up a toy truck and hit his new "friend" over the head with it. It was a gentle, "friendly" blow, and Allen was wearing a plastic cowboy hat at the time which protected his head. He probably understood that this was Douglas' way of being a friend.

Friendship among young children is a fleeting affair. Children who are friends one day may ignore or fight with one another the next day. This is all part of growing up socially and learning little by little what a mature friendship is. The child who makes no effort at being friends with anyone needs help in learning that doing things with other people often is more fun than being alone.

Some children will approach another child with words like, "You're going to be my friend," or "Teresa, do you like me?" Once a friendship has been made, a child will take pride in introducing the other child as "This is my friend, Teresa. She is only three years old."

Friendship can help a child develop good social behavior. Lorin and Ricky could not get along with one another. Every day they fought about something. Then Lorin met Timmy and found out how much fun it was doing things with his new friend. He kept clear of Ricky, and avoided fights with others.



Friendship is natural; it begins in childhood and grows more lasting as the child gets older.

Competition—"I can run faster than you." "My house is bigger than yours." "My painting is better than yours."

Such remarks are often heard in a child care center. Every child is looking for approval, and one way to achieve it is to run down someone else's accomplishments. If Lamont runs faster than Walter, then, in Lamont's way of thinking, he is a better person.

We live in a world which depends on both cooperation and competition. Although some American Indian and other societies are far less competitive, American city children become competitive by the age of four. Organized games with rules, like basketball, give older children an opportunity to compete with one another in an orderly manner. With children too young to play a game according to fixed rules, competition easily leads to fighting.

In a child care center one of the most common causes of a fight is unsupervised competition. David declares himself the leader in a game of follow-the-leader, but Ruthie, Dawn, and Enrico want to be leaders too. Older children have their own formulas for choosing the leader. They recite rhymes like: "Engine, engine number nine" or "One potato, two potato, three potato, four." But younger children do not know these methods, nor are they old enough to understand that if Dawn is "It" this time, most certainly the rules of chance will make someone else "It" next time.

When competition for leadership threatens to turn into a free-for-all argument or fight, teacher must step in to help the children take turns in the leader's position or to suggest another game that would assign important roles to everyone, like playing zoo with animals, keepers, and visitors. Supervised races also provide an

Some children enjoy a friendly wrestling match; others reject such energetic play. The child who doesn't enjoy play, such as wrestling, has to learn ways to fend off aggressive approaches.

outlet for competition.

A healthy kind of competition that does not lead to fist fights is competing against oneself. When a child tries constantly to improve his own achievements, he continues to be challenged, but does not feel defeated if he cannot surpass someone else.

The child care teacher can praise a child's accomplishments without reference to any other child's work. "That is really a strong garage you made today, Kathryn. It won't fall down like the one you made yesterday." "You were able to put that puzzle together all by yourself today, weren't you, Patrick?" By such remarks teacher gives the child a feeling of pride in his own abilities.

Another form of competition is bragging about new clothes. This can be painful to children from families who cannot afford to buy them new clothes. Instead of focusing attention on the new garment, teacher would be kinder to respond with a general kind of answer like, "We all feel excited when we get something new," or "It's nice to get new clothes, isn't it?"

The amount of competition within a group of children will depend on the range of ages. Children close in age are more likely to compete because their interests are similar. Lamont would not brag about running faster than Walter if Walter were much younger than Lamont.

Whenever teacher can settle disputes and channel chaotic competition into constructive behavior, the children learn they can look to grownups for help when things get out of hand.

Showing Concern—Healthy children naturally are sympathetic and care about one another. Examples of this can be seen every day in a child care center.

"I want my blanket. I want my blanket," Tania whimpered, pointing to Gregory, who was waving a red scarf in the air and prancing around in a teasing kind of dance. Tania always took the scarf to bed with her and called it a blanket.

Teacher tried to be helpful. "Go tell Gregory it is yours and ask him to give it to you." But Tania pulled farther away from the prancing Gregory and sniffled. Just then Russell, who was a head taller than Tania and several pounds heavier than Gregory, appeared. "Do you want that?" he demanded of Tania. She nodded. Russell walked boldly up to Gregory and in a matter-of-fact voice said, "That's Tania's. I'll give it to her." He took the scarf from Gregory's hand and gallantly returned it to its tiny owner. Apparently impressed by Russell's size, Gregory went off without complaint.

