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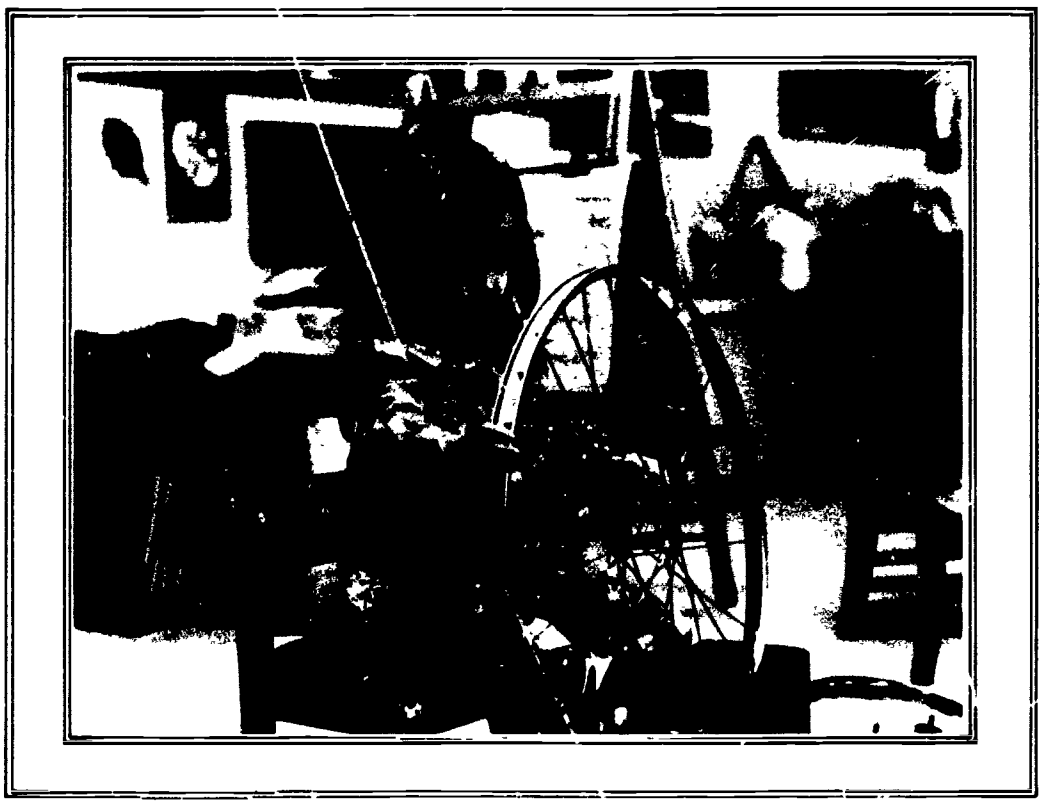
ABSTRACT

This guide describes the development of a nonsexist early childhood curriculum designed to make teachers and parents more aware of the sexism existing in society and reflected in our schools. The guide is divided into six chapters: Chapter 1 presents a brief history of the Non-Sexist Child Development Project; Chapter 2 examines some of the basic premises in psychological theory and in teacher training courses concerning children and their development. Chapter 3 evaluates five learning environments in a preschool classroom (housekeeping area, cooking, blocks, outdoor play, and workbench/shop), and suggests guidelines for eliminating rigid sex-role stereotyping in these areas. Chapter 4 outlines four nonsexist curriculum units (Families, Jobs People Do, The Human Body, and Homemaking), and Chapter 5 lists nonsexist early childhood materials that are either commercially produced or hand-made. The last chapter reviews some of the efforts made by the Women's Alliance to engage parents in discussion of the effects of sexism on both boys and girls. An annotated bibliography of nonsexist picture books and a bibliography of nonsexist readings are included. (CS)

THE WOMEN'S ACTION ALLIANCE

GUIDE TO NON-SEXIST EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

BARBARA SPRUNG



A Word About The Women's Action Alliance

The WAA was formed in January of 1972 to be a national service organization for women. Its work consists of three parts: information and referral, technical assistance and special projects, such as the Non-sexist Child Development Project. In just two short years the Alliance has grown to be an organization of national importance which provides a wide range of much needed services.

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The work of the project in 1973-74 was carried out by three project directors: Carol Shapiro who was Administrative Director, Jane Galvin who was the Community Relations Director and Barbara Sprung, Educational Director. A special word of thanks goes to Carol and Jane for conducting many exciting workshops about the project during 1973-74. They travelled nationally wherever and whenever there was an interested group who wanted to know about our work. In addition to their other duties, they led more than twenty-five workshops on non-sexist education for day care groups in the New York Metropolitan area.

A special thank you to Deena Peterson of the Women's Action Alliance who served as editor and Jacqueline Walker who typed many drafts from unintelligible longhand scrawl.

B.S.

This guide is dedicated to the four centers where this project was field-tested. They are The Educational Alliance Day Care Center, Anne Gray Kaback, director; Lexington Houses Children's Center, Shirley Cowan, director; Mabel Barrett Fitzgerald Day Care Center, JoAnn Hoit, director; and Amalgamated Workman's Circle Co-op Nursery, Catherine Hoviss, director. It was teachers, administrators, aides, parents, support staff and, above all, the children who breathed life into theories. Without their help, this guide to non-sexist education could not have been written.

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CHAPTER I

A Brief History of the Non-Sexist Child Development Project

In 1972, at the very beginning of its existence, the Women's Action Alliance began receiving an outpouring of mail from women all over the country who were concerned that their children were being forced into rigidly stereotyped roles even in pre-school! The Alliance did some research into the problem and came to the conclusion that although people were working to reduce stereotyping at every other strata of education, virtually nothing was being done at the pre-school level. The Alliance felt strongly that non-sexist education should start at the beginning of the child's educational life rather than somewhere further up the line when much that had already been learned in a sexist way would have to be "relearned."

The Women's Action Alliance decided to undertake the development of a non-sexist early childhood curriculum. It would free girls and boys of sex-role stereotyping and allow them to develop to their fullest potential, unhampered by societally imposed restrictions regarding "appropriate" behavior for each sex.

The goals of our project are as follows:

- o to present men and women in the nurturing role so that children understand parenting as a shared responsibility;
- o to show women and men performing a wide variety of jobs so that children understand that people are free to choose their work from an enormous variety of options unhampered by sex-typing. In many cases, we have presented men and women in counterpart jobs to underscore the fact that most jobs can be done equally well by men and women;

- o to show girls as well as boys in active play and to show boys as well as girls in quiet play. In all forms of media, girls are overwhelmingly presented as passive creatures watching boys at play while boys are presented as always active, unflaggingly energetic dynamos;

- o to help boys and girls to respect each other so that they can be friends throughout childhood and into adulthood. We do not mean by this that children of opposite sexes will always play together. Girls will want to be with girls and boys with boys much of the time. However, we feel that rather than minimizing the separation between the sexes, our social mores encourage this separation. We also feel that the way girls are presented in children's materials as passive, fearful creatures who strive constantly for adult approval, helps to create the derisive attitudes boys have towards girls;

- o to encourage boys and girls to develop and be able to express a full range of emotions. It is mostly boys who get short-changed in this area. Very small boys are told "boys don't cry." They are expected to hold back when they are hurt physically or emotionally because to display feelings is considered a "feminine" trait and to develop any "feminine" trait is highly undesirable and leads to being called a "sissy." We want all children, and consequently all adults, to feel free to experience a <u>full</u> range of human emotions;

- o to encourage the full physical development of all children. In this area, it is usually the girls who are not encouraged at school or at home to develop their fullest potential. We want boys and girls alike to know the joy of physical activity and to be as strong and as fully developed physically as they are able;

- o to present a more realistic (and therefore exciting) view of the world of children. We live in a pluralistic society made up of many varied racial and ethnic groups. Yet, the world presented to children by the media and early childhood materials is overwhelmingly white. Although in recent years Blacks have been more fairly represented, one hardly sees Hispanic, Asian-Americans, native Americans or Chicano people in early childhood materials or early elementary textbooks;

- o to present a more open view of the family. There are many alternative family groupings to the nuclear family. These alternative families can consist of two people or many people who live together and share food and shelter. A family can have one, many or no children and still be a family. Although many of the alternative families are successfully and happily sharing life together, children are consistently presented with the "nuclear" family as the norm and made to feel that their family is less acceptable if it does not conform. We would like to see teachers and children explore the variety of family lifestyles that actually exist side by side with the nuclear family and learn to accept and respect each of these family groupings.

At the onset of the project, we spent several months observing in twenty-five child care centers in the New York metropolitan area. We were looking at the books on the shelves, the records and games, and the way teachers and children interrelated. We also arranged time for an interview with the director of each center so that we could discuss our project and find out what were the prime concerns of each center. In each center visited, the idea of non-sexist materials seemed to be what caused the most excitement.

During the observation period, two centers volunteered to become demonstration centers for the project. A third center was recommended to us because the director is a feminist. The fourth demonstration center, a co-operative nursery school, volunteered to join the project because parents had expressed an interest in looking into ways that they could free their children from the kind of sex-role stereotyping they had been subjected to as children.

Before beginning our work in the four centers in the fall of 1973, we spent many months exploring the possibilities of convincing manufacturers that there was a need and a market for non-sexist toys. It soon became apparent that it would be a long, slow process to have materials commercially made, so we did what teachers have always done when they need special materials, we made them ourselves. We handmade a set of prototype materials and used our first grant money to have six sets of these materials hand-produced.* This gave us a complete set for each of our four centers and two extra sets for the workshops about the project which we have given nationally over the past two years. In addition to our puzzles, lotto, flannel board and block accessories, we put a library of non-sexist books, a set of resource photos, and a copy of the non-sexist record "Free to Be You and Me" in each center. We also put a tape recorder in each classroom so the teachers would be able to take down conversations and discussions with a minimum of fuss.

In order to create a curriculum which would foster the goals stated earlier in the chapter, it was decided that we would work with all the adults affecting the children's lives. We would include the teachers, administrators, aides, parents, and support staff members

* A complete description of the materials (plus instructions for making those not yet commercially available) appears in the section "Non-Sexist Materials."

of each center in our project. We felt that if our project was to have a lasting effect on the lives of children, and was to bring about more than superficial change, our approach to non-sexist education would have to be a total one, including consciousness-raising with parents and staff members of each center, non-sexist curriculum ideas, and new materials for the children.

Before the materials were introduced in the classroom, we met at least three times with the teachers and other staff members in in-service sessions during which we examined sexist materials and attitudes as well as the goals of the project. In some centers we met with parents from the start and in others we waited until the teachers were working smoothly with the curriculum before scheduling a parent meeting. We found the parents cooperative and enthusiastic. This is not to imply that parents were always in complete agreement with us. We had some very "lively" discussions about allowing boys to play with dolls. However, we found that parents were very open to examining our point of view about non-sexist education. Although many of them felt that their own lives would probably not change much, they <u>all</u> wanted more open options for their children. In some centers the teachers were surprised at how accepting of the project the parents were. As one stated, after a particularly stimulating and successful parent meeting on the topic of toys, "Well, we certainly underestimated our parents."*

* More about parent meetings in the section "How to Work with Parents."

After we had conducted several consciousness-raising sessions with teachers, we introduced our non-sexist materials and suggested ways of introducing them to children. We cautioned teachers to present the materials slowly so that the children would have time to explore and question each one thoroughly. We urged the teachers to treat our curriculum as they would any other, that is to slowly integrate it into the classroom life at a pace that was comfortable for the children. We did not want to move more quickly than the children were ready to move. We wanted to stimulate the children, but overstimulation would have caused tension for them. We stated over and over that we would rather delay the testing than have the project interfere with normal classroom life. In one center, we waited several months to begin because the children were going through an adjustment to a new teacher and we wanted them to be perfectly comfortable before we introduced the program.

Our field testing lasted from September of 1973 until April of 1974. During this time, in addition to our regularly scheduled staff and parent meetings, we were available to each center as often as they felt they needed us. We also made it clear that after the testing period was over, we would continue to be in contact and to help in any way we could.

It was our work in the demonstration centers that made this curriculum guide possible. It was the interaction among our staff,

the staff of each center, the parents, and the children which brought the ideas, curriculum and materials to life. Many of the ideas for trips and classroo .ties that you will read about in this book were created by the teachers who participated in the project. Throughout this project, the spirit of human beings cooperating to create more effective early childhood education has been deeply rewarding for all those who have been involved.

Before we move into the main topic of this boo', non-sexist early childhood curriculum, we feel it is essential to examine some of the background material that has shaped the thinking of educators in the field of early childhood education and has prevailed in the teacher training institutions which prepare people to teach young children.

CHAPTER II

Psychological Theory and Child Development Background*

A primary aim of this guide is to sensitize and sharpen the awareness of teachers to the sexism existing in our society and which is consequently reflected in our schools. A starting point may be an examination of some of our basic premises concerning children and their development. Most programs of teacher training include courses in child development and it is in such classes that we learn about the abilities of children, the stages they go through as they grow, the conditions which nurture such growth, and the differences to be found in the development of boys and girls. We would like to focus our attention on some of the research on sex differences which would be of particular concern for teachers. In this section of the guide, we would like to examine some of the basic "facts" and open for discussion and review what we have often accepted without question.

When this writer was a student teacher in the 50's, it was the time of longitudinal studies and pinpointing the child's social, physical, emotional and intellectual development along maturational lines which seemed to have a hallmark of development every few months. It was a time when there seemed to be a label for every age from "the terrible twos" to "the cooperative fives." Within such a framework, boys and girls were also captured, defined, and set. In our classes

* This essay on "Psychological Theory and Child Development Background" was written by Harriet K. Cuffaro, Bank Street College of Education.

we learned of sociable, compliant girls playing in housekeeping areas and of aggressive, assertive boys building with blocks. In student teaching, our "knowledge" was confirmed.

Over twenty years later, more often than not, this polarized view of children is still presented. Through the efforts of the women's liberation movement and the awakened consciousness of many people - women and men - we have been pushed to pause momentarily, to look at ourselves and the things we have unquestioningly believed. What we find are attitudes, beliefs, and pressures that totally permeate our society and every day functioning. It is time now not only to re-examine our knowledge but also the means by which we attain it. Even when some theories are not currently popular or very much in evidence, the shadow of their impact remains. For example, although orthodox Freudian theory is not as prevalent as it once was, and post-Freudian contributions to the literature have modified certain elements of psychoanalytic thought, some popularized aspects of the theory remain - if only by their echo - to characterize and to describe women. It is yet another layer, among many (such as Erikson's "Womanhood and the Inner Space"), which needs to be lifted, examined and discussed.

Before dealing directly with research studies, we would like to raise two points for teachers and parents to consider and think about, for they affect how we approach and deal with research findings. The

first point we wish to raise for consideration is the question of objectivity. More often than not, we have been conditioned to believe that if something is done scientifically - that is, if we account for variables, control the situation, accurately and precisely describe the procedure, what we will discover is "truth." This may be the case in chemistry laboratories, but it is not necessarily valid in the study of people. The point we wish to underline is that for every theory there is also a philosophical position, a framework of beliefs. For each view on the development of the child, there is also implied a view of human nature. Whether a child is seen as dynamic, interactive, passive, malleable or reactive will depend greatly on the view of the observer - how the observer perceives and interprets behavior. As Kessen has stated, "Behind each empirical investigation, there is a model, and this model colors and sometimes dominates the interpretation that is given the empirical protocols."[1] As students of child development we must then be aware of the philosophical position, or model, which may "color" research. At the same time, we must also consider how much the model has been "colored" or influenced by traditional, standardized stereotypic views of women.

The second point we wish to underline is that knowledge is not static but subject to change. Increased technology, shifts in perspective, the influence of other disciplines, breakthroughs in certain

fields all have their impact on what is known. With time, knowledge is altered, modified, enlarged. Throughout history, there have been people who have questioned what was known, who have wondered about the accuracy of our knowledge. In the questions raised by the women's movement, we find just such a catalyst which makes us stop and check what we have accepted about human development.

A case in point which illustrates the questions we have raised is the current research in infants. The researcher's view of the infant has changed dramatically in recent years. The following observation by Kessen in presenting an overview of research in the psychological development of infants, makes one wonder - have a new breed of babies appeared or have psychologists gained clearer vision?

> "The shift in point of view - to set the antithesis sharply - has been made from the child who is a passive receptacle, into which learning and maturation pour knowledge and skills and affect until he is full, to the child as a complex, competent organism who, by acting on the environment and being acted on in turn, develops more elaborated and balanced ways of dealing with discrepancy, conflict and disequalibrium. This shift, I believe, is of incalculable implication..."[2]

Aware then of these possible "pitfalls," we return to consider the question of sex differences. In reading research on the development of sex differences one will find a variety of viewpoints, differing foci, ample confusions and contradictions, pertinent shifts in the weighing of factors to be considered, and, in some instances, amazing narrowness in perspective. There is research on personality factors related to sex differences; cognitive functioning and ability

differentiated along sex lines; the role of socialization approached from varying angles; and a growing literature on the biological, genetic, hormonal influences on sex differences.

We do not intend either a review of the literature nor inclusion of all the areas of research indicated above, but rather the selection of some studies which will help us as teachers and parents to re-examine our knowledge of the abilities of children. The area of intellectual functioning in relation to sex differences naturally is of vital interest to educators. On a very general level, we will review some trends relating to intellectual functioning in the research literature.[3]

Concerning verbal ability throughout the early childhood years girls excel in most measures of verbal performance. They are more fluent, speak earlier, use longer sentences, articulate more clearly. They read earlier and seem to have less difficulty with this skill. By age ten, boys seem to have caught up in their reading skills according to some studies. In grammar, spelling, and word fluency girls do better than boys throughout the school years. Concerning number ability, although girls learn to count at an earlier age, there are not consistent sex differences through the elementary school years. It is in high school that boys begin to excel at arithmetical reasoning and this difference continues into adulthood. It will be interesting to observe if changes are noted in this area in future research with the advent of the "new math" which from the start

places greater priority and emphasis on reasoning rather than computation.

Another area of investigation related to intellectual functioning is spatial ability and there appears to be no difference prior to ages five and six, but after that boys do consistently better and this difference continues into college years. In relation to analytic ability, after age five boys begin to consistently score higher than girls. Prior to this age, there seems to be no difference. Analytic ability requires certain skills. First is the ability to perceive one aspect of a situation without being greatly influenced by the background or field. Children who are not analytic tend to perceive globally and are field-dependent. The analytic child is able to extract a part from within a whole without the relationship of the two (part to whole) interfering with perception. Measures of this ability are the Rod and Frame Test and the Figure Embedded Test in which the subject must find a form embedded within a complex field. Related to analytic ability is the mode used to group diverse arrays of objects or pictures. People who group "analytically" - putting things together on the basis of some selected element they have in common - tend to be less influenced by background conditions. With this latter skill, boys more commonly use analytic grouping but this differentiation does not begin to become apparent until after age five. In the few studies done on the ability to break set or restructure a problem, boys perform better than girls.

In summary, in terms of analytic ability after age five girls are found to be more global, field dependent, and contextual in their approach.

When we turn to connecting specific skills and abilities with personality traits, certain relationships are suggested. For example, in relating analytic ability to indicators on the dependence dimension, Witkin (1962) cites evidence to show that "both global (field dependent) perceivers and those who have difficulty breaking set in problem solving are dependent in their interpersonal relations, suggestible, conforming and likely to rely on others for guidance and support."[4] The traits described here are commonly seen as "feminine" and research tends to confirm that girls are more conforming, dependent, passive, suggestible, and reliant on external factors.

Turning to the opposite pole, independence is a trait frequently cited as influencing intellectual functioning. Self-assertiveness and initiative also facilitate intellectual functioning. These are the very traits fostered as part of "masculinity" and excluded from the "feminine" profile. Independence, initiative, and self-assertion are not passive states; they imply action. And this may become a crucial factor in intellectual functioning; to be active, exploratory, manipulative, places the child into an interactional relationship with the environment so that not only is knowledge experienced in a variety of ways, but it may also be discovered. Might it also be suggested that the evidence of higher aggression in boys found to start at an early age (two or three years old) may contribute to a style which

generally is more physical, active, intrusive which then predisposes boys toward a modality which will facilitate intellectual functioning? The traditional picture of the little boy taking apart a toy and the little girl putting her doll to sleep signaled more than preparation for future social roles. It also signaled future intellectual functioning.

As we have learned more about cognitive development, we have also come to better understand the importance of materials and learning environments which encourage and support such development. It would be absurd at this point not to begin to make connections between what we have learned about fostering cognitive development and what we know about many aspects of sex-typing, role expectations, and the socialization process in relation to girls and women. Our socialization practices tend to direct girls away from the style of functioning which would foster their total development. It is what we often choose not to do with girls and boys, in combination with our expectations, that is very important and limits potential. All too frequently, we do not consciously, directly, explicitly promote or expect independence, self-assertion, and initiative in girls. As long as personality traits have connotations of "femininity" or "masculinity" we limit the development of children.

A crucial task in early childhood curriculum is to strip sexist connotations from materials and learning situations so that learning opportunities may be offered to all children. With this in mind,

and bearing in mind styles of functioning attributed to boys and girls, we offer some comments of Maccoby (1966). She remarks that there is no evidence to support the suggestion that boys acquire spatial and perceptual-analytic ability because they have more opportunities to explore their environment and manipulate objects. She continues:

> "It is true that if one watches nursery school children at play, one is more likely to find boys building with blocks and girls placing doll furniture in a doll house or pretending to cook with beaters and bowls; but it is difficult to see why one of these kinds of object manipulation should tend to lead to greater spatial ability than the other."[5]

For teachers who have observed children in both such situations, this is an amazing statement! On a purely verbal level the words "build" and "place" invoke very different images of action in space. To build, even poorly, is a more dynamic, interactive, impact-producing experience with space than the placing of a chair in the front or the back of a doll house. Although it has not been proven that blocks are considered a "boy's material," the cumulative knowledge and daily experiences of teachers and children make it self-evident. By labeling it a "boy's material," directly or indirectly, we may reduce the attractiveness of this material for girls and also influence their potential performance in using it.[6]

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that the sex difference in intellectual functioning may be traced to the polarized personality traits attributed to men and women.

> "We do not know whether these personality differences between the sexes are in any degree innate, or whether they are entirely a product of the social learning involved in the acquisition of sex roles; but we do suggest that the existence of the differences may have a bearing upon the intellectual development of the two sexes."[7]

When we raise the question as to whether the personality differences are products of social learning or innate, the findings on cross-sex typing must be considered. To begin, "masculinity" and "femininity" are measured in a variety of ways. In some tests, the subject either rates self or is rated by observers. In other instances, subjects are not asked to characterize their traits but to indicate their preference for toys, games, activities. Tests with objects ask children to indicate preferences for stereotypically "masculine" or "feminine"objects or activities, just as choices made on rating measures reflect how closely the subject matches majority opinion on what is seen as typically "feminine" or "masculine." To a large extent what is being measured is the degree of effectiveness of the socialization process on the individual. The reliability of some of these tests is questionable and should be re-evaluated especially in light of our changing expectations for children.[8]

What do we see when girls rate as more "masculine" or boys as more "feminine?"[9] Oetzel found that among fifth grade boys, brighter boys were consistently "more feminine and slightly less masculine than their less intelligent peers." High I.Q. girls were found to be dominant and striving - "masculine" characteristics. There is

another interesting finding in Oetzel's study among groups of eleven-year-old children with uneven profiles of ability. Those children more skillful at "spatial tasks than verbal or numerical tasks tended to be low in masculinity if they were boys, high in masculinity if they were girls." Turning to children's interests, the Fels Longitudinal Study (Moss) reports that brighter girls are more likely to enjoy baseball and other "boys'" games; brighter boys will more often engage in "feminine" activities.

Moving to adulthood both Barron (1957) and MacKinnon (1962) "report that men who are outstanding in originality and creativity score more toward the feminine end of an M - F scale than do their less creative counterparts." This is seen as a reflection of the greater breadth of interest among creative men. As Maccoby states in summary:

> "The studies cited so far indicate that analytic thinking, creativity, and high general intelligence are associated with cross-sex typing, in that the men and boys who score high are more feminine, and the women and girls more masculine than their low-scoring same-sex counterparts."[10]

For the sake of clarity, it must be stressed that these findings do not reveal "women-who-are-men" or vice versa, but merely that judged by standardized, stereotypic measures, individuals with cross-sex typing are those who are able to share the interests, activities normally attributed to members of the opposite sex. That is, we might assume that we are in the presence of people who for a variety of reasons were able to follow their own drummer rather than the orchestration of society.

We will briefly look at some factors which might influence sex-typing: parent-child interaction and influences of the school. Concerning infancy, we are all aware of the examples of the differential treatment on the part of adults in responding to infants - from the designation of specific colors for each sex to sleepers for one-year-olds that have flowers for girls and boats for boys. The following quote from one infant study reveals even more subtle differences:

> "An observational study of infants playing with their mothers revealed that at the age of 13 months girls already were more dependent and less exploratory than boys in their play (Goldberg & Lewis, 1969). Most interesting these sex differences seemed to be related to the mothers' differential responses to boys and girls in the first 6 months of life. Earlier observations of the mothers' behavior toward their infants at age 6 months showed that the mothers talked to, handled, and touched their daughters more than their sons; when observed 7 months later the daughters, in turn, talked and touched their mothers more than their sons did. The overall results strongly suggested that mothers behave differently toward young boys and girls, reinforcing sex-appropriate behavior even in infancy."[11]

Connecting parental attitudes and intellectual characteristics of children, Moss and Kagan (1958), using the Fels Longitudinal sample, report that maternal protection and warmth in early years are related to high I.Q. in later years for boys. With girls, the important factor in I.Q. seems to be the freedom given to girls - away from protection and toward movement and exploration.

Turning to the influence of the school, a study by Minuchin (1964) is particularly pertinent to the focus of our program. Minuchin

poses the following question, "to determine whether children of otherwise comparable backgrounds are developing different sex-role concepts and sex-typing in behavior as a function of differences in attitudes and models offered by their schools and homes."[12] Her study compared the sex-role attitudes and sex-typed reactions of nine-year-olds in two types of settings: (1) children from two traditional middle-class schools and homes which would be expected to stress "socialization toward general standards" with (2) children from two "modern" middle-class schools and homes where stress would be on "individualized development." The findings supported her hypothesis that children from traditional homes and schools in contrast to those from modern settings were more sex-typed in play and consistently manifested conventional orientations of "aggressive expressions in boys and family orientation in girls." Concerning intellectual tasks, there were greater sex differences found in the traditional school. Minuchin, discussing the departure of "modern" children from conventional expectations and group patterns, comments that for these children socialization toward generalized cultural standards was not "the touchstone of child-rearing and education," nor were expectations in the sexes so "dichotomous as in traditional environments." In her estimation, modern homes assumed that the loosening of stereotypes in social roles and the providing of opportunities to develop in "keeping with individual propensities would result in more integrated development and more resolved identity."

The influence of the school may be seen at attitudinal levels, children being affected not only by direct attitudes toward social sex-role development but by attitudes "toward the formations of thought and opinions and the value of exploratory reaction rather than rapid, conventional responses."[13]

We would like to end this portion on research by considering two findings from infant studies. Feshbach (1970), in an article discussing aggression, presents some findings and possible implications. ". . . new born females have greater skin sensitivity (Bell & Costello, 1964; Weller & Bell, 1965) and pain sensitivity (Lipsett & Levy, 1959) than newborn males."[14] He suggests that it is possible that these constitutional factors though not directly implicated in aggression might exert a profound influence on its development. Possibly, the greater skin sensitivity of females might predispose them to prefer more passive forms of bodily contact. Although this might be possible, it does not account for all the female babies who do enjoy being "roughed up" and the girls who break with conventional expectations and use their bodies freely in sports and games. What about boys who show a greater skin sensitivity? Does societal handling literally de-sensitize them? Turning to another study (Bell & Darling, 1965) we find that newborn males raise their heads higher than newborn females.[15] Although we do not know for what period of time this difference exists, nor if female infants ever match or exceed male infants in this behavior, we may join

researchers in speculation. Assuming that boys consistently hold their heads higher in the first three months of life, we may suggest that this ability, giving them the possibility of a differentiated perspective (seeing the environment from varying heights), may contribute to their higher scores in spatial ability in later life. Or it might suggest that from infancy, boys are more attuned to assertion, movement, physical struggle as a style. But what of male infants who lift their heads only as high as female infants? Or female infants who lift their heads as high as males? How might adults react to this difference? Might the higher-held head be seen as strength, independence, curiosity, intelligence, "masculine?" By contrast, is the "female posture" indicative of dependence, passivity, docility, cuddliness and "femininity"?

The possibilities to be spun off for each of these findings are many. We do not know what researchers will eventually make of these findings, what implications will be drawn. Our concern is why does research tend to focus so greatly on finding the differences between groups rather than the range of differences among people, i.e., it would seem most plausible that there is as much variation to be found among men or women as between men and women. For example, although men are usually taller than women, this does not imply that all men are tall. We know that there are tall and short people of both sexes. The degree of height may determine the individual ability to do certain things. At this point, we can decide what to

do with this information. We can say (1) people of X height can do A and B or (2) since X height is usually the average height of men, doing A and B is a male occupation/interest. The latter choice places males under X height in an inadequate position and females who are of X height in a conflictual situation.

Research on cognitive development has focused on the sequential development of skills necessary to abstract, logical thinking. Focus has been on discovering skills, sub-skills, structures, etc. Based on research, educators may now plan more appropriately for children knowing, for example, that a pre-operational child cannot adequately handle tasks requiring the ability to conserve. As yet, we do not seem to be concerned with differentiating along sex lines. Comparison has been to the subsequent level in development so that pre-operational children are compared to those functioning on an operational level, etc. Will it take researchers long before they begin to look for differences between male and female conservors rather than at different types of conservation performance? If the response is that it might be significant if it is discovered that girls lag in such development, or score consistently lower, to that we must answer that greater significance may lie in discovering the relationships between the skills needed for conversation and the experiences a female has in our society which may block or interfere with such development. Cognitive developmental theory places great emphasis on the active, participatory, exploratory, interactive, nature of

learning.

It would seem that highly differentiated,expectations, and attitudes and behaviors that support and encourage these differences, work to the disadvantage of both girls and boys and the future women and men they become. Growing up and "becoming" are sufficiently difficult, complex tasks in themselves; people do not need the additional burden of societal demands and expectations which limit and restrict potential. Findings from cross-sex studies indicate that children do better when attitudes, behaviors and expectations are loosened and freed from conformity to societal demands. Greater warmth and attentiveness supports boys as well as girls; the freedom to wander and explore encourages discovery in girls as well as boys. We are not advocating simplistic techniques of giving each sex a little bit of "something." Rather, we are saying that parents and teachers address themselves to the unique person in their care unencumbered by conventions and expectations which tell us what each person will be before that person has "become."

We must evaluate not only the means by which we measure and what our findings tell us, but also what it is that we really want to know about people. What types of knowledge about people do we really value and emphasize? How free, objective, and uncontaminated are our observations?

New research would seem indicated, especially in schools like the "modern" ones of the Minuchin study, to explore further the effect of less stereotypic school environments. Generally, we feel that although there are inherent difficulties involved, we have much to gain in studying children in natural environments rather than in the artificiality of a testing situation. Researchers must also pay more careful attention to the educational experiences and learning environments of the children they are studying. All schools are not equal. Research would also seem indicated in better understanding why the fifth and sixth years of life mark such a departure for boys from the usually undifferentiated findings among children's performance in the earlier years. Is it the "serious" entry into the larger world of SCHOOLS and all that that may connote? Is it that the "masculine profile" is more suited to the skills that are needed in these rather pivotal years when children begin to make the gradual transition from pre-operational thought? In terms of research it is difficult to remain satisfied with findings that tell us who has better analytic ability when we still know little about the learning experiences involved in that ability. We need to know what makes people "tick" - not which ones. We must also look more carefully at that which we define as aggression; the label must be defined. We would also benefit greatly by enlarging our perspective to include the findings of sociologists and anthropologists.

The following quote from Stone and Church will serve well as a bridge between this section on child development and the sections on curriculum for it is addressed to all of us involved with children.

> "This is not to say that in the future all sex differences will be abolished. It does imply that, as parents, teachers, and social engineers, we can see through the artificiality and even perniciousness of some of our sex-role expectations. We brutalize boys when we expect them to become men living in a technological, educated, humane society, and we brutalize girls when we expect little from them in the way of intellect and creativity, and when, on the other hand, we expect from them to be passive, docile, accepting, and cast in traditional roles. In Freudian terms, we cultivate the boy's id and superego, we cultivate the girl's superego, and neglect the ego development of boys and girls alike."[16]

Part II

The curriculum sections of this program for early childhood are rooted in what we know about the development of young children and their learning style. Each section follows a similar pattern: discussion of the learning opportunities available in the use of material/area; exploration of stereotypic, conventional uses of these materials; suggestions for avoiding these traditional practices and presentation of specifics which encourage cross-sex usage. Clearly our aim is to make opportunities available to <u>all</u> children.

At this point, we would like to make explicit the philosophical stance which has determined our view. Obviously, it will be a view free from the boundaries of sex-stereotyping and with emphasis on being oneself rather than playing a role. As a corollary and intrinsic to our approach is the emphasis placed upon supporting and fostering the child's ability to think evaluatively and discriminatively. In addition to an intellectual style characterized by the ability to be logical, inventive, and rational, in our view of the child the total picture must include the feelings and imagination of the individual. We see in the interweaving of and the relationship between the cognitive and affective domains the integration which leads to a view of the whole child. Further, we see the individual in social context, as a member of a community. Consequently, we

place emphasis on social development, view the school as a community of people - parents, children, teachers - and focus on learnings about jobs people do, their skills, talents, responsibilities and their inter-relationships.

We see the assignment of traits to a specific sex as detrimental to the development of people. Why should boys and men be held back from being nurturing, gentle, expressive of feelings? Why should girls and women be denied a more dynamic personality? We have come a long way from the societies which started to train their young for the roles they would inevitably play as adults. If anything, the best preparation for the unknown future world of today's children is that each be a whole person utilizing as much individual potential as possible. If our current mode of alternative life styles is stabilized, then the environment will be more conducive to more open options for both sexes. Our society does not need more definitive men and women but caring, responsible, capable, imaginative people.

CHILD DEVELOPMENT VIEW

In the years of early childhood the young child is engaged in the tasks of understanding self and others, the order of life, the unraveling of the mysteries of the adult world. Invariably, central to their pursuit, children are seeking to understand their role in the world. Where, how, when do I fit into this reality?

The task the child has undertaken is a rather formidable one,

especially when we consider the "limitations" of the young child's thinking style. We may say "limitations" only because our standard is orderly, logical thought and children of three to six years are a long way from that end.

The young child deals with the world in a highly personalized, individualized manner. Fantasy and reality are manipulated and altered according to personal needs and desire. The child's viewpoint is highly egocentric, narrow in perspective, and children are further restricted in functioning by tending to believe what they see. They have not mastered certain important skills as yet. For example, for the young child it is extremely difficult to attend to more than a limited amount of information at the same time. As focus tends to concentrate on aspects of a situation, connections are missed. Concentration may be either on an undifferentiated whole or on parts or detail. It is also difficult for the young child to handle transformations as attention is focused on the fixed state without also incorporating into the process the element of transition. To further compound the situation, it is also difficult to go back in thought to the starting point, reconstructing the action in reverse. To illustrate some of these points, we are all familiar with the juice time situation when a child decides to break up a cracker into small pieces and then announces quite triumphantly, "I have more than you do" to the child who also has a cracker - only : is <u>intact</u>. Many crackers have been reduced to infinitesimal, uneatable crumbs as

others try to have "more" crackers. It is fascinating to watch this situation consistently repeated and to observe the time needed by children to understand that one does not really have more crackers but only an increase in cracker pieces. Reconstructing the cracker, putting the pieces together and saying, "See, it's just like yours - one cracker!" is usually greeted by, "She has more" for the child is focusing on what is seen, which is more pieces - and not on the process by which they were obtained.

Even with these "limitations," children of these ages are developing an ever-increasing facility with language and the ability to function within the symbolic realm. The pre-school child, unlike the toddler or infant, no longer needs a thing to be present in order for it to exist. For example, having known a dog by playing with it, touching it, hearing it, etc., a child can now imagine a dog, pretend to be one, recognize it by sound, talk about it - all without the actual dog being present. We see this abundantly evident in the dramatic play we find in the block area, outdoor play, house corner as children recreate the experiences they have had, the information they have taken in, and the thoughts and feelings these evoke as they relive their knowledge in their play.

In the years we are reviewing, the social development of the child gradually becomes more and more expansive. The child moves from "solitary play" to "associative play" to "cooperative play." With increased independence and autonomy, the child moves from play-

ing alone or in fleeting moments with others, toward playing alongside another or others with increasing continuity and in a more sustained, interested manner. With the development of increased social skills and further emotional maturity, the child begins to be able to plan with others, to amend ideas, to engage in the give and take essential to cooperation within a group as one deals with the viewpoints and desires of others.

It is in this social realm that the child's egocentric viewpoint begins to be altered. As the child interacts with others, there are differences in opinion and viewpoint which affect the child's perspective. In these years, children and the world connect as they explore it and come directly into contact with its institutions, opportunities and roles. As the child moves further out into the world from self and family, to school, to neighborhood, to world at large, the child's task is one of ordering by generalizing, classifying, sorting, enlarging, altering, reconstructing knowledge and understanding. Ordering includes not only information but also the realm of feelings, and play is an important means by which children accomplish this.

The young child learns best through direct experience, through participation and interaction with the concrete, real world. Children need opportunities for exploration and experimentation and time to question and to test ideas. As children learn about their world and themselves, our aim is to offer children, through our curriculum,

the opportunity to find a more accurate reality, one unhindered by the burden of stereotypic thinking. As children classify and generalize about people and roles, as they learn about themselves, our aim is that it occur within a framework which focuses on human potential rather than prescribed societal limitations.

Following the learning style of the young child, the learning opportunities offered in this guide are in the form of direct experiences, relevant to the immediate interests of these ages, and available within pre-school settings. Through discussion, materials, trips, games, books, language activities and dramatic play, children have many opportunities to question, to try out ideas and to test them, and through their play to experience their understanding.

FOOTNOTES

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(3) Maccoby, E. Sex differences in intellectual functioning. In E. E. Maccoby (Ed.), The Development of Sex Differences. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966, pp 25-27.

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(6) Montemayor, R. Children's performance in a game and their attraction to it as a function of sex-typed labels. Child Development, 1974, 45, 152-156.

(7) Maccoby, E. Sex differences in intellectual functioning. In E. E. Maccoby (Ed.), The Development of Sex Differences. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966, p. 44.

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(9) Maccoby, op.cit. pp 34-35.

(10) Ibid, p. 35.

(11) Mischel,W. Sex-typing and socialization. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology. Vol. II, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1970, 3rd edition, p. 49.

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(13) Ibid, p. 1047.

(14) Feshbach, S. Aggression. In P. H. Mussen (Ed.), Carmichael's Manual of Child Psychology. Vol. II, New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1970, 3rd edition, p. 189.

(15) Hamburg, D. A. and D. T. Lunde. Sex hormones in the development of sex differences in human behavior. In E. E. Maccoby (Ed.), The Development of Sex Differences. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1969, p. 8.

(16) Stone, L. S. and J. Church. Childhood and Adolescence. 3rd edition, New York: Random House, 1973, pp 376-7.

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCTION TO THE CURRICULUM GUIDE

When the Women's Action Alliance began to think about developing a non-sexist early childhood education project, we sought advice from experts in the field. Their comments usually ran something like this: "Why us? We have been letting boys and girls do the same activities for years. Why, we even allow co-ed toileting!"

This is perfectly true. Most pre-school programs do not openly segregate activities according to sex. Girls may not be encouraged to use the woodworking bench nor boys the housekeeping area, but they are seldom overtly denied the activity if they choose it for themselves. Also, it is true that most pre-schools in this country do not have separate toilets for boys and girls; this provides at least one opportunity for children to gain some knowledge about their bodies and the differences between male and female.

This situation does not exist, however, in most kindergartens, where very often toileting is separate and where boys seldom, if ever, feel free to choose the "playhouse" as an activity and girls seldom, if ever, build with blocks. By first and second grade the divisions are almost complete: a youngster who even shows a desire to engage in an activity specified for the opposite sex knows that he/she is in for peer ridicule as well as adult disapproval.

Dividing people according to sex-roles runs deep in Western civilization. Each of us, consciously or unconsciously, helps to

perpetuate this division by transmitting cultural attitudes that we may have accepted without careful examination. People who work with young children have a unique opportunity to challenge and change cultural stereotyping. We are the ones who provide children with their initial experiences outside the home. We not only become the most important influence on the child, outside of his/her family, but we have the added advantage of working with and influencing the child's family more closely than at any other phase of her/his education. We also have to rely less on printed materials in our work with children and are freer to innovate and create experiences for and with them.

Although we are concerned with cognitive skills and physical development, the primary goal of early childhood education is the positive social and emotional development of the child. In order to help the child to develop a healthy self-image, we must foster and nurture the "whole" child and allow him/her to reach his/her fullest potential unencumbered by rigid sex-role stereotyping which is equally damaging to the growth and development of both female and male children.

Those of us teaching in early childhood classrooms have a <u>responsibility</u> at the beginning of the educational experience of the child to look into ourselves, our attitudes, our classrooms, our materials, and our work with parents to recognize the many subtle ways in which we perpetuate sex-role stereotyping. We must begin to

devise methods in all the above-mentioned areas to eliminate these stereotypes from the lives of children.

The Hidden Messages

A group of feminist teachers in California participated in a study to examine the hidden messages we all give to children.[1] A trained observer spent time in each room and watched the teachers at work. They made some startling discoveries. They noticed that, despite their feminist philosophies, the teachers tended to pay more attention to girls when they came to school wearing dresses! They profusely remarked about how "pretty" the girls looked, reinforcing once again the societal message that it is how a girl (and later a woman) looks which is of primary importance.

As we become more aware of the ways we transmit sexist messages, we begin to notice so many things about our language, our rooms, and our materials, such as toys, books, and records. Suddenly a line or phrase in a book we have been reading for years will stand out as sexist. Dear Garbageman by Gene Zion[2] provides an example. A teacher had been reading this book to children for years when one day she took note of this sentence, "After everyone had helped themselves, Fathers went to work and Mothers went back to the dishes." The teacher described her reactions to this seemingly innocuous sentence as follows:

> "I guess I had read that book to children countless times over the years without realizing what a message that one line was giving on several levels. First of all, many of my children had working mothers and here was one more

> line in a book that left their mothers out. If you add up all the times working mothers are left out of books and other materials for young children, it is no wonder that children often think that something is wrong with their family when mother works. Also, it struck me that to describe the mother who stays home by saying, 'Mothers went back to the dishes' is a very demeaning description of homemaking. Picking the most menial of chores to represent what mothers do can't help but add to the low opinion children and adults in our society have of the job of homemaking."

Maybe it seems picayune to dwell on one line in one book, but sexist attitudes are made up of a conglomeration of just such lines. They may be in a book, on a record, in a TV commercial or in a situation comedy. They are in the pictures of men and women that we use to decorate classrooms. They are in the illustrations of lotto games, puzzles, flannelboard figures, and charts.

Take a look at the materials in your room. Are all the community work block accessories male except for the nurse? Is it possible to use the female block accessory from the family group as anything but a homemaker or does she have an apron painted on or a baby painted in her arms? Do any of your materials depict males in the nurturing role or females in work roles other than homemaker? Are girls shown in active play or watching boys while they play? Are there any books in your room about mothers who work outside the home? Are there any books about children living in one-parent homes or in families other than nuclear families?