It is a common sight in the play yard to see one child help another child up after he has fallen off a tricycle or to take the hand of a smaller child while climbing the ladder to the slide. Sometimes children can be quite adult in showing concern for others. While pouring juice, Joanie spilled some on the table and onto her slacks. Fear showed in her face at the sight of the spot on her clothes. Mother apparently had told her to stay clean, and she was so upset at dirtying her slacks that she could not move. Orlando quickly ran to the kitchen, got a sponge, mopped up the table, and returned the sponge to the kitchen. He had voluntarily done Joanie's job as soon as he realized she was unable to carry it out herself.

It is often satisfying for an older child to help a younger child. In some schools special programs allow slow readers in the upper grades

to listen to children in the lower grades read and to help them with difficult words. These programs have resulted in double benefits. Both the older and the younger child improve their reading skills at the same time. If a child care center can arrange its schedule so that children of all ages are together at some period during the day, some of the older children naturally will find ways of helping the smaller children.

Helping to care for pets either at home or at the center adds to a child's understanding of looking after a weaker creature. This understanding can carry over to a concern for other people.

"I" becomes "we" at the child care center

Exchanging Ideas—A baby's awareness of other people is limited at first to his concern about what people are doing for him. He gradually gets interested in what they are doing and still later in what they are thinking. This more mature kind of awareness develops during the second or third year. Often it appears at a time when a group of children are sitting around a table working with clay or play-dough. A child experiences good feelings from twisting and pounding a wad of clay and making it do what he wants it to do. His good feelings seem to help him to be sociable so that he naturally talks with his companions and looks to see what they are doing.

"I'm making a snake," announces Jeremy to whoever is interested.

"Mine's a turtle," says Anita.

"Where it's feet? Ain't no turtle without feet," Sandy criticizes. Then in answer to Jeremy, "I'm making two snakes, no, ten snakes."

"Well I'm making a hundred snakes," retorts Jeremy, trying to go one better.

Each child continues to work at his own speed on his own project. There is no competition except some verbal exchanges like those above. Teacher comments on the merits of each piece. A group spirit begins to grow as the children work and chat together. Sometimes a child who has been slow in joining group activities will take a more active part after a few satisfying sessions like this.

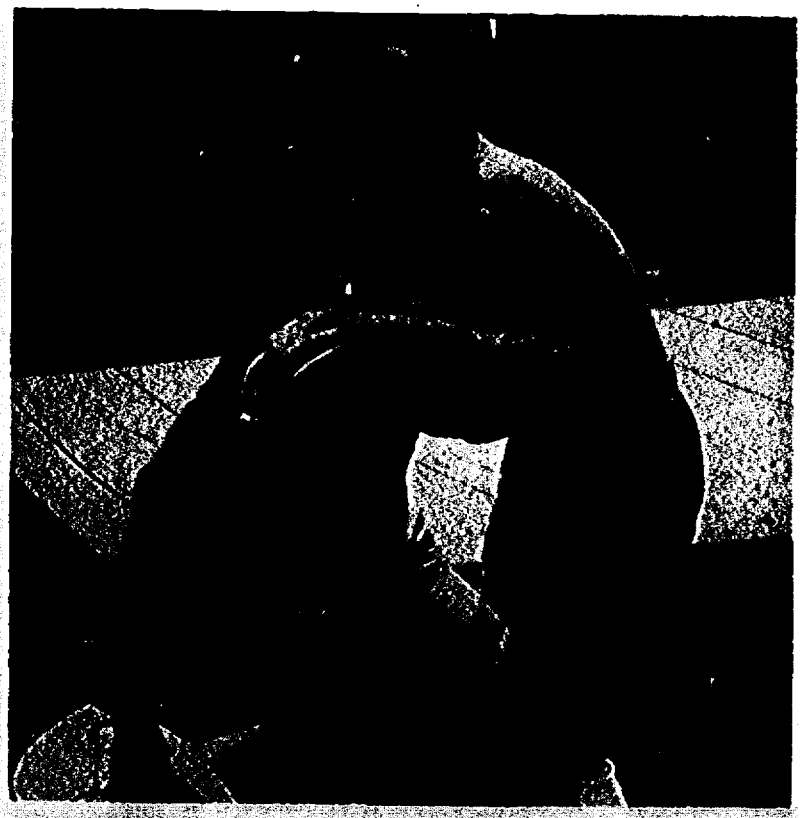
A sand box or water table can have a similar effect in providing children with a pleasing sensory experience in a warm social setting.