We help perpetuate stereotyped views when we fill our dress-up areas with absurdly "feminine" hats, shoes, and pocketbooks. These

frilly, outmoded props equate femininity with uncomforable, dysfunctional clothes that perpetuate pseudo-beauty as the female goal. The dress-up apparel in most rooms is reminiscent of the kinds of ridiculous outfits the Goose and Hen (usually foolish creatures, i.e., Petunia) wear in children's books. Even more important than the plethora of external messages discussed above are the attitudinal ones that we pass along unconsciously. A teacher expresses how she became aware and changed the way she discussed clothes with the children:

> "I used to remark about the children's clothing frequently. I did this to help them to become observant of themselves and each other, to develop color sense, and to generally enhance their self-images. I used to be careful to say that girls were pretty and boys were handsome. When I became aware of sexism, I began to examine what I was saying to the children. Instead of 'pretty' and 'handsome' I used words that connoted comfort and function. 'Short sleeves are cool and comforable for today, David.' 'Those overalls are great for climbing, Nell.' 'I like the color combination you chose today, Peter.'
>
> "Just by changing the ways I looked at the children's clothes, I was influencing their attitudes towards appearance without diminishing their pleasure in color or denying them a special bit of attention. As a matter of fact, it made giving each child a 'real' bit of attention easier since my comments become subtler and less hackneyed than the cliches 'pretty' and 'handsome.'"

This teacher describes such a simple change in just one area concerned with appearance, clothing, but just as sexism comes across to children through a conglomeration of messages, non-sexist attitudes are passed along in similar fashion.

Changing sexist lines and phrases in books as we read them (no one is suggesting we throw out all books that have some sexism in

them), including pictures in our classrooms that do not perpetuate sexist stereotypes, modifying the props we give children for dramatic play, becoming aware of our own language patterns and changing them whenever possible are but a few simple things we can all do to begin to alleviate sexism in our classrooms. And these small things do make a significant difference! A teacher recently described the following incident:

> "I really notice a freer attitude in my room this year, probably because I'm more aware myself now. Recently I put up a picture of Roosevelt Grier doing needlepoint in my housekeeping corner. You know the one - it's an ad for Interwoven Socks - well, a few days after I put it up one of my little four-year-old boys brought his needlepoint to school! You know that none of this would have been possible a few years ago."

HOUSEKEEPING AREA

Although one philosophy of early childhood education minimizes it and Montessori schools eliminate it altogether, the "housekeeping area," sometimes known as the "dress-up area," "playhouse," or "doll house" is a classic staple of most early childhood classrooms. It is in this segment of the room that most of the dramatic play about family life takes place. It thus provides the teacher with an important opportunity to observe the sexist attitudes of children as they reflect their own family life in play situations. This is always the important first step in creating non-sexist curriculum: find out what the children's perceptions and understanding of a given

situation are, and then devise experiences which will offer more options and a more open point of view.

What are some of the ways that one can open up the housekeeping area and begin to free it of its ingrained role divisions Let us begin by analyzing the component parts.

Clothing and props. What kind of male and female clothing does it have? Does the female clothing consist of frilly hats, beaded pocketbooks, a plethora of beads and earrings, spike-heeled shoes, and long cumbersome, fancy dresses? Does the male clothing consist of fire hats, construction hats, man-sized jackets and shoes? If so, these props are helping to perpetuate the continuation of stereotyped views of men and women. By simply changing the selection to more comfortable contemporary clothing, we can begin to effect changes.

For example, one teacher noted that by providing more small suitcases and brief cases and fewer pocketbooks she found more girls and boys playing dramatic roles about going to work. Also, most men's clothing is so large and unmanageable for little boys that they tend to dress up less than girls. Instead of adult male clothing try larger boys' sizes in jackets, shirts, and shoes. These are much more comfortable and encourage use. Also, tailored shirts make comfortable, functional dress-up clothes for both girls and boys. For example, a workshirt is a good construction outfit for boys and girls. Half slips make fine skirts which fit far better than women's dresses, and simple short nightgowns with shoulder straps make "fancy"

dresses which are easy for children to handle. It is also a good idea to have some lengths of material and cloths which the children can fashion into any items their imaginations dictate.

Dolls. We are all aware of the important role of dolls in the dramatic play of children. The doll is one of the first abstract symbols used by the child to replace the self as an object of play. We want and expect girls to explore the nurturing role in mothering through the use of dolls, but we almost totally deny this medium to boys, although logically they have just as much need and right to explore the nurturing role and fathering. It is truly ironic and sad that we condition our little boys away from doll play and then are angry and resentful when as adults they seem unable to show affection, tenderness, and nurturant qualities as husbands and fathers.

There are several things we as teachers can do to make doll play more acceptable and attractive to boys. The first thing is to look into our own attitudes. Are we uneasy that encouraging doll play for boys will disrupt the formation of proper sexual identity? Are we afraid of parental objections? Are we ready to accept doll play as an important developmental experience for boys as well as girls?

The importance of a nurturant father in the development of proper sex identification with same-sex parents is discussed in Mussen and Distler's article, "Child Rearing Antecedents of Masculine Identifi-

cation in Kindergarten Boys."[3] The authors found that the more nurturant the father is and the less rigidly defined the roles are between parents, the more likely it is that a positive identification with the parent of the same sex will occur. Behavior which fits male stereotypes such as authoritarian, stern, distant is much more likely to cause fear in the child and result in a negative identification with the parent of the same sex.

If we are to encourage doll play in boys, we should have more boy dolls in our classrooms. It is unfortunate that most dolls are anatomically incomplete, that is, they have no sex organs. This undoubtedly gives children the impression that their sex organs are something to be secretive about. It is also certainly a source of confusion to them, since other parts of dolls' bodies are usually quite detailed (baby dolls have dimples, folds, navels, etc.).

To date, it has been a losing battle in this country to obtain anatomically complete, reasonably-priced dolls. The one company which had them advertised in their catalog recently withdrew them because of lack of sales. However, we can at least give our boys and girls dolls which are as physically like themselves as possible. Our classrooms should contain girl and boy baby dolls and girl and boy dolls which look like young children 3 to 5 years. Such dolls do exist and they will help to encourage doll play, especially among boys. When we put a Black male doll dressed to look like a typical five-year-old in our demonstration centers we had dramatic results.

In one center, one little boy who had seen the Black boy doll "Caleb"*(which we had supplied to the center) the afternoon before came in the next morning and said, "Where's my boy?" In another center a teacher related this story to us:

> "The day after you brought David, the Sasha Doll, to us, I introduced him to the children at our circle time. I received "oohs and ahhs" and much excitement. The children identified with him, giving him names such as Sampson, David, Bruce Lee and other names of strong, powerful men. They said he was five years old and loved his friends. The biggest and most pleasant surprise came when K. demanded David (the name we all agreed on) from me and hugged him closely with all his strength. He refused to share the doll and kept holding him close to his body with enormous strength. Eventually I talked him into sharing the "feel" of David with the rest of the group who had grown quite impatient and angry. K. wanted to monitor the passing around of David, so I agreed. He did not allow any child to hold David for more than a few seconds.
>
> "I was flabbergasted by this behavior. Never had I seen such caring and tenderness expressed by K., who had grown up with the conception that life was tough and one had to be tough to survive. He could not play with dolls and such tender, "sissy" enjoyments. And now, here was K., holding on to a doll!
>
> "All that day K. kept David with him. He ate, slept and played with the doll. The following day he washed David's clothes, and when they were dry, he ironed them.
>
> "For an entire week K. played with David and included him in every phase of classroom life. Later on in the week, the doll corner became of interest to K. and, not only David, but most of the other dolls became a part of his experience. He especially liked a very tiny doll, which was the

* Creative Playthings, Princeton, NJ, 08540. Note: The doll is part of the "Sasha" line of dolls.

> size of an adult finger, with golden hair down to its feet. David not only brought a new happiness to K. but afforded him an outlet through which he was able to express kindness, tenderness and love. He no longer stood in the background watching others express fondness and warmth."

Pictures, personnel, books. Clothing, props, and dolls are certainly the major elements of a housekeeping corner, but there are other factors that can enhance the non-sexist atmosphere of this area. If our philosophy is that homemaking and parenting are shared responsibilities of men and women, we should have pictures around which show both sexes caring for children and performing household chores. These pictures will help boys feel freer to try homemaking and nurturing roles and will also serve as catalysts for discussion about their own families and how the work is divided in their homes. Books can also serve this function. A teacher told us about her experience reading Charlotte Zolotow's William's Doll to three-year-olds:

> "The first time I read it I got no reaction at all from the children. We had no discussion following the story that day. The next time I read it we had a marvelous discussion about all the things their fathers did for them. I found out how nurturant many of their fathers were in bathing, feeding, and dressing them. These were not things the children discussed spontaneously as they did about the nurturant things their mothers did. Even at three they perceived their fathers and mothers stereotypically despite the reality in their own homes which contradicted the stereotypes."

The teacher continued:

> "I find the story's closing lines particularly moving:"

"Why does he need a doll?" William's father asks.
William's grandmother smiled.
"He needs it," she said,
"to hug
and to cradle
and to take to the park
so that
when he's a father
like you,
he'll know how to
take care of his baby
and feed him
and love him
and bring him
the things he wants,
like a doll
so that he can
practice being
a father."

"These lines sparked them to talk about the nurturant role their fathers filled in their lives. With this knowledge, I was able to create other opportunities for them to express this aspect of their fathers' behavior, and it soon became a natural topic of discussion for us."

If we are fortunate enough to have a male staff member in the classroom, he can become an enormous asset by frequently making himself available to the children in the housekeeping area. He will be a living example of a nurturant male and if he and the female staff share housekeeping chores of the classroom together, they will be providing the children with attitudes and experiences which convey far better than words that the processes of daily living are naturally to be shared by women and men.

COOKING

Closely aligned to the "housekeeping corner," yet serving less as dramatic play and more of a strictly functional purpose, is cooking. Cooking enhances early childhood curriculum on many levels. Cooking is a life skill that comprises knowledge of math, science, safety, language, hygiene, nutrition, and aesthetics. When children cook, all their senses, as well as their intellect, are employed in the process. It would be hard to find another life skill that calls for such a fusion of abilities and feelings. With all of its inherent possibilities, it seems a real educational disservice to deprive a child of either sex of this experience. Yet, cooking is often conceived of by parents and teachers as appropriate only for girls. Children invariably perceive of cooks as women, despite the fact that many men cook for a living, and cooks with the most status and prestige are usually male (chefs).

The stereotype of the woman cook abounds. At home, few fathers share this job, and on TV cooking is one of the few things women are shown doing. In children's books, mommies are always baking or preparing dinner or lunch. Daddy is shown eating, but never preparing, food. Whitney Darrow's book, I'm Glad I'm a Boy - I'm Glad I'm a Girl, has a page that says, "Boys Can Eat, Girls Can Cook!" The implication is, of course, that boys can't cook and girls can't eat.

In order to counterbalance this very prevalent stereotype, and thereby stop denying boys the multitude of pleasures and learning

that cooking brings, we must do everything we can to see that both sexes feel free to cook in school. How can we do this? It bears repeating that the way young children learn best is through example and experience.

If children see men cooking, it will help them accept cooking as a skill performed by people. If staff men are not available to cook with the children, arrange for a male family member to come and do it. If this is not possible (usually all you have to do is ask), there must be some male member of your community who would be delighted to share his skill with the children. Try to vary the ages of the visiting cook. Perhaps a grandfather, uncle, or teen-age boy would help out as well as a father-aged person. This will help reinforce the feeling that cooking is a life skill all people need to know.

Pictures and Stories

As in the Housekeeping Area, pictures of boys and girls, men and women cooking will greatly help the children to feel this is an acceptable and desirable activity. Pictures can help children express negative feelings as well as positive ones and they give the teacher a chance to have one-to-one discussions with children about the pictures. Sometimes the discussion may arise spontaneously and sometimes the teacher may ask a question which will start it. Stories also serve this function. If one cannot find stories about men and boys who cook, one can make them up, have the children make them up, or use a stereotypic one about women and girls cooking to start a discussion

about whether it is accurate to show only females cooking.

Even very young children know the importance of food and, because of this, cooking can have a very prominent place in the curr..." ...m. Young children are always very interested in any skill that will make them independent and cooking is certainly something all independent people need to be able to do for themselves. Finally, we are a ...tion of adults with notoriously poor eating habits which make us fat and less healthy than we should be.

We have an unique opportunity, through the cooking experiences we provide for young children in the classroom, to instill good nutritional values in both boys and girls. By teaching children to cook food that is tasty and good for them, by using ingredients that are natural, by conveying enjoyment and patience and avoiding the use of mixes and artificial ingredients, we can help children understand that to feed our bodies well and be healthy is one of the most important functions of life.

BLOCKS*

Blocks are a material which complement the development of the whole child. In using blocks, opportunities are made available to the child for supporting social, physical, cognitive and emotional development in an integrated, organic way. Further enhancing the

* This essay on blocks was written by Harriet K. Cuffaro, Bank St. College of Education.

value of this material is that it is not limited to a specific age level. Blocks remain suitable over a wide age range. It is as though child and material grow together.

Blocks are an unstructured material, that is, blocks do not in themselves strictly define exactly how they are to be used. Rather, they become a tool, a means by which children may express their ideas and feelings. Unstructured materials such as blocks - and clay, paints, water, dough, sand, to mention others - allow children the freedom to make their ideas and feelings the dominant elements in play. Children are free to make their impact on a material and to express their individuality when the material is not structured by a great many details which prescribe use and which limit the inherent originality of each child. When we observe children spending endless hours working with sand and stones and earth, as well as blocks, we are watching them using unstructured materials and giving free rein to their imaginations.

Blocks are made of wood and are highly durable and long lasting. The child can make countless things with them - houses, garages, schools, launching pads, designs, etc. - and no matter how much ideas may change, the block remains the same. Whether you build a house or a boat, the blocks remain the same. Such reliability and constancy can be reassuring to young children living in a rapidly changing world. Not only do blocks remain constant in themselves; they also do not alter with the passage of time, making it possible to come back to what you have done to review it, modify it, alter it. A building made today can be worked

on again tomorrow.

In the act of building with blocks, children have the opportunity to experience many physical laws and to come to a deeper understanding of them. For example, concepts of balance, equilibrium, gravity, force and support are learn' experientially through the direct participation of the child with the material giving the words which are labels for the concepts a personal base of meaning.

Mastery and understanding of space, and self in relation to space, are necessary concepts to learn, and working with blocks offers children the opportunities to develop such concepts. To construct a building the child must work within space - enlarging it, diminishing it, affecting it through action. The child must also negotiate shared space, since children work together while occupying a common area.

The unitary, harmonious nature of blocks lends itself to considerable understanding in mathematics and geometry. For example, two unit blocks may be used to create one double unit providing experimental learning of fractions. As a bridge is supported and inclined to ground level, or stairs built to the second story of a building, triangles, angles, and the function of form take on added meaning. Essentially, much learning of a cognitive nature basic to mathematics and science occurs while using blocks. Knowledge is acquired in a most natural way developing out of the experience of the young child. In addition, decision-making, autonomy, initiative may be exercised constantly as the child uses blocks. For example, to exercise choice is

an ever-present option: what kind of building to make? Which detail to add? Which role to play? etc. In such instances, the child must choose, decide, consider alternatives in action and thought.

Moving into the social and affective realms, the task of children in these early years is to cope with and understand themselves and the world about them. Actually, these are not separate concerns but interrelated ones. Knowledge of self and world is acquired at the same time. Children need an arena where they can put their knowledge before them in order to review it, explore it, alter it, "fool around" with it as they try to understand it. Children learn new facts daily; they make hundreds of observations during the course of each day. It is really not in the style of the young child to question and explore these observations and facts through words only; the child is primarily active, sensorial and a participant. Children take knowledge and act on it - taking apart and putting together. Blocks offer a wonderful opportunity for such doings, for as children reconstruct the world about them with blocks they engage in dramatic play which brings to fuller life the knowledge they are absorbing. As children learn about the society in which they live - about jobs, institutions, roles, communities, families, and the order of things - they must find situations where they can utilize their knowledge, savor it, digest it, put it together with other things they know; and while they are doing this they work out where <u>they</u> fit into the picture. This is done by <u>living</u>

what is learned, which is precisely what happens when children are involved in dramatic play and block building. By recreating through building selected aspects of reality and then engaging in enacting the life of that reality, the child comes to grips with feelings and information about what is being learned. For example, a child puts together feelings and information related to being a "Mommy" or "Daddy" as the child builds a house in which the family lives. As the child manipulates the rubber or wooden figures or dolls* used in conjunction with the building, the opportunity is offered to externalize thoughts and feelings about mommies, daddies, babies, families, and by so doing come to better understand them.

At the same time, engaged in such play with other children, the child has opportunities to observe and relate to the information and feelings of other children which are important sources of learning - dealing with viewpoints which differ from one's own. In terms of social development, the child is offered repeated opportunities for growth which appropriately match the child's capacity. The material may be used when the child is only capable of solitary play, or parallel play, or cocperative play. The child may also build with others and function within the context of a community scheme, making connections and relating with others. In such relating, there will be conflicts, cooperation, rejection and acceptance, compromise, and

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* The sexist nature of some of these supplementary materials will be discussed later in this section.

assertion. In short, the interactions will contain all the elements of group living. As the child learns about functioning as an individual within a group context, the material is there to support the child's efforts and create a context, a framework, for such learning.

Obviously, blocks are a material which support children's development in an integrated, organic way and offer almost limitless learning opportunities. It would be unreasonable to restrict their use to only some children, depriving any of the rich potential inherent in their use. Yet blocks are generally considered a boy's material, thereby closing the door to a wealth of opportunities for countless girls. Why does this happen? It does not require much deliberation to see that blocks almost naturally fall into the masculine domain if one thinks along stereotypic lines. Building with blocks is associated with architecture, construction, engineering, "making things work." It requires participation which is active, physical, accompanied by noise and much "figuring out." In short, in the cultural terms of our traditional society it characteristically falls into being "a man's world." In classroom after classroom, blocks are the boy's domain. When children are directed toward play, the invitation, "Do you want to work in the block area?" is not often extended to girls. It does not take a girl very long to read the message. No encouragement or invitation from the teacher; the absence of girls in the area; the activity and bustle of the area running counter to what one has been taught as being appropriate "girl behavior," all result in girls closing off this area as being unavailable

to them.

It might be of interest at this point to consider what may happen when emphasis is placed on the learning opportunities offered by a material rather than on the gender of the child. For example, at the City and Country School in New York City, founded by Caroline Pratt who designed the unit blocks being discussed, block building is the core of the curriculum for ages three through seven. Naturally, at this school, founded by the woman who designed the material, one would expect that blocks would be used to their full advantage and potential. Being a focal point of the curriculum, block building is, of course, seen as appropriate for all children. Within such an atmosphere it is not surprising that girls in this school build daily and find it as interesting and satisfying a material as do the boys in the group. Girls build complex buildings, interesting architecturally and in terms of content. In this school, the invitation to participate is explicitly extended to all children - as is cooking, woodworking, sewing, and physical activity - without regard to traditional sex lines. Given the opportunity, girls demonstrate the ability to use the material and find it satisfying and challenging.

It would seem worthwhile to reflect upon what might be extracted from this school's experience and approach as a guide for teachers. First and foremost is that the teachers understand the potential of this material, the learning opportunities it offers. Through experience, observation and understanding, they refine their ability to

facilitate and support children's work with blocks.* Secondly, block building is considered a truly worthwhile material for all children. To this is added the teachers' expectation that given a conducive setting and the encouragement and support needed, children will respond. What is being indicated here is that the teachers meet the children with a clean slate - traditional, stereotypic expectation having been cleared away. To this is added teacher's encouragement and conscious eliciting of interest. These factors are the necessary foundation from which we may move to specific suggestions, but with the awareness that without such a value base, the suggestions that follow may end up as limited, isolated techniques.

1. When children are ready to start working for the day, as suggestions are made, questions asked, make block activity one of the activities consistently mentioned to girls, as it is usually offered to boys. Go one step further, saying, "You know, I haven't noticed you using blocks, that might be a fine place for you to work today." To extend this even further, a couple of girls might be approached with, "What would you like to build together?", or, "Remember when we went to the store to buy fruit yesterday? Maybe you can make a fruit store with the blocks. I'll come and help you get started." Of course, teachers' statements will depend on the age level, the individual child, and the life of the classroom.

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* A bibliography to help teachers in this area follows this essay.

2. Once girls do get started in building, both boys and girls must be helped to accept the situation. Girls might need consistent encouragement for continuity of effort. Boys might need help to accept an "intrusion" into male territory. This might be particularly true in situations where girls seldom enter the block area and when boys are active, engrossed participants. Overturning the applecart of traditional attitudes can be quite bewildering and a threat to identity fashioned out of stereotypic roles, rather than more freely created out of the capacity and potential of the individual. (This was observed when a five-year-old engaged a classroom visitor with the following monologue: "I got a football helmet for Christmas. I'm a football player because boys are football players." - long pause - "Girls" - pause - "Well, girls could play but they don't know the rules." Visitor asks, "Could girls play football if they learn the rules?" "Well, they don't know the rules, nobody tells them." Visitor asks, "Maybe somebody could tell them the rules and then they would know them." Long pause and a sigh. "Can girls be strong?" and then drawn out and thoughtful, "Girls can play football? Girls can play football, girls can play football." The last sentence was repeated several times as though the child were trying to understand the meaning of the words while also assimilating the impact.)

3. Discussions, especially with kindergarten age children, are a definite asset in promoting and extending the dramatic play which

accompanies block building. Held as group discussion, opportunities are offered to girls for participation and the teacher can be mindful of including them through questions, comments, posing of problems, and drawing them into the group situation.

4. Trips are necessary for sustaining and extending block play. This is the constant source for replenishing and "re-fueling" the content of dramatic play, since, as has been mentioned, the focal point or theme of such play is the child's reconstruction and reformulation of reality. Trips to local stores, fire stations, etc., are known standbys, but in these very familiar resources one will find sexist pitfalls. In another section of the curriculum guide, suggestions are made on how to think more imaginatively about trips as learning opportunities. What will be pinpointed here is that girls must also be able to find exciting, challenging roles to emulate from the real world. This will become easier to locate as sex barriers in the job market fall and girls too will find women in a variety of interesting positions. Until it is a more equalized, fair world of work, it means effort on the teacher's part to locate women who are plumbers, carpenters, police officers, construction engineers, marine biologists, etc. - jobs that excite and stimulate the imagination of children.

5. Supplementing blocks are many accessory materials such as rubber and wooden people. Till recent years, these have been stereotypic, standardized figures on many counts. They have been limited

not only in that professions represented among community workers have always been represented as male (with the exception of the lone nurse), but for many years they were all white people. In addition, among the family groups, there were further limitations in that the father was pictured with a newspaper, mother with apron and a baby painted in her arms, thereby making it impossible to use a female figure for anything other than a motner role. In the near future, there will be available on the commercial market multi-racial male and female community workers to be used with blocks.* This will certainly assist girls in participation. As one eight-year-old girl said upon seeing these new figures, "Oh, this will make pretending much easier."

Further, other accessories added to the block area should be examined for possible sexist connotation and teachers might follow the guidelines set forth in the housekeeping section of this guide when selecting materials. Choose things which are useful to <u>people</u> when they <u>work</u>.

It has often been suggested that one way to encourage the participation of girls in the block area is to declare a "girl's day" or set up times when only girls can build. We would strongly advise against this practice. It might lead to block <u>building</u> for a day, but not to the creation of block <u>builde::s</u>. Segregation, even for seemingly "noble"

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* For a description of these materials, see Chaper V,"Non Sexist Materials."

ends, cannot work because it is inherently unfair and it places girls in a false, untenable position. It may take longer to get girls into being functioning, fully participating group members in this area of the classroom, but the additional work and time will give the results we really want for children who are to be free to be themselves.

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OUTDOOR PLAY

Outdoor play offers enormous potential for children to move fully through space, an impossibility in the classroom, regardless of its size. It is mainly in the outdoors that large motor development takes place, through such activities as walking, running, climbing, wheeling large objects, and swinging. Muscular development also occurs through the carrying of hollow blocks, large boards, saw horses, etc., which are materials that are simply too large to fit indoors in most schools. Ball games, running games and other activities which increase coordination are also best suited to outdoor play.

This is not to say that all outdoor play is vigorous and involves running and shouting. Dramatic play occurs as often outdoors as indoors. However, although one certainly sees "houseplay" outdoors as well as indoors, one is more likely to see dramatic play outdoors involving transportation (driving a bus or train; going on a boat), hiding, chasing and escaping (robbers, Batman), building large structures (space ships and stations, airplanes), and generally requiring louder voices and larger, freer movements. Even sand and water play take on different dimensions under the sky. Outdoors one needn't be much concerned with the consequences of spilling and splashing.

Finally, there is the sense of joy and freedom that the greater space of outdoors provides; children express this, not often in words, but in running, shouting, and jumping as soon as they move from indoors to out.

Unfortunately, not all of the above-mentioned joy is experienced by many girls, for it is out-of-doors that one sees the clearest division of children along sexist lines. By the time they reach pre-school, too many of our female children have already learned that it is considered unseemly for girls to use their physical selves with abandon. The expectation for boys is that they will be noisy, dirty, and physical and that this is normal and contributes to their growth and development. Girls are not expected to get as dirty as boys and they are taught that one must be careful of one's clothes and appearance even at three years of age! These expectations all stifle freedom of movement and one can safely say that by the early elementary years many girls have an aversion to physical education and outdoor play, which is directly related to the societal messages they have been receiving.

What can we as teachers do to free girls (and some boys) of the inhibitions that keep their outdoor play from being the source of learning and physical development that it should be? First, in this as in all other areas, we must heighten our own awareness of the messages we give children. A teacher who was examining her own attitudes about outdoor time told us:

> "I realized that I was the perfect role model of the shivering, inactive female for my class. I feel the cold very easily and I found myself standing in a state of frozen tension, so constricted that I could hardly move, and counting every moment to "going in" time. Then I decided to do something to improve my situation and the image I was presenting to the children at the

same time. I began to wear warmer pants and to bring lined boots on cold days, and I kept an extra old sweater near the cubbies. But, more important than dressing, I learned some exercises that increase circulation. One of these is used by police officers on the beat and consists of vigorously swinging your arms across your chest! Naturally, the children were fascinated by this aspect of a police officer and many little cold ones began to imitate my exercise, thereby warming themselves instead of begging to go inside. I also ran in a large circle and soon the Pied Piper syndrome would take over and I'd have a following.

"When I thought about it, I had done nothing inventive, just two or three common sense ordinary things, but they helped me and my children cope with cold weather so much more effectively!"

Another thing we can do to help is to refresh our own thinking and then articulate the goals of outdoor play to parents. Very often parents are unaware that outdoor play has an important rationale in the pre-school program and see it as just a fun time for the children with no educational purpose. Usually, there is a meeting for parents at the beginning of the school year and this is a good time to acquaint them with the educational importance of the outdoor time.

Also, we have to ask ourselves if we are bothered, due to our own conditioning about what is appropriate behavior, by girls who are loud and who play as roughly as boys. If we think that it is less appropriate behavior for girls, they will pick up this feeling, although we may never state it verbally, with that special "instinct" children have for adult disapproval. Conversely, if our expectation is that all children play vigorously, the children will also pick this up.

Recently, we were observing outdoor time in one of our demonstration centers. We were immediately struck by the different quality of the girls' activities. They were vigorous, not "house-play" oriented, they ran, climbed, shouted, and were thoroughly adventuresome. When we discussed our observations with their teacher, she told us it hadn't always been that way. She said she made herself a role model, often running and playing ball and always encouraging this kind of play. Our visit was in February and her attitude and encouragement had already produced the changes we had seen. Incidentally, she was the same teacher who had been so successful in freeing boys for doll play as described on Page 44.

Another thing we can do to encourage children is to take every opportunity to make them aware that climbing, jumping, and running help them to grow. Children are always fascinated when they become aware of a process, and they will surely have better appreciation and understanding of their bodies if we increase their insights into how it grows. This knowledge is part of the healthy self-image we want all children to have.

Circle games, pitching games, and ball games are some of the more structured activities that may help involve less active children. Often children make up variations of the popular games.

Although all of the above suggestions are those that will help children toward a more active use of the outdoors, we do not want to imply that this is the only kind of play we feel is important. Nor

do we want to lose sight of the fact that timid boys will need as much help to achieve full use of the outdoors as girls. It is important to remember that during outdoor time, as in all other areas discussed, our goal is to have both girls and boys participate as fully as possible. To strike a balance, the teacher may need to encourage the more passive children (both boys and girls) in the above-mentioned ways and guide the most active ones to an appreciation of quieter activities. Naturally, some children will strike their own balance and need little or no guidance.

Before leaving a discussion of outdoor time, it is necessary to explore one other area: clothing. At first it may seem irrelevant to discuss clothing in a curriculum, but it figures very prominently in how children participate in every area of pre-school work and is especially pertinent to outdoor activity.

All children should come to school in "workclothes," for play is children's work, and they need to be comfortable and free to work in whatever they wear. This idea of wearing suitable workclothes to school is a part of pre-school tradition and was pioneered in such New York City schools as City and Country, Bank Street Children's School, Ethical Culture, and Little Red Schoolhouse, in the early 1920's.

In these schools children's play was treated with a serious attitude and with respect, for it was understood that it is through play that children acquire the many skills they use in more formal

education later. These educators realized that to be free to play, children must be dressed in workclothes and not the conventional school clothing considered appropriate in most schools at that time. In the words of Caroline Pratt, founder of City and Country School,

> "Of course the visitor was right in her complaint: this did not look or sound like any schoolroom. But it was very much like something else. It was like a segment of grown-up activity, an office, a small factory, or perhaps office and factory combined. Nor did these children look like school children, starched and clean-faced, the boys in white shirts, the girls in crisp frocks. These children wore workclothes, dungarees or overalls, boys and girls alike (occasionally a dress, the exercise of individual prerogative), and they and their workclothes bore the evidence of their work."[4]

In order to use blocks and to roll vehicles across the floor, one must wear coveralls so that one's knees do not get hurt. Also, workclothes are essential to the child who paints, collages, cooks, does carpentry, etc. No one, grown-up or child, likes to do this sort of work in fancy, constricting clothes.

The other major factor about clothing which affects children's performance is whether or not it is appropriate for the weather. If a child is overdressed or underdressed she or he will not be comfortable enough to move freely or feel relaxed for indoor or outdoor play. Although boys are sometimes dressed inappropriately, it is usually girls who suffer the most discomfort in school because only they wear dresses and fancy accessories, such as party shoes, which slip on most school floors and certainly are not conducive to climbing. It is also the nature of girls' clothing which causes them to feel cold

more frequently than boys. For example, dresses are loose-fitting garments which allow air to flow up. This is very cool in summer, but very cold in winter. Also, very often parents feel that tights take the place of long pants or overpants for girls, but since tights are not usually made of warm materials, this is not necessarily true. They do work well, however, as an insulating layer when they are topped by overalls.

We do not mean to suggest that girls must never wear dresses to school. Many girls pass through a stage where wearing a dress is very important to them. Perhaps one reason they go through this stage is because they perceive that they receive much more adult attention when they look "pretty."[5] In any case, if they are allowed to wear a dress or smock top, with pants underneath (for outdoor and indoor protection), they are usually satisfied and this solution is certainly preferable to a morning confrontation which sets the tone for an unhappy day in school. Also, if children know that their teacher expects them to wear workclothes, sets an example by wearing them also, and has the support of their parents that this is what everyone wears to school, we are certain there will not be much of a problem.

If one explains to parents the rationale for the clothing preferred for school and makes it clear to them that their children will be better able to fully participate in activities, we are sure they will cooperate.

WORKBENCH/SHOP

Workbench or shop experiences provide young children with life skills that every independent person needs to know - how to construct useful items from wood and how to mend and fix. Shop also provides endless opportunities to use mathematics in an applied way and concretely demonstrates to the child the importance of this skill. In addition, shop is one of the more product-oriented activities for young children and, as such, provides a sense of accomplishment in making something.

Very young children (three and up) are able to competently hammer, saw and nail with much less adult help than most people think. Again, it's a question of expectation and the child will quickly feel the adult's sense of confidence or lack of it and perform accordingly. In addition to adults often underestimating all children's ability to work with tools and wood, it is one of the areas in a classroom or school where sexist attitudes prevail.

Carpentry and construction has been a "man's" job through the ages. Whitney Darrow, in his now infamous (and out-of-print) book I'm Glad I'm a Boy - I'm Glad I'm a Girl,[6] states it all in six words: "Boys build houses - girls keep houses." Indeed, schools in America have kept this idea alive by excluding girls from shop and boys from home economics courses until very recently. As a matter of fact, many schools still have exclusive practices and probably will continue to until parents, students, and teachers pressure adminis-

trators to obey Title IX of the 1972 Education Act, which prohibits such discrimination. Our attitude is that, in order to become independent adults who are capable of caring for themselves, boys and girls need to know at least basic carpentry and basic home economic skills. The place to begin teaching these skills is in the pre-school years.

And let's also remember the math and science skills that can be learned through shop. One must measure, count, balance, and level in order to construct. Rhythm and coordination are also involved in hammering and sawing. Judgment and estimating skills are also learned in shop. One must be well-organized and plan ahead for the size of the nails needed, the thickness of the wood, the shape of the construction and the trimmings it will need.

All would agree that no child should be excluded from an experience which provides such possibilities for learning. Yet it is a fact, that girls are systematically excluded from shop experiences because our society has deemed this activity as appropriate for boys only. Even in schools where boys and girls do participate in woodworking, it has been observed that boys are given more independence and encouragement than girls. Many shop teachers seem to think that girls are less capable and require more help. A typical remark heard goes like this: "That's fine, Ted - you can do it all by yourself." "Here, Mary, let me help you with the nailing. We don't want any hurt fingers."

If we want our children to have mutual respect for each other and if we agree that both girls and boys have equal needs to become competent and that it is our job as educators to help them acquire skills they will need to do so, we must stop fostering less competent behavior in girls by perpetuating a double standard of expectations.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

Easel painting, collaging, drawing, clay work, sculpturing a variety of materials, sponge painting, fingerpainting, printing, stitchery, and a host of other art and craft activities provide children with opportunities to increase hand-eye coordination, small-muscle control, attention span, and self-discipline. Because of this, they provide important training and increase readiness for reading and writing. But even more important than technical training, they provide children with a means of self-expression, a sense of aesthetics and the pleasure that comes with creating.

Any person who has ever seen the joy of discovery and sense of beauty as three-year-old children experience the principles of color mixing through fingerpainting will not minimize the cognitive and affective importance of the art experience in early childhood. We would certainly not want to see this exciting synthesis of sensory and intellectual learning which art provides denied to any child, nor would we want to see it limited in any way by different expectations of achievement for boys and girls. Since virtually no one

consciously limits children's art experiences according to their sex, it may seem odd to even bring up the matter. But it is worthwhile to look at our unconscious messages and the attitudes they convey in this area of curriculum. Let us begin by asking ourselves some questions.

Do we have stereotypic views of what girls' art looks like? Is it more inclined to be "pretty," with flowers and houses and the main subject? Do we think of it as neater than boys' work? Do we view boys' art as more complex? Do we expect their collaging to show more glue? Are boys clumsier with their fingers? If these are our attitudes as we look at children's art, how do we convey them? Language is an important factor to consider. If we consistently say to a girl, "That's a pretty picture," we may keep her creativity at a "pretty" level, for if our approval is associated with "pretty" the child may feel she dare not try something which may turn out not so "pretty," but which could be more complex and interesting and perhaps move her expression to a higher level of development.

A suggested way to move away from stereotyped comments to children would be to discuss some aspect of the painting in more specific terms, such as, "I like your color mixing. How did you make that bright orange?" or, "You have worked hard and have made many interesting designs today." These are comments that are more pertinent to the work actually done by the child and less evaluative of aesthetic quality. Also, if this type of statement is made to

both sexes, children will understand that there are similar expectations for all. We have noticed in our classroom observations that just as teachers suggest blockbuilding as a work activity less often to girls than to boys, they suggest painting and other art work less often to boys. A teacher expressed this to us:

> "As I became more aware of 'hidden' messages I was giving children, I started to make a conscious effort to involve girls in blockbuilding and boys in art work more often. It was really so simple. If I saw a girl who did not seem to have a clear idea of what she wanted to do, I suggested blocks and sometimes offered to help her get started. I did the same thing with boys and art work. Just by lending a little support at the beginning of the work (I was always careful to move away as soon as I was no longer needed), I found the children were working in more areas of the room. Also, I saw girls' blockbuilding develop simply because they were acquiring more experience with the materials, and the same thing happened with boys and art. I used to think that girls were more dexterous than boys, but now I think that the reason they are is because they have more experience with cutting, pasting, drawing, etc., and the practice is what makes the difference. I want to continue to observe my children now that my expectations for them are not so stereotyped. I wouldn't be at all surprised if girls, who have as much encouragement as boys to build, and boys, who have as much encouragement as girls to do art work, turn out to be more equal in ability than I used to think."

This teacher expressed for us exactly what we anticipate happening to attitudes about young children. Our goal is to have teachers and parents view children as people who have strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, because they are individuals and not because they are separated into categories according to gender.

FOOTNOTES

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CHAPTER IV

Curriculum Units

UNIT I: FAMILIES

Families are what young children know best. The first source of learning for the young child is the family unit in which she/he lives. Within the structure of the family, the child learns all of the beginning life skills and emotions - to eat, crawl, walk and talk, and to be loved and to return love to those adults who give nurturance and care.

What does a family consist of? If we look at children's books and games and the television and advertising, it would appear that almost all families are white and consist of a mother, a father and two children, usually one of each sex. We continually display this family group, the "nuclear family," as typical when, in reality, in our country today, there exist many variations of groupings which are also "families" in that they are two or more people who live together.

All of us who work with young children are aware that an increasing number of them live in a family which is not the nuclear stereotype. Twelve percent of all U. S. children live in one-parent homes headed by a female.[1] The number of children living in one-parent homes headed by males is as yet miniscule, but it is growing and we should be aware of this trend and ready for the occasional child for whom this is a family reality. Another rare but growing trend is the interracial family and we must be prepared, as teachers, to have

materials and curriculum ready which serve the child from such a family. The block accessories designed by the Women's Action Alliance should be a helpful tool if such a child is a member of one's class.* Unfortunately, the extended family trend is not growing, however, many American children still do live in extended families. In certain parts of our country a new form of the extended family, the communal family, is also a growing trend.

The point is that "family" is a concept that is currently fluid and changing in our country. By constantly presenting children with a rigid and inflexible view of family, we may be confusing them. One of the main jobs of pre-school is to help young children understand the world around them. If we present the most important aspect of the young child's world, his or her family, in a way that has no basis in reality, we are doing an educational disservice to the child.

However, if we present to children an open view of family life with room for any variety of grouping and lifestyle, we will leave no one out of our study; all the children will feel free to have their family included in the discussion. We will also expose children to the fact that many kinds of families exist and that we are accepting and respectful of all of them.

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* See Chapter V, "Non-Sexist Materials."

How to Begin

The best way to build any unit of curriculum is to begin by finding out what the children already know. This method enables the teacher to avoid spending too much time on material that is already familiar and well understood. It also clarifies, at the outset, any misconceptions that the children may have about a given subject, in this case family.

One suggestion for starting a discussion about family is to read a story about one. Instead of choosing a typical story with the proverbial "nuclear" group, try one such as "Joshua's Day" or "Martin's Father,"[2] which are about children who live in one-parent homes. If the children you teach are predominantly from one ethnic or racial group, it would be better to choose a story which deals primarily with that particular group. However, if such a story is not readily available, the teacher may want to make one up or use a story about an animal family (which has no fixed ethnic or racial identity) to start the discussion.

After the story the teacher might say, "Let's talk about families today." Try to give all the children a turn to say something about their own families. If the group is too large to do this without having restlessness occur, try dividing the group in half and having two separate story and discussion times. At the end of the first discussion, sum up the information given by the children and stress the variety of facts they have given. Suggest that there

is so much to learn about the families in the class that you should all talk some more about the subject on another day. You might want to give the children a question to take home to ask their families and report on for the next discussion.

At the beginning of the next discussion, it would be a good idea to sum up the previous one, asking the children to recall what they remembered so that the teacher is certain that no misconceptions are being formed. You might suggest that you will write down what the children say on an experience chart so that they can have a record of their study of families. Of course, as the children express what they already know, it is the job of the teacher to expand, clafify, and organize the material. For example, if a child mentions an uncle who lives in the family, the teacher can make sure all the children understand how an uncle is related to a parent, to the other parent (if there is one) as an in-law, to the child and to the child's grandparents.

Visits

After the children have talked a few times about their individual families and have written an experience chart so that all the material is recorded, it would be a good idea to schedule some school visits by members of the children's families. Personalizing of this sort is very important to young children. Try to invite the least stereotyped people first. For example, if a child has an uncle or grandfather

or teen-aged brother who cares for her or him, try to have this person come to school and share part of the morning with the children. At no time do we mean to imply that a mother or father is not welcome to visit. But these are the easier experiences to arrange for the children and, since we want to open the children's views on family, other less conventional visitors should be especially sought out.

Through these visits, it is hoped that the children will be exposed to men and women of all ages who spend part of their time caring for children. We feel this will help fight the stereotyped attitude that only women are nurturant and that only mothers take care of children's needs. Also, a unit such as this is an excellent way to involve family members in the school life of the child. People often feel they are not welcome in school and this unit should help them to feel more needed and welcome. Older people especially should be sought out. So often nowadays, older people are isolated from children and vice versa, but they have much to share and school is an excellent place for them to come into contact with each other. Also, older people have more free time than parent-aged people who often work and are too tired to do much participating in school life.

One way to dramatize the visit of a family member would be to have a special place in the room where, on the day a particular visitor is expected, the block accessory family figure who most

closely resembles the visitor is displayed with a sign stating the visitor's name and relationship to the child.

Making Family Books

Books made by the children are a fine way for them to record their family study. Each child can make an individual book to take home and also contribute to a class book on which all the children collaborate and which becomes a part of the class library. Each child can dictate to the teacher what she/he wants to say about his/her family for the individual book and then illustrate the story with drawings. The class book may be a round robin story, to which each child makes a contribution, or a collection of individual stories which are bound together.

Another possibility is to let the children make up stories which are fictional, but which are about family life. However, if the stories are fictional, it is important that the teacher help the children understand the difference between an autobiographical and a fictional story. Young children often confuse fantasy with reality. While we don't want to stifle imagination, it is important they be helped to make the distinction between the two.

Puppets and Skits

Often children who have difficulty expressing themselves can do so more easily through the use of puppets. Puppets can be made simply with paper bags and sticks, or the non-sexist family block

accessories can be easily used as puppets.* The children can enact simple family situations of their own making or the teacher can give a subject such as, "Let's pretend the mother puppet is going to work and the child is staying home with a sitter," and let the children act this out.

The possibilities for creating puppet skits which help children express the emotions concerned with family living are endless. Through these skits, the children will reveal many anxieties which will give the teacher greater understanding and enable her/him to be supportive and to design effective curriculum for each individual child in the class.

Some children will be able to use themselves in dramatic skits and will not need or want to use puppets. Activities similar to those suggested for puppets can be planned. Again, either the children can choose simple scenes to act out or the teacher can assign short situations revolving around the topic of family life.

Dramatic skits and puppet skits are an excellent way to help children express all the human emotions, especially the ones adults usually avoid dealing with, such as sadness and fear.

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* Just attach a pencil or stick to the figures with a rubber band so the child will have something to hold.

Charts, Murals and Other Art Activities

It is during the early childhood years that most of the skills needed for later success in learning are established. It is for this reason that we organize the day in a set routine, establish easy methods for setting up and cleaning up activities independently, set rules for storytime which encourage quiet listening, ask questions which develop discussion techniques, and in many small ways foster the cooperative group behavior children need in order to learn.

It is also possible to help even very young children to learn to categorize and record their growing body of knowledge well before they have mastered numbers and letters. For example, in our study of families, we can first record on a chart each individual child's family, using the child's name and a stick figure for each person in the family. After the children are thoroughly familiar with this chart, the information on it can be further consolidated into a chart which records by groups (such as mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, etc.) - the combined adults in the children's lives. This chart can be done by color bars and the children will readily be able to tell if their families have more aunts than grandmothers, fewer uncles than fathers, or a host of other comparisons. These simple charts are a form of symbolization that help to pave the way for the abstract thinking that is necessary in later school years. While abstract thinking is not the sphere of the young child, those things which serve as the experience building

blocks leading to its full development certainly are a part of early childhood education.