It's Fun to Cooperate—Randy decided he was going to build a gas station all by himself. He tugged a large wooden packing case to the place he had chosen for his station. It was hard work. Then he tried to put another box on top of the case. It was too heavy for him to lift that high. He was getting hot and discouraged when William rode up on his tricycle.

"What are you doing?" William asked.

"I'm building a gas station all by myself," Randy replied. Then a bright idea came to Randy. "If you help me build the gas station, I'll put gas in your car."

William agreed and together the boys



Helping other children, especially those younger than themselves, is important social development.

A group spirit grows as children work side and side and exchange ideas.

easily lifted the box to the top of the packing case.

"How are we going to climb up there?" William wanted to know.

Randy spied a ladder. It was too heavy for him, but now he had a partner, so there was no problem moving the ladder into place.

Mrs. Ward, their teacher, let them use the bucket from the kitchen for a gas pump. Alice, who had been watching their work and looking for an opportunity to join them, found a rope and suggested that it could be the hose for the gas pump. Meanwhile Mrs. Ward asked Sue and Maria to help her pick up pebbles to use for money. Tony ran inside and brought out the toy cash register, and the gas station was open for business.

Soon every child on a tricycle was lined up waiting for gas. Randy put in the gas; William pretended the handlebars were windshields and scrubbed them vigorously with a cloth; Alice stood on the roof and waved a sign; and Tony worked with the cash register. With the cooperation of others, Randy was able to see his idea turn into a successful product. If he had persisted alone with his building, he would have become frustrated and defeated.

By providing materials that are too large and heavy for one child to handle, the child care center encourages such cooperation. Mrs. Ward's interest stimulated the imagination of other children and brought more youngsters into the game.

In some places "junk playgrounds" have become popular. These are small play areas equipped with discarded items.[6] The junk can include hoops, wheels, tires, boards, fence pickets, stones, bits of furniture, or almost anything that someone wants to donate. When a child sees such fascinating raw materials, his imagination soars. While teacher may enter the picture as a helper after the project is underway, it is best for her not to offer suggestions of what to build or how to design it.

A large playhouse that will hold several children promotes cooperative play. One child care center has a two-story house with outside stairs and an open deck for the second floor. The children have so much fun talking to one another from the two levels that the house has contributed as much to language development as it has to social development.

Other cooperative activities in a child care center might involve working together to decorate the room for "Parents' Night" or making a big Christmas card for the center's director. The children might work together to create a book about themselves. Each child draws a picture that becomes a page of the book. He is free to draw what he chooses, yet his independent work is part of cooperative effort.

Let's Pretend—These are the magic words of childhood. They can turn ordinary boys and girls into airplane pilots, truck drivers, fairies, puppy dogs, or even mommies and daddies. While children are pretending to be somebody else, they try out different poses, different approaches to others, and different responses to many familiar social situations. They can feel free to behave in ways that would not be acceptable if they were themselves, but since they are somebody else, they can give free rein to many kinds of social behavior.

"You get in here dog, y'hear. I'm gonna wallop your tail if you don't move." Laurie swatted Joey with a broom and shooed him into the housekeeping corner. The children were playing house, and Joey volunteered to be their pet dog. He barked every time Laurie waved the broom at him.

"It's time to get ready for church now," ordered Laurie to all her "children." They dressed up in high heels, hats, and purses. Even the boys accepted ladies' hats when they ran out of men's clothes. Someone tied a cloth over Joey's head for a ribbon, and they marched, arm in arm, to the other side of the room.

Teacher suggested that as they were in church, it might be a good idea to sing some songs. She lead them in a familiar song. Soon even the children who had not been members of the make believe family had joined in the singing.

When a group of children play out a pretend situation, they find that most of them have lived through similar situations. Getting dressed for church and singing hymns apparently was a familiar experience to many of the chil-

6 Jeannette Galambos Stone and Nancy Rudolph, Play and Playgrounds (Washington: National Association for [illegible]ation of Young Children, 1970).

Children cooperate with one another when materials are too large to handle alone.

dren. As they realize how much alike their lives are, they begin to develop stronger group feelings.