Murals and collages are two more ways to tie the family study into other areas of curriculum. A suggestion for family collages would be to cut a variety of figures, or parts of figures, out of magazines (be sure to get a good racial mix) and have the children collage a family. This should be a very open-ended activity where the children feel free to exercise imagination and whimsy. It should be both fun and interesting to see what they create.

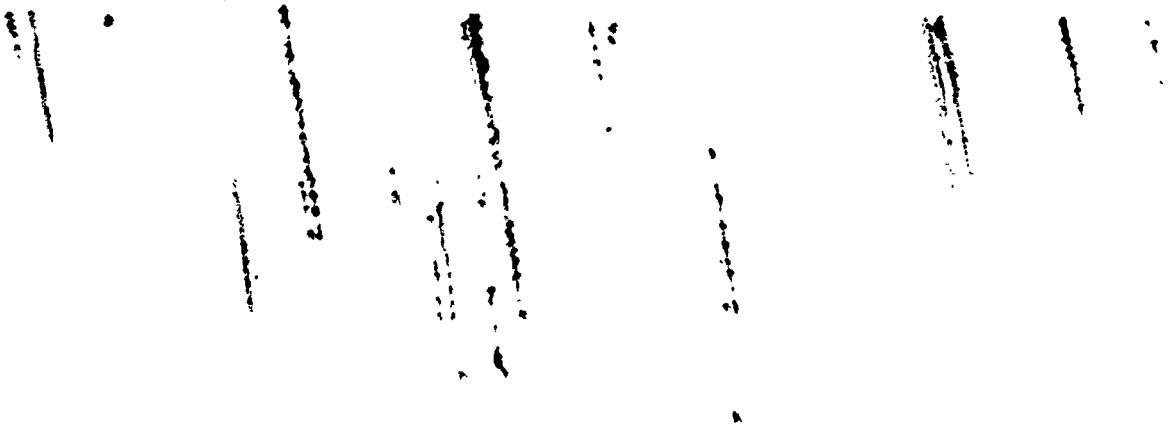
A nice finale to the family study would be to have all the children (all those who want to, that is) participate in creating a family mural. A variety of media (paint, crayon, collage) could be employed and the children can plan with their teacher the format they want for the mural. After the mural is completed, it would be a good idea to have a display of the other art works, charts, and books related to the unit and give the children a chance to discuss their feelings about the family study in which they have participated.

Summary

All early childhood curriculums contain some study of the family. As was stated at the beginning of this discussion, it is what the young child knows best and is fraught with possibilities for expanding and enhancing this base of knowledge.

The main thrust of our family study is to help children broaden their views of family. We want children to both accept and enjoy the

fact that there are many variations in how many people make a family and who these people are. It is a formidable task to fight the media stereotypes, but the school is the best place to begin to do so, especially if it enlists the cooperation of the children's families for the task. Together, school and home comprise the largest force influencing the child's life. If we help children feel as positive as possible about their own families and accept and respect the families of their peers, we will also helping them to build a positive self-image about themselves. However, in order to do this, we, as teachers, must first arrive at the point where we look more broadly at our concept of family. We must learn to appreciate and respect the variety of lifestyles which now exist in this country, and we must convey all of this to our children through both attitudes and curriculum.



UNIT II: JOBS PEOPLE DO

The world of work is fascinating to young children. Especially interesting to them are those jobs performed in their immediate neighborhood, the function of which they can readily understand. The so-called community jobs such as firefighter, police officer, letter carrier, construction worker, doctor, and nurse are those which are most comprehensible and seem most exciting to young children. However, until very recently all of the above-mentioned community jobs (except the nurse) were jobs performed exclusively by men. Studying the jobs performed in the community furthered the view that it is the men in our society who perform all the important jobs. Even the former terms for these jobs perpetuated the idea that they could only be performed by men, i.e., policeman, fireman, postman, etc. This view of male dominance is further perpetuated by the media and in early childhood books and materials.

For example, in the 150 readers examined by Women on Words and Images for their study and slide show, "Dick and Jane as Victims,"[3] they found only two stories about mothers who work outside the home. In one, the woman works in the cafeteria in the same school her daughter attends and, in the other story, the implication is that the boy, Martin, is a sullen bully because his mother is at work instead of at home! Also, until very recently, block accessories, the little wooden or rubber figures used in conjunction with block

play, consisted of a community workers set which contained eight figures, seven males in a wide variety of roles and one female nurse. In the only two family groups previously available, the Black mother has a striped, ruffled apron painted on her and the white mother has a baby painted in her arms.

Such materials certainly help to restrict children's views of the work women do. It must be very difficult for the child of a mother who works outside the home to understand why women are always portrayed in domestic scenes! It is also impossible to use a female figure dressed in an apron or holding a baby in any imaginative play other than houseplay. The readers and other materials also restrict the view of men's roles. They are portrayed as always active, totally energetic, positive characters who never despair, never share household chores, never nurture their children. Actually, the materials now available and the curriculum they inspire do not even adequately reflect the reality of our present society, never mind present a forward-looking view. There are at least 26,000,000 American school children who do have mothers who work outside the home. Yet, despite this huge and still growing figure, the working woman is virtually non-existent in the world we show to young children.

In perpetuating the myth (consciously or unconsciously) that homemaking is the only role women may play (we see full-time homemaking as one of <u>many</u> options), we are doing a double disservice to children. First, we give a false impression and confuse those who

have working mothers, and, secondly, we perpetuate the inequality of women in presenting so few options for them to choose in adult life. In effect, we tell boys and girls that, while boys may choose to be fathers and have any career they desire, girls may only choose motherhood. However, it is possible, within the framework of classic early childhood curriculum, to open up children's views of the world of work and present it to them as much more equally divided between men and women. It is well worth the extra effort it takes to present this more open view of work to children; to do so not only makes children more accepting of people performing non-stereotyped jobs, but it also opens up the choices they will consider for their own careers in adult life.

How to Begin

As in the other units, we feel it is best to begin by finding out what the children know. What is their understanding of work? Who performs which jobs? If you ask the children a controversial question such as, "Can a man be a nurse," don't be surprised if you get a completely sexist response even from three year olds.

To begin the discussion about work, the teacher might read a regular stereotyped book about jobs and then follow it up the next day with a more contemporary book such as Joe Kaufman's Busy People and How They Do Their Work, Joe Lasker's Mothers Can Do Anything, or Eve Merriam's Mommies at Work.* The differences between the

* See Annotated Bibliography of Childrens Books.

first and second story should be a catalyst for raising some important questions about work.

Another way to begin the unit is to show the children some photographs of women and men who are engaged in non-stereotyped work and have them react to them. One of the teachers in a demonstration center participating in the project began looking at jobs in just this way. When the children were choosing work for the day, she offered them the option of making a book with some photos she had. Three girls chose this work and the following curriculum ensued:

> On the table were eight 8" x 10" black and white photos of women doing non-stereotyped work including a farmer, milk delivery person, garage mechanic, bus driver, etc. One girl was asked to choose the first picture for the book and she chose the bus driver. The children recognized that the driver was a woman and that she was driving the bus, but they couldn't put it all together because in their perception of the world, women don't drive buses. One girl said, "She's a man, right teacher?" The teacher kept asking questions which helped the children to clarify what they were seeing. The conversation went like this:
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> T: What is this picture about?
> Ch: A bus driver.
> T: Who's driving the bus?
> Ch: The lady.
> T: Do you think ladies can drive buses?
> Ch: (in chorus) NO!
> T: Why not?
> Ch: Ladies can't drive (Note: These were inner city children who do not often see women driving).
> T: I can drive a car. But this lady is driving the bus. That's her work. Don't you know some ladies who drive cars?
> Ch: My daddy can drive but he don't have money for a car.
> Ch: I know some ladies who drive cars.
> T: I know you don't see ladies driving buses in New York City, but in many other places they do and that is their work.
> Ch: Oh.

As the children were talking the teacher was taking down their comments and this writer was taping the whole episode. The children's comments went from incredulous to accepting.

The picture was irrefutable evidence that at least this one woman was driving a bus. It would have been a much better experience if the activity could have been followed up by a trip on a bus driven by a woman or by a visit from a female bus driver, but in New York City this was one trip that couldn't be arranged.

The book with all the children's comments on this and the other pictures became a favorite in the class library. The teacher backed each page with cardboard and covered it with clear contact and then used ring binders. The result was a sturdy useful book.

Later, at a staff meeting, we discussed the use of the word lady versus woman. We pointed out that "lady" is a word with societal connotations that are quite different from woman and yet is often used as a substitute word to mean woman. We suggested that the teachers try to use woman instead, but not to purposely "correct" the children when they use "lady." Children learn more by example and, just as we try to use correct grammar, rather than to correct their grammar, we feel that using non-sexist terms regularly will lead to the children using them also.

The activity described above took place in September, 1973. In April of 1974, the teacher repeated the same activity. This time there were two boys and two girls involved. There was complete acceptance that "ladies" can drive. To the teacher's question "Can

ladies drive?" came this answer, "Yeah, some ladies drive and the money is also dropping down." The two boys' reaction to the photo of a woman fixing a motorcycle were as follows. "The girl is fixing the motorcycle because it's broken." The teacher asks "Is it hers?" and A. answers "Yeah, she rides it. She's fixing it with a screw-driver." The other boy says, "It's a gas woman fixing the motorcycle." The children's comments on a photo of a female letter carrier are, "She is putting a newspaper in a slot that's in the door. It's a mail lady." The teacher says, "Maybe we could call her a letter carrier."

It's evident from the April experience that not only are the children more accepting of the fact that women can and do perform all kinds of tasks, but also that their teacher is actively helping them to develop non-sexist language as well, i.e., "Maybe we could call her a letter carrier?"

You may get some heated denials that men sometimes take care of babies (i.e., pediatric nurses) and that some women are garage mechanics, but this is a fine way to begin. Students don't always agree with their teachers and lively discussion over controversial materials is just as appropriate to early childhood as it is to higher levels!

After "Jobs People Do" has become a lively topic of discussion, the next step is to have the children research their families to find out what kind of work various members do. The earliest form of

research is to ask someone a question, and even three-year-olds can be expected to remember a question and report the answer in school the next day. (Note: Not all threes can do this, but certainly most fours and fives can be expected to.) After the information about the jobs done by the children's families has been collected, the teacher will have a better idea about how much further research she/he must do in the community to provide non-sexist trips and visits for the children.

Trips and Visits

A series of visits and trips and follow-up activities is an effective way to expose children to the world of work. Children as young as three can learn a great deal from having their own mothers, fathers and other family members come to school to share their expertise.

A teacher of threes tried this curriculum in 1972:

> "I decided that the best way to acquaint the children in my class with the fact that many of their mothers were "experts" in various fields was to invite several of them, who did work that was interesting to children, to come and visit and teach or demonstrate their skill. In a class of thirteen three-year-olds, I found among the mothers an opera singer, a horticulturist, a folk singer, and a photographer! I also found a father who was an artist, but he was too shy to share his work with the children.
>
> "Each of the mothers spent a part of the morning with us. The horticulturist conducted a whole planting session; the opera singer sang very soft lullabys in several languages during rest time; the photographer took both stills and movies and let the children explore the cameras; and the folk singer conducted a music time for us. The children soon learned that their mommies were "experts" in various

fields and it was an especially rewarding experience because the children already knew these women as the mommies of their friends and learned to view them in another way as well."

This teacher had a fine idea that worked especially well for threes. For fours and fives, we suggest that the idea be expanded to include fathers and members of the extended family. The jobs these visitors have do not all have to be non-stereotyped. It's far more important that a child's parent or relative is made to feel welcome and that the job they do is treated with respect, than that it be especially non-stereotyped. It is also extremely important to include people (men and women) who have a special expertise in a homemaking skill, such as baking, cooking or stitchery in this study of jobs. We want children to understand that this is also a form of work. (There will be some overlap among the units especially family, jobs and homemaking as there is in all learning.)

Visiting Parents at Work

One of the demonstration centers in our project had already developed a pattern of taking small groups of children to visit their parents at work. These visits were to local factories, to stores and to a hospital where many of the parents worked in jobs ranging from aides to physicians. No more than four or five children went on a trip at one time. They could usually walk to their destination, although they sometimes took buses and subways as well.

We thought this was a fine idea and shared it with our three other centers. They all found it an excellent way to help children

understand the work their parents performed while they were at school. The teachers all felt that it gave the child whose parent was visited a special feeling of sharing. It was especially important to children in day care whose parents often cannot take time off from work to attend school functions. The visits also exposed children to a wide variety of jobs. Since each trip generated excitement, each job seemed very special to the children and enhanced their respect for all work.

In one school, a mother who is a cab driver, arranged to drive by the school at a certain time and let the children see her at work. The children were thrilled by her visit and poured over the cab admiring every part. The mother told the teacher that her own estimation of her work had gone up because of the way the children reacted. Before, she had felt a bit ashamed of being a cab driver, but the fact that the teacher had especially asked her to share her work and the children's positive reaction to S--'s mommy driving a taxi made her feel a greater self-respect!

Community Trips and Visits

In addition to tapping the parents as a rich resource of information about jobs, the community offers a wealth of experiences suitable for young children.

The teacher will need to do a little research to find out what the school neighborhood has to offer in the way of people performing

non-stereotyped jobs. Spreading the word about what one is seeking is very helpful. In our centers, parents helped to find many exciting experiences for the children.

A fairly simple trip to arrange would be to visit a female building superintendent or manager. This is a job that is held by a woman fairly often, but children usually think of it as a man's job. She could explain how she keeps the building warm, how she repairs things that need fixing, and how she keeps the building clean. It is usually a good idea when arranging a visit to tell the person how long you will stay (keep it short) and suggest the things you think will interest children the most. It's also wise to let them know that short answers to questions are better than long explanations.

Usually, if the teacher arranges a convenient time for the visit, people are flattered and quite willing to let children come and talk to them.

Another easily arranged trip is to a local cleaner where a male tailor is employed. Adults know that most tailors are male, but young children associate sewing with females and, for them, seeing a man who sews is a non-sexist experience. Also, tailors are most often older men (tailoring is a dying craft) and it adds another dimension to the trip for the children see an older person at work. If it is at all possible to arrange, it would be a fine experience to invite the tailor to come to the children's school and

teach them some simple stitchery. It may be easier for the boys to participate in a stitchery project if it is taught by a man.

Community Worker Visits

As we mentioned earlier, because of media and materials, children overwhelmingly view community jobs as male-dominated. This is no longer true; we can open up their perceptions of community jobs to include women through a series of trips and visits. Again, the teacher will have to do a little prior planning to make sure that female letter carriers and police officers (two favorites of children) are present when the children visit the post office or the police station. If possible, arrange for them to conduct the tour for the children.

In two of our centers, female police officers played a dramatic role in enhancing the children's views of women's strength and the jobs they are able to do. The children in one of our centers walked to the local police precinct for a visit. They met several male police officers and one female. The female officer spent quite a bit of time answering the children's questions and both she and the children were delighted to discover that she was assigned to patrol the block their center was on. They began seeing her on patrol as they came to school and one day they even saw her in the school building! She had promised to visit the children in their classroom and one day she arrived, resplendent in full uniform including her

holster, handcuffs, whistle, and walkie talkie. During her visit she answered all the children's questions and had her picture taken with them. This police officer was a tall, strong, Black woman who provided a very positive role model for the Black girls in this five-year-old class. One child in particular, a Black girl, who often made comments about how she couldn't do this and that and how girls were not strong, dramatically changed after the visit of this strong woman who, in the eyes of the children, did such important work.

In another center, the children had the experience of seeing a female officer on duty daily at the crossing near their school. When she came to visit, the children seemed to matter-of-factly accept that either a man or woman could be a police officer. They showed enormous interest in the paraphenalia of her work, especially the handcuffs, but in no way indicated that they were surprised that she was female. We would consider it ideal if all children could show such lack of surprise at females in community jobs, for that would mean that enough women were so employed that children could view these jobs as performed by <u>people</u> rather than by men and (a few) women.

Another important aspect of community work is medical care, the work of doctors, nurses, dentist, lab workers, etc. These jobs become stereotyped very early in the minds of young children and the stereotypes often prevail even though the child's own situation is

contradictory. For instance, many children who do have female doctors think that <u>really</u> all doctors are male and all nurses are female and shrug off the fact that their own doctor is a woman! Also, no teacher has ever gone through a whole year with pre-schoolers without having to arbitrate the argument that arises when a girl wants to be a doctor and a boy (and sometimes even another girl) challenges her right just because she's a girl. The phrase usually goes, "You can't be the doctor - you have to be the nurse 'cause you're a girl."

In order to help children begin to understand that both men and women can be <u>doctors</u> and <u>nurses</u>, it would be a good idea to have a pair of each come and visit in the classroom. We feel that it's especially beneficial to have both a male and female counterpart, who perform the same jobs, come together for a visit since this reinforces the view that men and women can do most jobs equally. We designed our community workers block accessories this way and have urged manufacturers to do the same as they develop non-sexist materials.

We feel it is better to have medical workers visit the classroom because hospitals and clinics produce anxiety in so many children. They are more likely to be relaxed and interested if the medical workers visit takes place in their own familiar classroom. Of course, some early childhood centers provide medical and dental services and children become used to clinics. If this is the case, try to arrange to have female dentists and doctors and male nurses and aides work with the children.

One of our centers had an experience with a female dentist which almost set our project back. The children went for their regularly scheduled checkup and the director was especially excited because the dentist assigned to them was a woman. However, she was most abrupt and gave no special attention or kindness. Indeed, she was almost rough. The director was chagrined and was going to especially request a different dentist for the follow-up work. However, she decided to talk to the woman instead and help her to understand that it was doubly important for her to establish a good relationship with the children, for the sake of a positive attitude towards tooth care and for the sake of the project. The woman was understanding on both scores and the next visit was a much more positive experience for all concerned!

We feel that finding a male nurse is very important in the study of medical workers. Although about 15 percent of nurses are now male, very few children even know it is possible for a man to be a nurse and most have never seen one. We feel that this is an important option to open up for boys. They should feel that when they begin to look at career choices in their teens, the choice of nursing is one they can make freely, if they are so inclined, without feeling that they are mavericks who are in for a struggle.

The job of construction worker is another that has special appeal for young children. To "build a building" is an important and powerful job which calls for strength and brains. Needless to say, con-

struction work has been, until very recently, exclusively a male occupation and, as was discussed in the section on block building, the male dominance of building work carries over into the classroom. However, nowadays it is quite possible in most communities to show children that both men and women can build. The number of women architects and engineers is growing every year; one doesn't have to search too hard to find one who will share her work with children. It is also getting easier to find women carpenters and, although still rare, women laborers.

Our project was tested in New York City and we were able to find a woman building engineer and a woman architect who allowed the children to visit them on building sites and see them on the job in construction clothes. Their first experience involved a trip to see a woman building engineer who was supervising the building of a bank in the heart of Rockefeller Center (a subway trip). We were doubly pleased about this trip because it was the husband of one of the teacher aides in the school who had seen this woman and had told his wife about her. She told the teacher who then arranged the trip! Before the children went on the trip, they had a discussion about what they were going to see and one girl in particular expressed disbelief that any woman could do such work.

When they arrived at the site, there she was in construction clothes complete with hardhat, supervising a whole group of workers! The children observed and asked questions and the teacher took pictures. When they arrived back at school, the little skeptic

burst into the classroom and informed a teacher who had not gone on the trip, "We saw a lady and she was the boss!" The next day, as a follow-up activity, the teacher set out wood, glue and cardboard and those children who chose to could "construct." One little girl, M., who always said she wanted to be a fireman, policeman, etc., began to build a bank, just as she had seen on the trip. She spent at least one hour building a huge construction and when it was finished, she took the femal construction worker (Women's Action Alliance had given a set of our newly designed block accessories containing male and female counterpart community workers to each of our test centers) and placed her on top of the building saying, "She's the boss." She then placed the male construction worker near her and said, "He's her helper." M. then dictated a story to her teacher relating all she had seen the day before on the trip and describing the big bank she had just constructed. M. is a strong little girl who had experienced something she was very comfortable with: a positive role image of a woman performing a powerful, active job!

Another group took a trip (this time by subway and bus) to see a woman architect who was supervising the development of an entire new town going up on an island in the middle of the East River. The architect showed the children the various types of houses going up and then showed them one of the oldest buildings in New York which is being left intact as a landmark. Before they left, she showed them a new playground being built and let them try some of the equipment. The teacher later described the trip as a "mind boggling"

experience which included the wonderful adventure of the transportation they had used to arrive at the site, including a train that went under the river!

Before moving into suggestions for follow-up activities, this writer would like to relate one more trip which, although ordinary, worked out quite extraordinarily this year.

The children were taking their usual walk to the firehouse in the Fall. However, this year, when the fireman wanted to dress one of the boys up in the firefighters clothes, the teacher pointed out to him that K., a five year old girl, was every bit as excited by what she was seeing and suggested that he dress her up instead. He did so and also let her "drive" the firetruck and climb the ladder. The teacher photographed K. in full firefighting regalia and also took pictures of her "driving" and climbing. We took the photos, had them blown up to 8" x 10" and made puzzles from them.

Each year after the trip to the fire department, the teacher would give the children a very large carton which they would make into a firetruck and weeks of dramatic play centering around the trip would ensue. This year, spurred by K's excitement, and the pictures and puzzles, the girls were much more involved in the dramatic play than they had ever been before. They "drove" the truck, put out fires and were active participants in the painting and designing of the truck. The teacher put the words "firegirl" and "firewoman" on the wall alongside "fireboy" and "fireman."

Even though these children had never seen a female fire-fighter, just a small change in their normal trip was enough to produce noticeable change in their play! In many communities, women are actually actively involved in firefighting. Even more changes in the children's attitudes can be expected when it is possible to give them this first-hand experience.

Follow-Up Activities to Trips and Visits

Many of the follow-up activities to the trips and visits in the Jobs People Do unit will come from the children themselves in the form of spontaneous dramatic play, block schemes, drawings, paintings, questions, etc. However, in order to maximize each experience the teacher will want to plan some activities.

A natural follow-up activity to a trip was described earlier in this section. After the trip the children had taken to see the building engineer, the teacher set out materials which were for building and she took down dictated stories about the trip from the children as they worked. Another natural follow-up would have been to plan a block scheme with the children. Planning block building in this case would have helped children to organize their knowledge so that their building of the bank and its surrounding buildings would recreate to the best of their ability what they had seen the previous day. This planned experience would serve quite a different purpose than spontaneous building; there is room and need for both types of experiences in pre-school curriculum.

A collage mural would be another fine way to record a trip. Scraps of construction paper, thin wood, sandpaper and other materials are fine media to suggest the various textures of buildings in the city. The teacher might also suggest clay or plasticine as a modeling material for some children to use to reproduce what they had seen on the trip.

Also, experience charts, class books, individual books and poems are all fine ways to help children understand and retain their experiences.

Sometimes one media may be more suitable than another to follow-up a particular trip. But, in general, all of the classic early childhood mediums of expression are appropriate for the non-stereotyped look at the world of "Jobs People Do" that we have been discussing in this chapter.

Use of Photography

Children as well as adults are extremely responsive to photography. They love to see themselves. Recording their trips and visits with photos is not only fun, but helps them to recall small details they might otherwise forget. Some of the older children (some fives and most sixes and sevens) can be trained to use a simple camera and take their own pictures, but it's wise for the teacher, parent or aide to take some also so that, if the children's photos are not too clear, there will be others to record the trip. The

photos can also be used for a variety of follow up activities. They can be the illustrations for books made by the children. The children can put one sentence captions under the photo or tell longer stories which the teacher writes down for them. Since prints are a bit expensive, photos should be used for a book or chart made by the whole group for classroom use, rather than in individual books for taking home. For these individual books the children can do their own drawings instead.

Another good use for photos is in a large montage poster titled "Jobs People Do." The children can mount their photos on a large piece of artboard or any large stiff material available, to make a poster which records all their trips and visits. This poster can then be used by the teacher as a basis for several kinds of discussions revolving around the unit. Sometimes the teacher may want the discussion to be free-wheeling, allowing the children to talk about anything pertaining to jobs. Other times she may want to be more specific, focusing on a particular trip or a specific type of work. Varying discussion from general to specific topics is a good exercise which aids children in organizing the materials they've learned about a subject. It is also an aid in helping children to learn to speak to the point.

Having some fairly large photos of people at work around the room can be the catalyst for one-to-one discussions between teacher and child or between children. Not every activity has to be planned

as long as the classroom environment contains changing stimuli so that the children are challenged to inquire and discuss. Photos are an excellent source of just such inquiry as this teacher relates:

> "I had seen a telephone company advertisement which featured a little Black boy about five years old with tears streaming down his face. I cut it out and hung it up at eye level in my classroom. It was amazing how much conversation ensued. I had a little Black boy in my class who cried quite a bit and he was really able to relate to that picture! Many of the children would look at the picture and when I noticed one doing so, I would wander over and we would start talking about what made us sad. We also discussed why people cry, what made our parents sad, etc. In short, the picture provided a wonderful catalyst for discussing sadness, an emotion that adults often try to avoid discussing with little children, but one they really need to talk about."

Projects for Older Children

Many day care centers and other institutions which care for children have both upper elementary school age children and teen-agers who spend after school hours at the center. It has been this writer's experience that schools often have a problem programming stimulating experiences for these children.

One suggestion for these after school groups would be to utilize them in the "Jobs People Do" curriculum. Whereas, young children can go on walking trips in their own communities or even a bit further afield in their exploration of the world of jobs, there are many areas that would be inappropriate or too far away for them to visit. However, children from eleven years and up could make trips into the larger community, with still cameras and, if possible, movie cameras

to record and bring back information to the younger children. For example, one would not want to take small children into a large hospital complex, nor would they be allowed to visit, but a trip could certainly be arranged for teen-agers to go to such a place and photograph the enormous variety of jobs performed by men and women. Another example would be to have older children visit a factory or large institution such as a utility, which would be overwhelming for younger children, and again report back what they had seen in a similar fashion.

These older children could then prepare movies, filmstrips, slide shows, charts and verbal presentations for the younger children. Becoming involved in such a trip project would not only broaden the look at the world of jobs for the younger children, it would also expose the teen-agers to job options that they may never have known existed.

Teen-agers need far less adult supervision on their trips than the younger children, but they do need help in preparing their projects and reports. With adult supervision and guidance about what is relevant and interesting to young children, the older children would also be gaining valuable insight into how young children think and learn.

We feel an additional advantage to projects like the one described above is that older children and adolescents gain insight into small children and thus eventually become more knowledgeable, understanding and effective parents.

UNIT III: THE HUMAN BODY

When we began to field test this project, we gave each teacher a curriculum outline containing suggestions for discussions, follow-up activities and trips. We deliberately designed an outline containing suggestions because we wanted the teachers to feel free to create a curriculum(s) of their own. We encouraged them to use our ideas flexibly realizing that what might work well for one group might not work at all for another. Our overall goal was to have a curriculum created out of the interaction between our project and the teachers, and between the teachers and the children. We wanted all the people involved in the centers including administrators, parents, aides, kitchen and cleaning help to contribute their ideas; this is precisely what did happen during the months that we worked in each center.

The following curriculum ideas for a study of The Human Body with young children originated in the Resource Room of the Educational Alliance Day Care Center.* This is a room where children from the four and five-year-old groups come (ten at a time) to participate in special projects. The catalyst for much of the unit was a book that we put into the center as part of the non-sexist group of materials we were testing. In the words of the center's director, Anne Gray Kaback,

* The teacher in charge of the Resource Room and responsible for the development of this curriculum unit is Ann-Marie Mott.

"This is a real breakthrough book!"

The book is called Bodies by Barbara Brenner with photos by George Ancona. It was published in late 1973 by E. P. Dutton & Co. of New York. It consists of photographs of all kinds of bodies doing all kinds of things. It has photos of men and women of all ages and of children actively investigating the world. The book shows whole bodies and parts of bodies. One of its most important pages depicts such essential bodily functions as breathing, eating, moving, sweating, eliminating and sleeping. There is a photo of two naked little boys playing in a stream and on the facing page one of two little girls playing in the bathtub.

Another page has a picture of a Robot with the mechanisms of its insides clearly visible and the following text:

> "What's a body like?
> Is it a machine?
> It has parts like a machine.
> If you listen hard you hear something ticking inside like a machine.

But. . .

> A body is alive.
> A machine isn't alive.
> A machine has no feelings.
> So a body can't be a machine even thougn it seems like a machine.

One can see that these few simple questions and statements are rich stimuli with which to launch children's minds into an area of study that is of prime importance to the development of self-image, the study of their own bodies.

As a matter of fact, it was evidence that her children did not have a well developed self-image that led this teacher to seek out ways to give her students experiences that would increase their physical self-awareness. This is what she told us:

> "I had been wanting to focus on the body since last year. I had asked the children to draw themselves and their drawings were so incomplete for children their age. It seemed to me that their self-image was poor in spite of the fact that they were physically capable and well-coordinated.
>
> "I felt we needed to focus on 'Who am I?' We started with hand printing and foot printing. Each child compared the prints of his/her own feet and hands and noticed the similarities and differences between them. Then the children compared their own prints with those of their friends to look at such concepts as smaller and larger, and wider and narrower.
>
> "Next, we traced each child's outline on large sheets of brown wrapping paper and cut them out. This enabled the children to realize their actual dimensions. There's a big difference between seeing yourself in a mirror and having a life-size cutout to look at and study!
>
> "The children filled in the features and painted clothing on the figures and then each of them wrote a story about themselves telling their name, who were their special friends, what they liked to eat and what they wanted to be when they grew up.
>
> "We followed up the brown paper figures by doing chalk outlines on the roof. The children traced each other and their teachers and again they were able to compare relative sizes and shapes. All of these activities took place in the early Fall and helped to give the children greater understanding of the outer dimensions of their bodies and a sense of greater detail about their extremities.
>
> "When the Women's Action Alliance introduced the book Bodies into the center, it provided the catalyst to focus on another dimension, the inner parts of the body and the functions they serve."

The children were fascinated by the book and especially intrigued by the robot. They wanted to make a robot, which they did by using boxes, scrap machinery, and a battery for the light bulb eyes.

Naturally, there was discussion about the connecting parts inside the robot and what connections were especially necessary to make its eyes light up. The teacher then compared the robot's working parts to the inner workings of the children's bodies and helped them understand that they too had necessary inner connections.

After the children made the group robot, they each made an individual one using boxes, masking tape, egg cartons, etc. They used pipe cleaners to represent the wiring. Their teacher said:

> "They were so fantastically original. Some of the children cut out sections of paper egg cartons and pasted them on for eyes. I had each child make a plan before starting the robot. I felt that this was a good experience for them. They really were able to stick to their plans.
>
> "The individual robots were so special I decided to make a book about them. I called the book 'Who Made the Robot?' and made it in the following way:
>
> > On the left side of the page, each child wrote his/her name and then dictated their robot story to me. I folded the right side of the page less than halfway toward the middle and on the outside flap placed a photo of the child's robot which I had taken and developed. When the right flap was lifted, there was a photo of the child underneath revealing who had made the robot!"

In the five year old's classroom, the teacher turned the doll corner into a hospital for The Human Body curriculum. The children

listened to their own and each other's heartbeats with a stereoscope. Both boys and girls created dramatic play situations revolving around health care. The teacher reported that girls felt quite free to be doctors as well as nurses and that both boys and girls were very involved with caring for the sick. Both real children and dolls were the patients.

Next, the teachers arranged a trip to the Museum of Natural History so the children could see the "Transparent Woman." This is a life-size figure of a woman in clear plastic with all of the internal parts of the body clearly visible. In the teacher's words, "The children responded to the woman with wonder, curiosity, and respect. Those usual embarrassed giggles evoked by pictures of nudity were absent." The children also realized from seeing the woman and from an X-ray photo of a hand in the book "Bodies," that the Halloween skeleton that hung in their room was a representation of the skeletal structure inside their own bodies! As five-year-old C. put it, "I liked the robot lady (transparent woman) the best because it's important to know about how your body works!"

This gifted teacher thought of yet another way to enhance this exciting study of the body for the children. She arranged a visit to the Central Park Zoo where the children observed the baby gorilla, "Patty Cake." It was a moving experience for the children to see how similar their bodies were to this other animal creature and how similar her need for nurturance was to theirs. Observing "Patty Cake"

and her family was an affective experience for the children which, when added to the cognitive experiences they had been having, made their study of the body more totally satisfying than if either aspect had been ignored.

In the classroom, the children turned their visits to "Patty Cake" and her family into dramatic play situations in which both boys and girls cared for the baby and this play helped them to express their deepest needs and feelings. The children became so involved in this experience that they made lemonade and baked cookies which they then sold to raise money to give the gorillas a more natural environment at the zoo!

Songs and rhythms were also part of the curriculum. For this aspect, the teacher turned to another teacher in the center who was especially gifted with music. Old standbys such as "Punchinello" and "Loopy Loo" were useful to help the children identify parts of the body. Other songs used were "Put Your Finger in the Air" and "If You're Happy and You Know It, Clap Your Hands." Ella Jenkins' songs, again emphasizing the parts of the body, were also used. For example, "And One and Two," which appears on the record of the same name, combines counting, rhythmic movements and parts of the body.[4]

The music and games were not new ones. They were familiar to both children and teachers. What was new was the focus. When their old favorite songs became a part of The Human Body curriculum, the children and teachers became more aware of the words and more inter-

ested in relating these words to their individual bodies.

When the children had been studying the "Human Body" for some months, had seen the "transparent woman" and made several visits to the Zoo to visit "Patty Cake" and her family (which was important to the family study as well as the Human Body study), our staff met with the center's staff for our final in-service session. We all discussed what activities had taken place and how these activities had brought about changes in the childrens' self-concepts. All the teachers who had taken part in the unit felt that the children had a new interest in their bodies which was based on intellectual understanding and curiosity. The teachers and the director noticed far less tittering and toilet talk. As the children found that their questions were answered openly, there was no longer a need for sneaking and peeking. The children also showed pride in their bodies and their knowledge of its functions. The girls were especially delighted that the life-size figure in the museum was female.

UNIT IV: HOMEMAKING

In the course of this project, we have had occasion to speak to numerous groups of women who shared with us their concerns and their feelings about the women's movement and the effect it has had on their lives. While many of the women we met were mothers who work outside of their homes in paying jobs, many were women who work as full-time homemakers. Although the women who are full-time homemakers work hard at their job of housekeeping and childcare, they are not paid any wages for their services. They also are regarded as low-status people by our society, which measures jobs mainly by their monetary value. Needless to say, women who are full-time homemakers generally have a poor self-image and, when asked what they do, usually say, "I'm just a housewife." Very frequently, when one discusses work with young children and asks them what their parents do, they will say, "My Mommy doesn't do anything; she just stays home," if their mother is a homemaker.

We feel that homemaking is a complex job which requires a multitude of skills, including executive ability to handle it successfully. We feel that it is one of many work options open to women and that it is as deserving of respect as any job performed in our society. Many of the women we spoke with who are full-time homemakers feel that the women's movement, with its stress on paid jobs, has left them out. They told us that they feel guilty if they are not using their skills

in the outside world, despite the fact that a career in homemaking is one that they have freely chosen and find satisfying. We feel there is justification in the way these women perceive the messages of the women's movement. Full-time homemaking is not often discussed as an option deserving of equal status and respect as a paying job.

Also, since homemaking skills are overwhelmingly performed by women and since women don't regard them as skills comparable to those performed by men, they do not often discuss or even think about the complexities of the work they do. Therefore, men, who hardly ever experience the complexities involved in smoothly running a household, seldom realize or appreciate the jobs done by homemakers. They simply take it for granted that their households function properly. On the other hand, the successful performance of their own jobs, no matter how menial, are matters for daily discussion, encouragement and praise.

On the basis of what women told us, we decided that the early childhood classroom would be an appropriate place to begin to look at homemaking as a profession. Although we consider it a part of the Jobs People Do curriculum, homemaking is such a complex job, comprised of so many component parts, we decided to present it as a separate unit.

Our hope is that, as we provide experience in homemaking skills to young children and relate these experiences to jobs in the world outside the home, the children will gain understanding and respect for this work. We also hope that as mothers share their homemaking

expertise with the children, as an important part of the curriculum, their own self-esteem will improve.

How to Begin

As always, our suggestion is to begin by finding out what the children know. What is their understanding of homemaking? Do they see it as domestic chores only or do any of them perceive that it is more than cleaning, ironing, cooking, etc.?

After finding out what the children's perceptions of homemaking are, the teacher might want to say, "Let's take a look at the work our Mommies do." Or, "Homemakers do a big job - let's study about it." We suggest that the teacher adopts the term "homemaker" since housewife has negative connotations and also leaves out the occasional man who is a homemaker. Next, break down homemaking into its component parts and relate them to jobs that the children are familiar with in the outside world. For example, food preparation can be compared to the restaurant business; health care can be compared to nursing; the coordinating and planning aspects of homemaking can be compared to the work of a business executive; laundry is done by homemakers and is also a business and the same thing is true of cleaning.

Meal Preparation

An excellent way to help children understand that meal preparation is a complex job which involves budgeting, purchasing, storing, preparing, serving and cleaning up is to take them on a trip to visit

a restaurant. Before going on the trip, arrange to have the owner spend a little time with the children and explain the intricacies of his/her business. Try to arrange the trip when there are no customers in the restaurant so that there will not be any danger of the children getting in the way of scurrying waiters and hot food. Make sure the restaurant owner explains (very briefly) the multiple steps it takes to put a meal on the table.

Follow-Up

When the children return to the classroom after the restaurant visit, suggest that they pretend to be restaurant keepers. Go through all the planning stages that the restaurant keeper enumerated. Have the children plan a menu, decide how much they will have to spend, go shopping for the food, cook it, set the table and serve the food, and finally, clean up. Each child can choose the way she/he would like to participate. Some children can be shoppers, some waiters, some cooks, some customers, some cleaners. Naturally, all of these activities will not take place on one day as they do in a real restaurant, but over a period of several days. We also do not suggest this complicated activity for children under five.

The final step of the activity would be to help the children to understand that their mothers do all of this work everytime they prepare a meal. One way to do this would be to invite one or two mothers to come to school and talk to the children about how they plan the family meals. Perhaps the visiting mothers can help the children to

make a classroom chart which lists the various functions of meal preparation. The chart could be illustrated with pictures of shopping, cooking, eating, and cleaning up.

Other follow-up activities can include original stories, experience charts, a large mural of the restaurant the children visited or of the restaurant they made themselves.

Another possible follow-up activity would be to have the children make-up a play about their experience. This would be interesting since it would be a more abstract form of pretending than the experiential pretending they had done following their visit to the real restaurant.

Health Care/Nursing

Since so much of a homemaker's time is taken up with health care, it would be interesting to present this aspect of the job by helping the children to compare what their mothers do at home to some of the functions that nurses perform. One suggestion would be to have a nurse and a mother come to school on the same day and demonstrate infant care to the children. This could include how to hold, diaper, bathe and feed a newborn infant. They could do their demonstration with a doll.

Also, a visiting mother could also participate in dramatic play with the children. For example, a child could pretend to be sick and the visiting mother pretend to take its temperature, check the symptoms, speak with the doctor, "give medication" and amuse the patient just as a nurse would do.

Another suggestion would be to have the visiting mother take care of one of the adults in the room such as the teacher or an aide, since homemakers take care of sick adults also. It would be especially interesting to use a male staff member as a patient, if one is available.

A visiting mother might tell the children a story about how the food she buys is related to health care. She might also talk about vitamins and medicines and stress the fact that she must be an expert on safety so she will know how to protect babies and young children from reaching medicines when they are too young to know better.

One final suggestion about how to relate home health care to nursing is to have both a mother and nurse demonstrate first-aid techniques for the children. The visitors might show the children how to splint a sore finger or bandage a sprain or properly disinfect a wound. These three suggestions are everyday ailments, but not ones that would be in anyway frightening for the children.

Follow-Up Activities

The nature of what we have been suggesting is dramatic and close to the everyday happenings in the life of a young child and dramatic play would be the most spontaneous follow-up activity. This will occur naturally and will need little or no teacher direction.

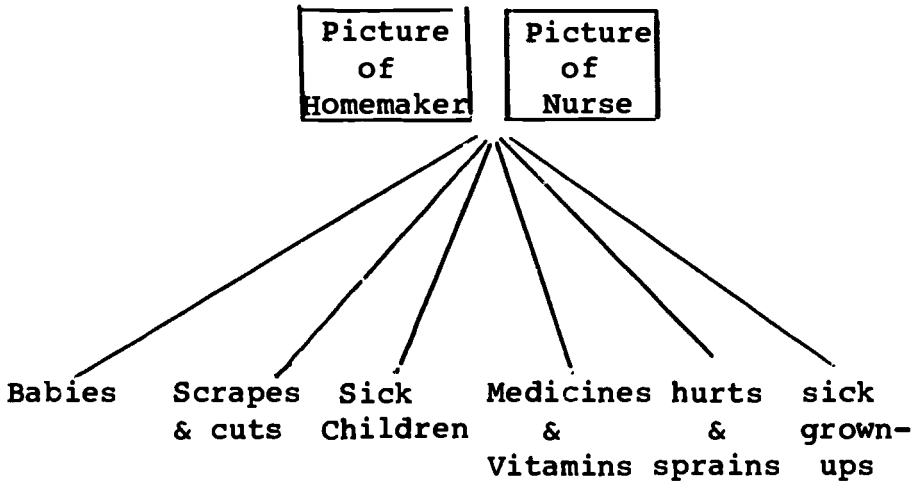
A more structured follow-up activity would be for the children to make a large chart with a picture of a homemaker and of a nurse at the top. Attached to these pictures would be brightly colored string,

yarn or ribbon leading to the pictures of the various health care functions the children have learned about.

SAMPLE CHART

Homemakers are like Nurses

They take care of



Note: Each of these categories can be shown with pictures.

A class book would also help the children to record the various health care functions of the homemaker.

Household Executive/Business Executive

This is a harder concept than the others to get across to young children because it is more abstract. Perhaps a good way would be to have two women, one who is a homemaker and one who is an executive, come and visit together to talk about ways in which their jobs are similar. For example, they can make some charts about their budgets (circular pie wedge charts would be good for this); they can show

how they each write checks to pay bills; they can pretend to call up and schedule several appointments. Perhaps they can both pretend to go to a meeting. For this demonstration, the teacher will need to pick the visitors carefully in order to get people who are at ease pretending since they will actually be doing role-playing for the children.

Laundry and Cleaning

Doing the laundry and cleaning the house are the most taken for granted chores of the homemaker. But, when one goes to a commercial laundry and realizes the processes one must go through and price one must pay to have clean clothes, and when one calls in a cleaning service and pays a huge price, one realizes that this too is a time consuming difficult chore. Through experiential activities, the teacher can help children become aware that these two aspects of homemaking are hard jobs which take skill and strength to perform.

How to Begin

Ask the children if they think doing laundry and cleaning are hard or easy. Also ask them how they think both chores are done. When the children have discussed all they know about these two chores, suggest that they go on a trip to visit a laundry and also try to arrange a visit from the maintenance person who cleans the school.

Follow-Up Activities

After the children have visited the laundry, suggest that they

become laundry workers for a day and after the visit from the person who cleans for a living, suggest that they become "cleaners" for a day also.

On "laundry day" the teacher may want to take the children to an automatic laundry if there is one close by. This is really a more relevant way to teach about laundry than having the children do handwash. However, even if there is no laundry near enough, handwashing will help the children to realize that doing laundry is hard work, which is the point of the whole experience. If the children go to the laundromat, they will learn about measuring soap, using bleach, separating colors, all seemingly minor and simple tasks, but necessary ones for successful laundering. On the cleaning day, the children can thoroughly clean their classroom. They can wash all the shelves, polish the wood, sweep and mop the floors, shine the mirrors, etc. By working very hard at this job, they will experience both the fatigue and satisfaction that hard physical labor brings.