"Let's pretend" games vary from place to place and with different ethnic groups. Children near Cape Kennedy, Florida are more likely to play astronauts and rockets than are children in Alaska, whose experiences are different. City children who live near a freight yard probably play train a good deal more than rural children who may be more familiar with rounding up cattle for market than with railroads.

While most pretend games spring spontaneously from children's imaginations, teacher can encourage this kind of play by suggesting that the children act out a favorite story. Playing the roles of the three little pigs, for instance, can give the children the satisfaction of knowing that little creatures, whether little pigs or little children, can outwit a big creature, who may be the big bad wolf in the story or a demanding parent in a child's imagination.

Having Fun Together—

Two little hands go clap, clap, clap,
Two little feet go tap, tap, tap.

The children clapped hands and tapped feet in time to the music—all except Maybelle, who stood on the sidelines and looked bewildered. When they began to sing "Ride a Cock Horse" and prance around the room like horses, Maybelle pulled back into a corner and stared at them with frightened eyes.

Maybelle was new at the center and didn't yet feel at ease with the other children. When the song was over, Miss Meredith, the teacher, decided it was time Maybelle joined the group. She took the little girl by the hand, arranged the other children in pairs, and led a parade around the room while everyone sang "Yankee Doodle." Maybelle marched but wouldn't sing.

Then Miss Meredith got out the rhythm instruments and gave each child a pair of sticks, a triangle, bells, or a tambourine. She handed Maybelle some bells. The children sang "Yankee Doodle" again, and kept time with their instruments. Maybelle, standing very close to teacher, timidly shook her bells. When she heard the tinkling sound, she smiled. She shook them again. Then again. The group had finally begun to communicate with Maybelle through music.

The next day teacher played several ring games with the children. Maybelle held firmly onto teacher's hand, but she allowed another child to take her other hand. Again she seemed to relax and enjoy the activity. On the third day she smiled broadly when the "wife" chose her to be the "child" in a game of "Farmer in the Dell," and she giggled when she chose Miss Meredith to be the "dog."

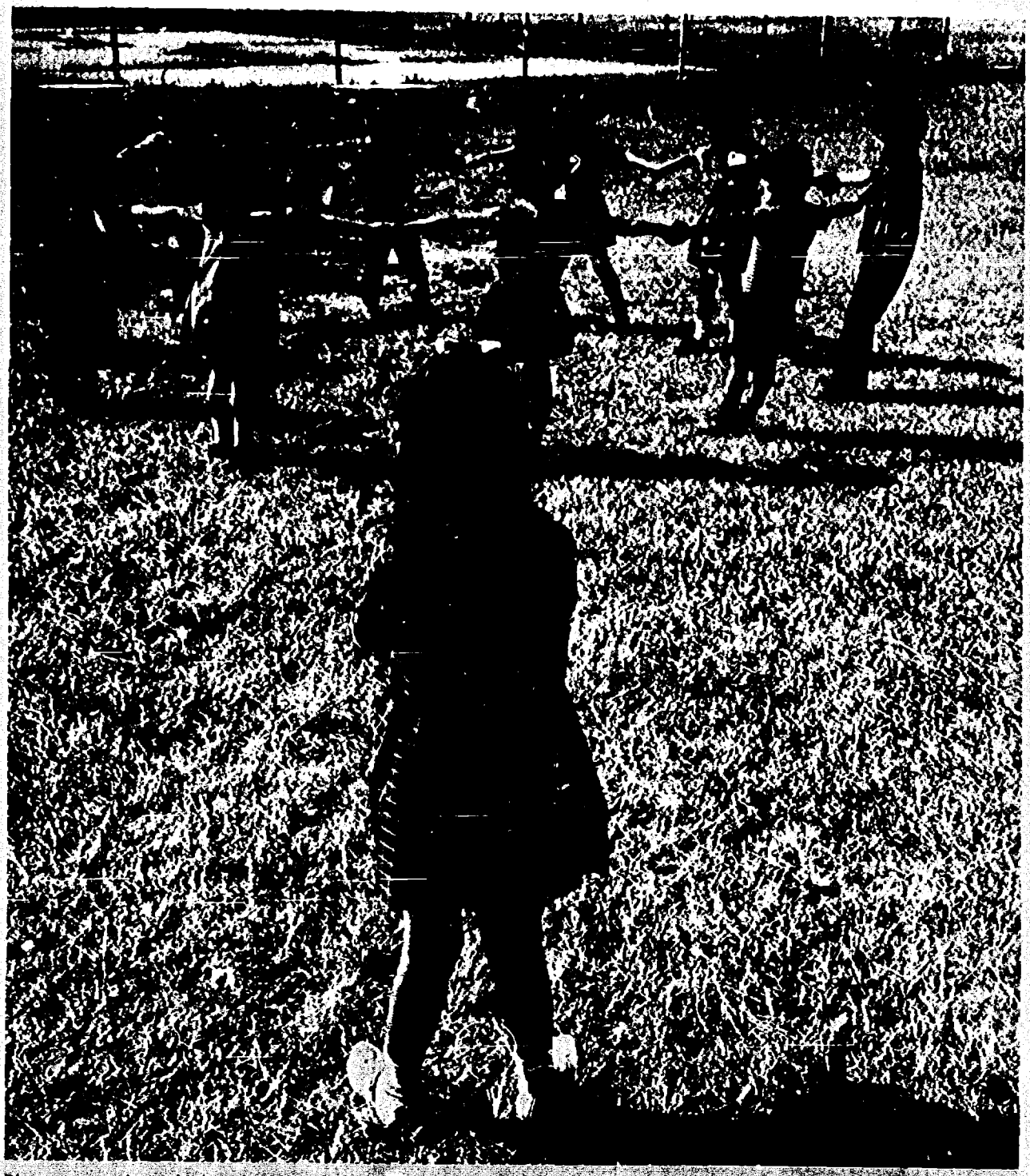
Miss Meredith wisely planned group games or singing every day. One day they would play "Ring Around Rosie," on another day they would dance and sing "Shoo Fly," or just sit on the floor in a tight circle and sing songs. Maybelle began to appear more comfortable in the group. Soon Maybelle was taking an active role in many activities and did not depend so heavily on supervised group play, although she was always the first to respond to the invitation to "join hands for a game."