The object of arranging experiences concerning laundry and cleaning is to relate these experiences to the jobs their mothers do as part of their total jobs as homemakers.

Summarizing the Unit

An important part of this unit is to devise activities which help children understand that all of the areas of homemaking they have explored are also performed in the world of work outside the home. We also want children to realize that it takes a most competent

person to perform such a wide range of jobs.

Some ways to summarize the unit so that the above-mentioned goals are attained follow:

- Have the children write a class story and illustrate it after <u>each</u> section of the unit. When the unit is completed, bind <u>all</u> the stories together into a big book. Some suggested titles for the book are "Homemakers Do Many Jobs," "The Book About Homemaking," and "What is a Homemaker?"

- After each section of the unit, prepare a large chart such as the one described in the mother/nurse section. When the unit is completed, have a display around the room of all the charts with a title tying them all together such as "Homemakers have to know how to..."

- After each section of the unit, have the children make a mural (paint or collage) about the work they have explored. When the unit is completed, tape the mural sections together so that they tell a continuous story about homemaking.

- When the unit is completed, invite all the adults who have helped explain the various parts of homemaking to come and have a party with the children. Before the party food is served, let each person read or tell the children a short story about the day they came to visit and what skill they shared with the children.

- Have the children make up poems or songs about the part of the unit they liked best and sing or say them in round-robin fashion so all the parts of the unit are mentioned or sung about.

- It would be very exciting if the parent or teacher could take movies of each section of the curriculum and then show the movie at the end of the unit. This would be a fine record and really illustrate the total complexity of the homemaking role. If movies are not a possibility, a photographic essay of the unit would also be an excellant way to record all the activities. The photos could be used as a catalyst for discussion, to help the children remember, for charts or for a photo montage of the entire unit.

Our goal is, that if respect for the profession of homemaking is a part of the life of a child, that child will grow up with this respect and bring it into his or her own home as an adult.

FOOTNOTES

1. Roby, Pamela, "Child Care What and Why," p.3, chapter in Child Care - Who Cares? Basic Books, Inc., New York, N.Y. 1973.

2. Surowiecki, Sandra L., Joshua's Day and Eichler, Margrit, Martin's Father. Lollipop Power, Chapel Hill, North Carolina. See Annotated Bibliography of Non-Sexist Picture Books.

3. Women on Words and Images. Dick and Jane As Victims, Princeton, N.J. 1972.

4. Jenkins, E. "And One and Two." Folkways Records, FC. 7544.

CHAPTER V

NON-SEXIST MATERIALS

As we stated earlier in the book, it became apparent in the observation period of the project that a most necessary part of our work would be to develop non-sexist early childhood materials. As we have said, we had to hand-produce these materials because none were available and it would have taken too long to launch the project had we waited for them to be commercially produced. We are pleased to say that there are now several items available which have been made from our original designs and as a direct result of our efforts with two major manufacturers of early childhood equipment - The Milton Bradley Co. and The Instructo Corp., a division of McGraw-Hill.

All of the materials we produced are early childhood staples, i.e., puzzles, lotto, flannelboard, and block accessories. We feel that these traditional items are useful classroom materials which help children develop important skills. However, at the beginning of the project, our quarrel with the materials was that they were so sexist, outmoded and stereotyped in their design and format that their usefulness was seriously curtailed.

To combat these problems, the materials we developed not only equalize the work and family roles of men and women, but they also reflect the rich multi-racial and ethnic makeup of our society, the variety of sizes that people represent, and contemporary hairstyle and dress.

The commercially-available, non-stereotyped, multi-racial materials now available are as follows:*

Block Accessories

(1) Our Community Helpers Play People

This set contains twelve male and female workers in counterpart community jobs. Included are letter carriers, construction workers, doctors, nurses, police officers and business executives. These figures are suitable for dramatic play in conjunction with block building and can also be used in a variety of ways in the Jobs People Do curriculum. They are also suitable as puppets if a stick is attached.

(2) My Family Play People

The set consists of two families, one white and one Black, each containing six figures. In each set there are two parent-aged people, a young child, a young adult and two older people. The females in this set do not wear aprons or have babies painted in their arms! The child is free to use the figures to represent the reality of her/his own family, rather than being confined by the "nuclear" family concept normally found in children's materials. Both the Black and white family figures are packaged in one set; this provides the opportunity for the child from an interracial family to pick from the dozen figures those that most closely represent the members of his/her own

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* See attached order form for prices.

family. For the same reason, the set provides material for children who live in interracial neighborhoods.

Both sets of block accessories are drawn with great detail and are complete front and back.

Community Careers Flannelboard

The set contains twenty-seven figures of men and women dressed in appropriate work dress or uniforms. As in the other materials, men and women are presented in a wide variety of community jobs and sometimes in counterpart roles. The set also contains props which are appropriate to the various jobs. This material can be used by the teacher to illustrate jobs in the Jobs People Do curriculum unit. It can also be used by an individual child or a small group of children.

Photos

(1) People At Work

This set consists of twenty-four 8" x 10" black and white photos of people at work. Men and women have been photographed on location doing their jobs. An effort has been made to find as many non-stereotyped workers as possible. This is a valuable resource for the Jobs People Do curriculum as it shows boys and girls the enormous variety of options that are open to them in the world of work. The photography was done by Jolly Robinson and Ann-Marie Mott.

(2) Resource Photos of Men in the Nurturing Role

This set consists of eight 8" x 10" black and white photos of men interacting with young children. Included are fathers, grandfathers, and men who work with children as teachers and pediatric nurses. Also included is a poster featuring a grandfather and granddaughter in a group of sequential photographs involving playing with grandpa's hat. This poster is ideally suited to a variety of language art activities. These photos are an asset to both the Families and Jobs People Do units. Photography was done by Jim Levine.

(3) Resource Photos of Women in Community Jobs and in Professional Roles

These are two separate sets of photos containing eight 8" x 10" black and white pictures each. The community set is espeically good and contains a milk deliverer, a letter carrier, a police officer, and a bus driver. The professional set is not quite as good. Some of the professions are a bit hard to define, i.e., a politician and a computer programmer, but others such as a judge and a potter are fine. The sets are quite inexpensive and are a valuable resource. They are distributed by Feminist Resources for Equal Education, Box 185, Saxonville Station, Framingham, MA 01701.

(4) Other Photos

When we began to develop non-sexist materials in 1972, we relied heavily on advertising photos. Whenever we saw an ad in a magazine

that would be useful in a non-sexist curriculum, we cut out as many as we could find and then wrote or phoned the advertiser to ask for reprints, which they were always willing to send. Currently there are many ads around which feature fathers and young children. They are shown holding them, reading to them and generally in nurturant poses. It is much easier to build a non-sexist picture file now than it was two years ago. It is also becoming easier to find advertising photos showing women on the job. Recently, ads have appeared showing a woman barber, marine biologist, and garage mechanic.

A source of photos of male and female medical workers is your local hospital. If you call the public relations department, they will usually send you photos from their files. It is important to stress that the pictures are for classroom use with young children, otherwise they may send some frightening surgical scenes.

"Ebony and "Essence" magazines are good sources for pictures of Black people both at home and at work.

And, of course, a valuable source of photos is your own school or community. There is certain to be at least one member of your school or community who is a photography buff. This person can be mobilized to take pictures for use in the curriculum.

Pictures of people in the community are especially important to minority groups who are not usually featured in national advertising or other media. For example, if your school is part of a community that is Mexican-American or Native American, the children will be

exposed, through these photographs, to role models from their own community and will identify more strongly with the photos if they are taken within the community.

Also, don't forget teen-agers. Many of them are interested in photography and, if asked, would probably be delighted to take pictures of people doing their jobs in the community. And finally, newspapers have been running more and more features on women at work, girls and women athletes, nurturing men. These articles are excellent sources of unusual pictures.

Puzzles

Women's Action Alliance designed several puzzles for the project. These were developed to counteract the puzzles which are commercially available and which are often highly stereotyped or unrealistic cartoon-like animal subjects. We made two puzzles which showed men and women doing non-stereotyped work, three or four of fathers in the nurturing role and two showing girls in active play.

To date, these puzzles have proved too expensive to be mass manufactured. However, they are relatively easy to make. Here is the method we used to make puzzles:

> First, select a picture that is non-sexist. Magazine illustrations are excellent for puzzles because they are fairly thin, but you can also use photographs successfully.
>
> Cut the picture out and cover any advertising print with a scrap piece of paper from the ad. (When you laminate the picture onto wood, this patch will hardly show.)

Measure the photo and then measure and cut a piece of wood exactly to size. The wood can be thin or thick, but it should be easy to cut with a jig saw.

After you have the picture and the wood cut to size, make a tray into which the wood fits with just enough room so that the pieces of the puzzles won't become stuck.

Next, laminate the picture onto the wood. We used a sealing material called decoupage, but if this is not available in your local art supply or hardware store, ask them to recommend a similar, thin, sealing substance.

We applied six coats of decoupage and rubbed each coat down with fine sandpaper when it was thoroughly dry (it dries very quickly).

After the picture is laminated to the wood, turn the wood over and draw an interlocking jigsaw design on the back. When you draw the design, be careful that all parts of the body are left whole (for example, don't have an arm in two pieces or cut the head in half) and that you have made right angle corners.

Finally, cut the design with a jigsaw, sand and seal all the rough edges and your puzzle is ready!

You can also make puzzles with photos of the children or members of the community. Some suggested subjects for puzzles are:

- o Girls in active play
- o People at work (non-stereotyped jobs)
- o Men, teen-age boys and older people caring for children
- o Boys playing with dolls
- o Women and girls engaging in sports.

We stress these subjects, not because we don't want puzzles in the room of boys in active play and of women nurturing children and male athletes, but because those puzzles are easy to buy commercially and the subjects we suggest are not.

There are three puzzles commercially available which we do recommend:

- o Dressing and Undressing by Galt. Available through Childcraft. This is a puzzle which features a boy and girl of the same size. They each have a fishing net and are sharing a jar of fish they have caught. All of their clothing comes off and underneath their genitals are drawn in a very tasteful and childlike way. The puzzle is saying that the real difference between boys and girls is a biological one.

- o Crossing Guard by Judy Puzzles. This is a multi-racial puzzle of a woman dressed in uniform and crossing children. Although it is called "crossing guard," she does not have a white crossing guard band across her uniform, but she does have two badges and could be called a police officer.

- o Doctor by Judy Puzzles. Part of their occupation series (the rest is highly stereotyped). This puzzle features a woman doctor examing a small girl as her mother looks on. The figures are not very well drawn, but it is the only puzzle of a female doctor we have been able to find!

Lotto Games

Lotto games are an important material for young children. Even three year olds can play them successfully and enjoy them. However, commercially produced lotto games are quite stereotyped and the style of the drawings is very outmoded.

We made a photographic lotto called, "Children at Play Lotto," which showed girls and boys at play instead of girls watching boys at play, which is usually the case. This material is not yet commercially available (possibly in 1975-76), but it, too, is realtively easy to make. Here is how we made ours:

Begin by taking enough pictures to select thirty-six shots of girls and boys at play. Make sure as we did that you have plenty of action shots of girls.

Have the pictures developed in 3" x 5" prints with white borders (the white borders will give you a natural divider between pictures). You will need <u>two</u> copies of each print, one for the cards and one for the matching picture. We used <u>color</u> prints for the lotto.

Buy some sturdy artboard in an art supply shop. Artboard comes in a variety of thicknesses and you will have to choose what thickness you like best and what your budget can afford. We used artboard about 1/4" thick so that it had a spongy feeling.

Next, group your pictures according to the type of play. We had a ball playing card, a toddler card, an ice skating card, a running card, a gymnastics card and a playground card in our set.

Be sure to seek out children of different races when you take the pictures. We took ours in two parks, a school, and a day care center.

Choose six pictures per card and mount them onto the artboard with liquid cement. Trim the artboard so that the edge of the pictures are flush with the edge of the board.

Seal the pictures to the artboard with self-adhesive clear plastic which you can buy inexpensively at any art supply store.

Finally, mount the second print of each photo individually to a piece of artboard and seal it also. This is your matching set of cards which the children place over the one on their boards until their whole board is covered.

Note: We made our lotto, "Children at Play" game, but you can make Job Lotto, Family Lotto, Sports Lotto, etc., in exactly the same way.

<u>Records</u>

At the present time, there is only one non-sexist record available, "Free to Be You and Me." Fortunately, it is so full of good

material that it can trigger many non-sexist musical experiences. Much of the humor and quite a few of the stories are too sophisticated for younger children, but all of the music is delightful and the words of the songs can be used as part of the curriculum units. For example, "Parents are People" would be an excellent addition to the units on "Families" and "Jobs People Do." Children have always accepted the fact that fathers, but not mothers, combine a career with the job of parenting. The song puts working and parenting on an equal basis for mothers and fathers and, in addition, lists many interesting and non-stereotyped jobs performed by both sexes.

"Brothers and Sisters," conveys the kind of friendship we would like to see become the norm for boys and girls. The song is joyful and the kind of feelings that the word "Brotherhood" usually brings to mind, sharing and loving, are expressed here as both sisterhood and brotherhood!

"Free to Be You and Me," states the theme of the record and of our project as well - that is, that children must be free to choose for themselves from life's multitude of options, unhampered by sex-role stereotyping. As all the music on the record, the song is a joyful ode to freedom.

The poem, "I Hate Housework," spoken by Carol Channing is a hilarious spoof of televion commercials which try to make household chores into the world's most satisfying work. Although we wish the title were different, the message of the poem is an excellent way to

help children begin to look at TV critically.

"It's All Right to Cry" is a most important song because it is about letting out one's feelings, even if they're sad or bad ones. It's especially sung to little boys by Roosevelt Grier!

There are many other parts of the record that can be used in a variety of curriculum activities. Teachers will want to pick the poems and songs that have the most meaning and suggest the most curriculum ideas for themselves. The children will also pick their favorite parts and sing and dance to the songs and say the poems over and over.

(Note: In the spring of 1975, Caedmon Records is planning to issue a non-sexist story record for children including such stories as "Martin's Father" and "Jellybeans for Breakfast.")

Dolls

After the project was well underway, we became aware that Creative Playthings[1] had expanded its "Sasha" line of dolls to include several boy dolls dressed to look like typical four or five year old boys at play. We especially liked their Black boy "Caleb" and purchased him for all our centers. Although he isn't a soft doll, he has an unusually smooth finish. We purchased another "Sasha" doll called "Black Baby" which is also very smooth and has a realistic shape. "Caleb" became very popular with the boys in our centers and he made it easier for several boys to move into doll play more comfortably.

Films

"Free to Be You and Me," the TV special, has been made into a film. It is available in its entirety (40 minutes) or as three fifteen minute segments. For information write to:

McGraw-Hill
Dept. SF - 31st Floor
1221 Avenue of the Americas
New York, New York 10020.

Filmstrips

While not specifically designed as non-sexist materials, Scholastic has two filmstrips which are unusually sensitive portrayals of a wide variety of family lifestyles. "Five Families" allows children to see how children live in a Chinese, Mexican-American, Native American, Black and white family. "Five Children" shows how children live in various geographic locations.

Both "Five Families" and "Five Children" are available in Spanish and English. For information write:

Scholastic Early Childhood Center
904 Sylvan Avenue
Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

FOOTNOTES

1. Childcraft Education Corp., 750 East 58 Street, New York, NY 10022.

2. "Free to Be You and Me," Bell Records (Division of Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.), 1972, at 1776 Broadway, New York, NY. Note: This record is sold in many outlets or by mail through Ms. Magazine, 370 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

3. "Sasha Doll" (Caleb), Creative Playthings, Princeton, NJ 08540.

RESOURCE SHEET

The following are useful resources for gathering additional information and materials for non-sexist education.

Publishers

Lollipop Power, Inc.
P. O. Box 1171
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

They specialize in early childhood books.

Feminist Press
Box 334
SUNY
Old Westbury, NY 11568

Non-sexist books, bibliographies, resource booklets, curriculum materials, etc.

Films and Slides

Odeon Films, Inc.
1619 Broadway
New York, NY 10019

Producers of "Sugar and Spice," a film on non-sexist pre-school education.

Women and Words and Images
P. O. Box 2163
Princeton, NJ 08540

They rent a slide show, "Dick and Jane as Victims," which documents sexism in children's readers. They also sell a pamphlet by the same name. Currently they are preparing a study and slide show on sexism in children's television. They expect it to be ready in the Spring of 1975.

Bibliographies

Feminists on Children's Media
Box 4315
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10017

They have recently updated their excellent bibliography of non-sexist children's books.

Change for Children
2588 Mission St., Suite 226
San Francisco, CA 94110

In addition to an excellent bibliography of pre-school books, they have a pamphlet of curriculum ideas and a series of fine photos of women in non-traditional jobs.

Bookstores

Child's Play
226 Atlantic Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11201

One of the best collections of non-sexist children's books to be found. They sell mail order and have a catalog.

Feminist Book Mart
162-11 Ninth Avenue
Whitestone, NY 11357

Another good place to send for non-sexist books.

Resource Center

Resource Center on Sex Roles in Education
National Foundation for the Improvement of Education
1201 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036

A national center for the dissemination of information on non-sexist education (K-12).

CHAPTER VI

HOW TO WORK WITH PARENTS

Introduction

Because it is as crucial for parents as well as teachers to become aware of sexism in language and television, we have included these two sections in "How to Work With Parents."

Language and television permeate every part of the child's life at home. Because of this, it would be far less effective if we tried to create curriculum in these two areas without involving parents in our efforts.

Sexist Language

Sexist language is the most all-pervasive aspect of sexism in our society. We feel that masculine words which are used constantly to convey broad human concepts and groups contribute heavily to the "non-person" status so many girls and women feel about themselves.

Young children certainly do not understand that words such as mankind, brotherhood, early man, manpower, chairman, etc., are supposed to include men and women in their scope. Even older children and adults have a problem recognizing that these words are inclusive of both sexes. These "generic" words contribute to the notion that women have not participated in the development of civilization.

Add to this the fact that the masculine pronoun, he, is used on all institutional forms (even if the group filling them out is ninety-

nine percent female) and one can easily understand why most females consider themselves second-class persons. Also contributing to the low self-esteem of women is the fact that they are encouraged to remain children throughout their lives.

> "When a culture makes adulthood synonomous with manhood, a girl can never reach adulthood at all. There is a clear demarcation between the words boy and man that does not exist between girl and woman. A boy greatly increases his stature when he becomes a man, but a girl loses status and bargaining power when she loses youth."[1]

Women are regularly referred to (and refer to themselves) as "girls." Any man would consider it derogatory to be referred to as a "boy" if he is above the age of adolescence, but women of all ages are "girls." (The term "boy" came under scrutiny in the civil rights movement as derogatory when used in reference to a mature Black man.) When women are not referred to as "girls," they are most often referred to as "ladies." Lady is a term that has an entirely different meaning than woman. It suggests helplessness and has class and behavioral connotations that woman does not. If we used the word lady paired with gentleman, at least they both carry the same connotation, but when men and ladies are paired, as they most often are, the result is to think of woman as unequal to men.

Other pairs of words which have very different meanings are master and mistress and bachelor and spinster. In each of these the masculine word is positive and complimentary, while the feminine counterpart connotes being owned (being a mistress) or being rejected (no one chooses spinsterhood).

In a study done by American Heritage Publishing Company[2] prior to the development of their wordbook for children, some startling facts about sexism in language were discovered. American Heritage did a computer analysis of five million words encountered by American school children in their books. They found that when adults write for one another they often use the words child or children, but when they write for children they carefully differentiate and use the word boy or girl twice as often. Also, no matter what the subject matter of the book, girls and women are in a minority even though they comprise over 51 percent of the population. The overall ratio of masculine pronouns to feminine is 4:1. Men and boys are the subject matter of most of the stories. The study found over seven times as many men as women in the books and over twice as many boys and girls. However, when one sees how girls and women are portrayed in these books and becomes aware of the words associated with females, one may be glad that they don't appear more often!

In a study titled Sexist Semantics in the Dictionary,[3] by H. Lee Gershuny, an analysis was made of sexism in the Random House Dictionary. It was found that masculine gender words appeared in 68 percent of the sample and feminine gender words in 23 percent with the mean 9 percent masculine/feminine. Female gender words were found to connote weakness, dependency, incompetence, vanity, submissiveness, timidity, etc. A few female positives were sensitivity, nurturance and tenderness. Masculine words connoted achievement, ambition, aggres-

sion, competitiveness, competence, dominance, intelligence, etc.

In other words, the patterns of viewing males and females with both a sexist and stereotyped point of view is the same in the dictionary and in the vast body of books that help to shape our children's views of society.

It is no wonder that boys show derision to girls! One cannot help feel negatively towards people who are constantly described as afraid, imcompetent, foolish, gossipy, stupid, etc., and this is the way not only girls but women are overwhelmingly described (when they are described at all!) in printed matter. Such views of themselves, and their adult role models, have to be destructive to the self-image of girls. We also consider the constantly active, competitive, non-emotional, non-nurturant view of men that is presented in books to be damaging to the self-image of boys. They cannot but feel pressured or inadequate trying to emulate the role models of adult males which are presented to them through books.

What can we as teachers do to make changes in sexist language and to free our children from these damaging images? First, as always, we can become aware of the language patterns which perpetuate sexist views that we may be using unconsciously. For example, it is considered grammatically correct to refer to both sexes as "he," but is correct grammatical structure worth a lessened self-image for even one female child?

We can begin to consciously refer to the children in our class

as children or people and avoid using the terms boys and girls much of the time. We can refer to humans, humanity, people, brotherhood and sisterhood instead of man, mankind, and brotherhood to express the concept of global civilization. We can use words that connote strength, intelligence, humor, tenderness, nurturance, achievement, when we discuss both men and women and girls and boys. We can, when absolutely necessary, use the more awkward form s/he, his/hers, rather than leave half the population out of our speech. As we read books aloud to the youngest children, we can edit them to make them less sexist. We will have to do this for a while until some new materials are available. No one is suggesting that we eliminate the vast body of children's literature because it is sexist. We can change the wording whenever possible and make children aware of some of those changes. With slightly older children, it is a good consciousness raising technique to let them find the sexist messages in their books.