Offering someone your hand is a warm gesture of welcome. When a teacher takes a small child by the hand and leads him into a group activity, she is saying, "We are very happy you are with us. We want to have fun together."

Eating Together—Eating is a valuable social experience when the food is tasty and the company is pleasant. A good hostess usually serves her guests something to eat or drink as a way of

making them feel welcome. In a child care center, lunchtime can be one of the most satisfying social experiences of the day.

A happy lunchtime scene is a combination of many factors. The children must be comfortably seated on child-sized chairs at tables of a similar size. They must not be expected to wait too long for their food. Lunch, itself, should consist of familiar foods without too many new dishes at one meal. Seating should be arranged so that children who do not get along together do not sit next to one another.



Ring games when children hold hands develop a feeling of belonging. A shy child may need help to join in.

Teacher, sitting at one of the small tables and eating the same food, can direct conversation onto interesting and informative subjects. "There are tomatoes in this salad. What color is a tomato, Tom?" Or she can say: "Do you remember what animal gives milk? That's right, Marty, a cow. We saw the farmer milk a cow when we visited the farm last week, didn't we?" Or she can lead the conversation to transportation: "This is pineapple for dessert. Pineapple grows far, far away in the state of Hawaii. This pineapple sailed on a big ship to get here to us."

As teacher directs her remarks and questions to different children, she encourages them to talk among themselves. Her manner must be relaxed, and she must allow plenty of time so the children do not feel they must gulp down their food. Rushing through a meal destroys social exchanges as well as digestion. Teacher also must remain calm when somebody spills something, as is bound to happen in a group of young children. If everyone knows the rules about cleaning up and if a damp sponge is available, accidents should not disrupt the meal.

The experience of sitting down with a congenial group once a day for an enjoyable meal, can help a child realize that being with others can be satisfying.

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Through many different social experiences in a child care center, the young child gradually becomes aware that there are many people in the world, and that each one has his own desires and his own way of looking at things. He learns that he is not the center of the universe, but only one individual who must get along with other individuals if he is going to lead a happy life.

When he feels that he belongs, he refers to his group in possessive terms like "my class" or "our hamster." He begins to think more in terms of what "we" do or how "we" feel. He feels sure of his place in the group, and he can be himself without fear of being rejected.

A child who enjoys such confidence is free to explore his own interests. He is not afraid of failure, for he knows his group will continue to support him. He has made a great deal of progress from the baby who was only aware of himself.

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