Another thing we can do is to become aware of how often we comment to little girls about their looks. Are we assuming that we add to their self-image when we compliment them on their appearance instead of their accomplishment? Do we say, "Steve is strong" and "Eve is pretty?"

Finally, if we use the non-sexist terms for workers in the community, children will soon begin to use them also. Children are imitative and often use the same phraseology as their teacher. So,

if we say letter carrier instead of mailman or mail lady, police officer instead of policeman or police lady, chairperson instead of chairman or chairwoman, delivery person, spokesperson, firefighter, sanitation worker, instead of dividing them by sex, the children will learn these terms correctly from the beginning and will not have to go through a relearning process in elementary school.

In 1972, Scott, Foresman and Co.[4] issued the first set of guidelines for the elimination of sexual stereotypes, "Improving the Image of Women in Textbooks" and, more recently, in 1974, McGraw-Hill has also issued a set of guidelines entitled, "Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in McGraw-Hill Book Company Publications."[5] Both of these publications are available by writing to the company. The McGraw-Hill guidelines are especially well thought out and give many helpful ideas about how to restructure language to avoid sexist attitudes and still maintain good grammatical form. It really is quite possible to do both.

Footnotes

1. Graham, Alma. "The Making of a Non-Sexist Dictionary," Ms. Magazine, Dec. 1973, pgs. 12-16.

2. American Heritage Publishing Co., Inc., and Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, NY. The American Heritage School Dictionary (1972).

3. Gershuny, Lee H. "Sexist Semantics in the Dictionary," A Review of General Semantics, vol. XXXI, no. 2, pgs. 159-168.

4. McGraw-Hill Co. Guidelines for Equal Treatment of the Sexes in McGraw-Hill Book Company Publications, 1974. McGraw-Hill Co., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY. 10020

5. Scott, Foresman and Co. Guidelines for Improving the Images of Women in Textbooks, prepared by the Sexism in Textbooks Committee of Women at Scott, Foresman, Sept. 1972, 1900 E. Lake Avenue, Glenview, IL 60025.

Bibliography

Burr, Eli[illegible]ann, Susan and Farquhar, Norma - Guidelines for Equal Treatment [illegible] the Sexes in Soc. Studies Textbooks, "The Language of Inequality," pgs. 5-12. Westside Women's Committee, P.O. Box 24D20, Los Angeles, CA 90024, 50 cents each (c) 1973.

Densmore, Dana, "Speech is a form of thought," 1970. KNOW, Inc., P. O. Box 10197, Pittsburgh, PA 15232.

Fuller, Mary M., "In Business the Generic Pronoun 'he' is Non-Job Related and Discriminatory," Training and Development Journal, May 1973, pgs. 8-10.

Lakoff, Robin, "You Are What You Say," Ms. Magazine, July, 1974, pgs. 65-67.

Television

Many of us think of television as an overwhelming force in the lives of children over which we, the adults, have very little influence or control. Parents, in particular, feel this way. Although they may thoroughly disapprove of what their children watch, they feel powerless to prevent them from watching.

We have tried to give parents the feeling that, not only can they control what their children watch, if they are determined to do so, but that they can also help to turn even very young children into critics who are aware that the men and women that they see on televi-

sion are absurd and unrealistic people!

Teachers can do a great deal to help children and parents become more aware of the harmful images seen on TV. We suggest that teachers engage the help of parents for "A Critical Look at TV." If possible, have parents and other people who care for children come to a special meeting to discuss ways in which they can help children become more critical viewers. If a meeting is not possible (often working parents are too tired and busy to come to an extra meeting), speak to the person who picks the child up at school and explain that the child will be bringing home "homework" about TV. It is also possible to inform the parents with a letter, although personal contact is preferable.

We think the poem "I Hate Housework," from the record "Free to Be You and Me", would be a good way to start a discussion of how "silly" women and men often act on TV. Another way to start the discussion would be to say "I saw the silliest commercial on TV last night." The children will almost surely follow with "silly" stories of their own.

Assign the children some watching for that night and have them report about what they have seen the next day. Try to have the children compare the men and women they have seen on commercials with the adults with whom they interact daily. Do their mothers, grandmothers, aunts, or baby-sitter discuss soap and floorwax all day? Do the men in the families lead the outdoor life or exclaim over

floorwax and rug spots the way men on TV do? Ask the parents or guardians to sit and watch TV with the children for a short time each evening; let them know the assignment so they can become involved in the child's viewing and help point out some of the absurdities. We feel that enlisting the aid of someone in the child's home with the assignment will not only help the child, but also the person watching with the child, to become more aware of the images of men and women that children are bombarded with daily.

Helping children become critical of television can do more than combat sexism. It can also help children become better consumers. Again, enlisting the help of the parents, the teacher can make the children aware of the poor quality and lack of durability of many of the toys advertised on TV. The most effective way to do a comparative study with children would be to have them bring in a collection of their toys, including TV toys, and then compare them with the toys in the classroom for durability and interest. Have the parents help by showing the children which toys break easily and are "junky" when they go shopping together.

Taking a look at food commercials, which regularly advertise sugared cereals, candy and other tooth-rotting foods on children's shows is a natural follow-up activity for The Human Body curriculum unit. As children learn about their bodies, they will certainly need to know the effect that food has on health and growth.

After studying TV in the ways suggested above, the teacher can suggest that the children compose a letter to a major network (or several) to protest their advertising and programming. Younger children can dictate what they want to say and older children can write their own letters to the network or to particular advertisers. Parents and community people can also start letter writing campaigns to protest not only sexist commercials and shoddy merchandise, but excessively violent programming as well. These campaigns are quite effective. Advertisers are only too aware that a displeased audience means a loss of sales.

It is true that TV plays a large role in our children's lives and will continue to do so. Therefore, it seems of prime importance to us that we begin to deal with it educationally and do all we can to make it a positive rather than a negative force.

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As we stated in the opening chapter, it was basic to the philosophy of this project to involve all of the key adults in the childrens' lives in our work. Before we began, it was decided that we would only work in centers where there was a nucleus of people, parents and teachers, who wanted non-sexist education for the children We felt that if we went into a center where the goals of the parents and teachers were very different from ours, we would set up a situation of conflict for the children. This would be counter-productive both for them and for the project. This basic premise proved to be a sound one. In each center, our relationship with parents evolved

differently, but working with each group was a valuable experience where parents were as helpful to us as we were to them. In this chapter, we will share with our readers the techniques that we found most valuable in our contact with parents.

The way to begin is similar to the way we begin exploring any area of thought: by finding out what people think and feel about a given subject.

One way to begin would be to schedule one or more informal meetings on the topic of educational goals, physical and emotional development, the working mother, the meaning of play, or any similar topic which the center (staff and administrators) feels would be a good stimulus for discussion. It may take some time until a relationship is established between staff and parents which allows for free and open discussion. It is better, however, to invest the necessary time before embarking on educational changes for which the parents are unprepared. In one of our centers,* the director had already spent a good deal of time establishing such a relationship with parents before we began to work in the center. They had advanced from casual discussion (about equal pay for equal work and the need for day care), as they brought the children to school in the morning and picked them up in the evening, to full scale meetings on such topics as "Sex-Role Stereotypes." In the words of the director:

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* Mabel Barrett Fitzgerald Day Care Center, N.Y.C., JoAnn Hoit, Director.

"But something did change when we talked about the children. Our first official discussion was called "Sex Role Stereotypes." About twenty-five parents and staff attended: Black, Hispanic, White - mostly women and a few male staff and parents. Together we wondered why we used boy/girl groupings so often to move the children through routines, 'Now all the boys put on your coats and go to the yard.' We wondered why art was a girl's activity and boys weren't supposed to play with dolls in the housekeeping area. People shared their hopes that their children would marry and have children and explored their fears about homosexuality. We talked about what it means to find an identity: racial, sexual, human. We talked about the right of every individual to find an answer on his/her own terms. We talked about helping our children to grow up free by helping them to try out as many of their talents, interests, and roles as they want to."

It is clear from the above quote that, in this center, the parents were far along in their thinking and discussions of topics pertaining to the women's movement. They were ready to evaluate sexist materials and then look at non-sexist alternatives for their children. In two other centers, the topic of sex-role stereotyping had never been specifically discussed. For these centers, our staff and the staff of each center did quite a bit of thinking and planning for the initial parent meeting. The staff of one center* was sensitive to and aware of the particular social mores of their parent group and suggested that we not use the words sex-role or sexism in our discussion. Based on their insights, we planned a meeting around the topic of toys. The timing for such a meeting was excellent because it was scheduled just prior to the holiday toy-buying season.

* Educational Alliance, N.Y.C., Anne Gray Kaback, Director.

The turnout was very good because we had chosen a timely and important topic.

Our emphasis throughout the meeting was that we did not want to see any child deprived of the learning inherent in any toy. Each teacher and each of our three staff members took turns explaining the learning possibilities of our favorite toy or type of toy and each of us stressed that the toy was equally important for girls and boys. We also stressed the quality, safety, and longevity of each toy; we urged parents to begin helping their children to become quality-conscious consumers.* After our presentation we opened the meeting for discussion and had an exchange of views that lasted nearly an hour! One mother told all of us that she had insistently given her daughter a doll every Christmas although the child showed little interest in doll play and preferred trucks. She told us that this Christmas (1973) she would give her child both a doll and a truck!

The "toy" meeting was so successful in one center that we shared the idea with another center. The staff of that center heartily agreed that the toy approach would be a good way to reach their parent group also. In the second center, the format of the meeting was a bit different. The director of the center** went to some of

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* See "Television" section.

** The center was Lexington Houses Children's Center, N.Y.C., Shirley Cowan, Director.

the leading distributors of early childhood materials in the New York area and purchased a selection of sturdy, safe, educational toys, books and records. In addition, we supplied copies of several non-sexist books and the record "Free to Be You and Me." The parents were able to browse and select their holiday toys right at school before our meeting, which took place in the early evening over sandwiches and coffee supplied by the school. Again, after we presented our views about toys and explained why we felt it was important to let boys and girls learn all they could from all types of toys, we opened the meeting for general discussion. Parents were eager to participate and share their feelings about toys with us. We had a fruitful discussion about toy guns: whether they were useful because they provided children with an outlet for aggression, or harmful because they encouraged violent play. People spoke up on both sides of the issue. The director of the center explained the school's philosophy, that no "real" (toy) guns were allowed, but the children were allowed to use imaginary symbols (such as a pointed finger or a block) if their need for a gun was strong enough to make them invent one. This compromise seemed to satisfy most people, although some still said they saw no harm in toy guns and would continue to let their children play with them. One parent shared this story with the group. She told us how much she had wanted trains when she was a little girl and could not have them because they were for boys. She of course said that she was planning to buy her daughter a set of trains for Christmas.

An interesting incident occurred at this initial parent meeting. The director of the center had inadvertently picked up two paperback picture books which were sexist when she was purchasing the materials. This writer was browsing through the toys with the parents before the meeting and came across the two books. They served as a dramatic example of how carefully we must examine everything we buy for children if we want to avoid adding sexist materials to our homes and classrooms. In each case, the director had picked the books because she knew other works by the author; she had not examined each page of the text. It was the kind of mistake all of us make and she graciously gave me the two books to add to my collection of sexist early childhood materials.

In our fourth demonstration center* our work began differently. This center was one where the parents had initiated interest in looking into sexism. Our first meeting in this center revolved around looking at sexist puzzles and books and then viewing and discussing "Dick and Jane as Victims,"** a slide show which depicts sexism in elementary school readers. It was the mothers in this center who were

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* Amalgamated Workmen's Cirlce Co-op Nursery School, Bronx, N.Y., Catherine Hoviss, Director.

** Women on Words and Images, "Dick and Jane As Victims" slide show. Princeton, NJ, 1972.

most articulate in stating the conflict that their perception of the women's movement set up in them.* Most of them were women who did not work outside the home and many of them had chosen homemaking as a full-time profession, at least while their children were small. They felt something should be done to help women such as themselves to feel less guilty and more positive about having made the choice to stay at home. It was the concern expressed by these mothers which led us to create the Unit on Homemaking described in the chapter on curriculum.

Although our work with parents began differently in various situations, we had the same goals, not only for the parents in our four demonstration centers, but also for the thousands of parents we have reached in the workshops which we have conducted nationally over the past two years. These goals are:

- o to help parents become aware of sexism in our society;
- o to help parents become aware that sexist attitudes affect the way we handle children from birth on;
- o to help parents become aware that sexist attitudes and behaviors deprive children, both girls and boys, of the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential;
- o to help parents become aware of the everyday factors (such as language, television advertising, packaging) and how these factors perpetuate sexism in ourselves and our children;
- o to help parents become aware of what they can do to

* The phrase "perception of the women's movement" is used because we view this as a misunderstanding of the women's movement rather than a fact. The women's movement has consistently tried to present homemaking as one option open to women and has tried to upgrade the self-image of women who work in the home.

combat sexism in general and in the lives of their children in particular;

- o to mobilize parents to conduct letter-writing campaigns against sexist advertising, packaging, and programming on television; and
- o to mobilize parents to raise the issue of sexism in their local public school.

In order to achieve these goals, we developed some techniques which we found useful in working with parents.

Before we began our work in the center, we tried to anticipate the areas that parents would have most anxiety about. We defined these areas as homosexuality, doll play, and biological sex differences. We then researched these areas so when questions arose we were prepared to defend our point of view, that no aspect of our philosophy would increase homosexuality, confuse children's proper sex-role identification, or interfere with biological sex differences.

When the question of homosexuality arose one of the project directors would always make the point that although we live in a society rigidly divided along sex lines, homosexuality is rife and perhaps we should be open to looking at new ways to rear children. We also referred parents to several studies on sex-role identification, one of which is Mussen & Distler's Child Rearing Antecedents of Masculine Identification in Kindergarten Boys.* This study clearly makes the point that, contrary to popular belief, the most positive sex-role identification takes place when the sex-roles between parents are less

* See bibliography.

rigidly defined and when the father is warm and nurturant rather than the stern, authoritarian stereotype of the father figure. We found that our being able to refer to studies on the subject alleviated parental anxiety and gave credibility to what we were saying.

Concerning doll play, William's Doll,* by Charlotte Zolotow, turned out to be as useful a book to read to parents as to children. Its approach to the question of why a little boy might want or need a doll is a common sense one. Parents usually ended up nodding their heads in agreement when the grandmother (who gives William a doll) explains to William's father why his little boy needs a doll:

> "He needs it," she said,
> "to hug
> and to cradle
> and to take to the park
> so that
> when he's a father,
> like you,
> he'll know how to
> take care of his baby
> and feed him
> and love him
> and bring him
> the things he wants,
> like a doll,
> so that he can
> practice being
> a father."

Most of us have just never stopped to consider that boys have as much right and need to examine the role of fatherhood through doll play as girls have to examine the role of motherhood.

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* See Annotated Bibliography of Children's Books.

When this writer brought William's Doll home for her family to review, her son confessed that he had played with his sister's dolls as a little boy, but only behind closed doors! He then polled his friends and each of them who had a sister, and therefore access to dolls, said they had done the same thing! I regularly related this anecdote to parents because it conveyed an important message: all of us have been conditioned to think and act in certain ways and it takes a conscious effort to begin to think more openly. But we can change and if we do, we will help children to become freer than we are. It helps parents to know that other parents have made mistakes, even those they might consider experts.

We also made the point that although we deny little boys the opportunity to try out the role of fatherhood through doll play and other nurturant experiences, and systematically teach them to inhibit their emotions, we somehow expect them to grow to adulthood and miraculously change into tender, affectionate, sensitive partners and fathers! Again, whenever we made this point to parents their heads would nod in agreement.

In order to prepare ourselves for questions concerning biological sex differences, we did much reading on the topic. We also attended a lecture given by Susan Ralls, a biologist, who was then teaching at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, N.Y. (1973). Ms. Ralls' lecture clarified for us any questions we might have had about hormonal differences, pre-natal development, and the difference, if

any, in the male and female brain. She uniquivocally stated that there was no difference between a female and male brain. This made us feel entirely comfortable with our philosophy: to offer as many options as possible to boys and girls and let them make their choices from these options as human beings, not as males and females. In our discussions with parents (and teachers), we tried to emphasize that we would like to see new research undertaken and older research re-examined in the light of new information which has become available since the 1960's, when the latest phase of the women's movement got underway.

We also reported to them any new research that we knew of including some doctoral studies which will be done to measure certain aspects of this project.

Parents were as helpful to us as we were to them. Their insights into their own children and social group were enormously important to the way we shaped the project in each center. They shared their work with the children and helped us to find interesting trips for the children to take. If it hadn't been for one alert husband, we might not have been able to give the children the experience of seeing a woman building engineer!*

In another center, a father's reaction to the slides, "Dick and Jane as Victims," was to go into the public school to investigate what

* See "Jobs People Do."

books were being used to teach his children to read. In the same center, parents and teachers arranged a meeting with community people and the local kindergarten teachers to share all of the non-sexist materials with them. Since this center is a cooperative, they had a volunteer program called "Mother of the Day." It is now called "Parent of the Day" and at least one father is giving a full morning of his time to the center each week.

In our work, we have shown parents both sexist and non-sexist materials and have explained why we feel non-sexist materials are crucial. Through engaging them in discussion, we tried to make them aware enough of the dangers of sexism to both boys and girls, to spur them to take action to combat it whenever and wherever they can. We made the basic assumption that no parent wants less than the fullest intellectual, emotional and physical development for her/his child. Therefore, the parents' goals for their children and our goals for all children are identical. All of our work with parents was geared to helping them to become aware that, in order for children to realize their fullest human potential, sexism must be eradicated from their lives.

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THE NON-SEXIST CLASSROOM

Checklist*

The following checklist is meant to be used as a self-evaluating tool. For the best results, you should be honest in answering all questions. Answers should reflect the way you feel, act, or think now and not how you would like to think or act nor how you think you should feel.

CLASSROOM

1. Are there the same number of pictures of girls as pictures of boys displayed around the room? ___ if not, how many are pictures of girls_____ pictures of boys _____

Do the pictures of girls show girls involved in active play? _____

Do the pictures of boys show boys in contemplative or caring roles?___

Do the pictures of girls show girls displaying "positive" behaviors, such as: making decisions____ leading____ helping____ solving problems____

and "negative" behaviors, such as: crying (or sad)_____ hitting_____ getting into trouble_____

Are there more pictures of one type than the other?____ If yes, which type?_____

Do the pictures of boys show boys displaying "positive" behaviors, such as: helping____ leading____ making decisions____ solving problems____

and "negative" behaviors, such as: crying (or sad)____ hitting_____ getting into trouble_____

Are there more pictures of one type than the other?____ If yes, which type?____

The majority of pictures of boys are _____.

The majority of pictures of girls are _____.

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* This questionnaire was prepared by Felicia George, Assistant Project Director.

2. In which areas of the room do you display pictures of both sexes involved in that areas activity?

blocks ____ dramatic play (doll corner) ____ art ____
woodworking ____ manipulative ____ reading ____
science ____ other(specify) _____

Are all areas attractive, i.e. organized, clearly labeled, decorated with pictures of interesting items?

dramatic play Y N blocks Y N science Y N music Y N
woodworking Y N cooking Y N manipulative Y N
reading Y N

Are pictures of male and female adults engaged in comparable activities displayed? Y N

which activity (ies) _____ which sex(es) _____

_____ _____

Keep a record for one week (chosen randomly) of activities participated in by each sex: (sample record form)

	MON:	TUES:	WED:	THURS:	FRI:	TOTAL
Girls						
Boys						

ATTITUDE:

1. Do girls and boys play in all areas of the classroom? Y N If not, in which areas don't girls play? _____
in which areas don't boys play? _____

Keep a record of the areas each child plays in. (Mark child's initial in box for area each time he/she plays in that area for one week.

		Girls	Boys
A.	Doll Corner		
	Art		
	Cooking		
B.	Blocks		
	Woodwork		
C.	Sand/Water		
	Reading		

Are there girls who play only in area A? Y N If yes, how would you characterize these girls? _____

Are there girls who play only in areas A and C? Y N If yes, how would you characterize these girls? _____

Are there girls who play only in areas B and C? Y N If yes, how would you characterize these girls? _____

Are there boys who play only in areas B? Y N If yes, how would you characterize these boys? _____

Are there boys who play only in areas B and C? Y N If yes, how would you characterize these boys? _____

Are there boys who play only in areas A and C? Y N If yes, how would you characterize these boys? _____

Are there boys and girls who play in areas A, B, and C? Y N If yes, how would you characterize these children? _____

2. From the following list check those activities that you do not present to your class?

woodworking ____ active games ____ sewing ____ cooking ____
music ____ reading ____ electricity ____ dance ____

Why don't you? _____

_____

Do you plan a greater % of noisy or quiet activities? noisy _____
quiet _____

Do you plan a greater % of messy or neat activities? messy _____
neat _____

Do you disapprove of noisy girls? Y N noisy boys? Y N
noisy girls more than noisy boys? Y N noisy boys more than noisy girls Y N

3. Check the statements which best describe your reaction to the children's appearance.

Girls	Boys
"What a pretty dress!"	"What a handsome suit!"
"That's a good warm sweater to wear on a cold day."	"That's a good warm sweater to wear on a gold day."
"You came in like a big girl today."	"You came in like a big boy today."
"Linda is wearing ribbons!"	"Mark has a part in his hair!"
"Those are good shoes for running."	"Those are good shoes for running
"You look nice today."	"You look nice today."
"Short sleeves are comfortable on a warm day like today."	"Short sleeves are comforbable or a warm day like today."

4. List the following attributes under the column that you feel they most accurately describe.

confident	happy	objective	forceful	aggressive	emotional
tender	vain	intelligent	dependent	talkative	attractive
strong	brave	independent	passive	creative	considerate
tough	timid	responsible	protective	ambitious	fearful
active	stoic	competent	weak		

BOYS	GIRLS