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ABSTRACT

This document consists of the two 2000 issues of a magazine for parents, teachers, and others involved in cooperative nursery schools. The magazine is designed to provide a forum for views on dealing with young children, express a variety of ideas, promote the cooperative philosophy, and enhance the relationships of those involved in cooperative nursery schools. The spring 2000 issue (40th Anniversary Issue) contains the following articles: (1) "Interview with Dr. Mary Bigler" (Mary Margaret Crombez); (2) "Mothers of Offspring: 40 Years of Love and Learning" (Lisa M. Mangigian); (3) "The Cooperative Nursery: Stepping Stones to Fulfillment" (Esther Middlewood); (4) "All for One and One for All: Meeting the Needs of the Individual Student in a Group Setting" (Esther Callard); (5) "Young Children and Their Art" (Jean N. Hillman); (6) "Picture Books for Pre-Reading" (Jane A. Romatowski); and (7) "One Step Ahead: Reasons to Read to Your Child." The fall 2000 issue contains the following articles: (1) "Growing Cooperatively: One Family's Story" (Suzanne Arnold); (2) "Nurturing Neurology: The Family's Role in Early Brain Development" (Mary Margaret Crombez); (3) "Indulging Daydreams: Encouraging Imaginative Play" (Margaret Packo); (4) "Supporting Separated and Divorced Families" (Anne K. Soderman); (5) "Four Generations of Mothers" (Marilynn M. Rosenthal); and (6) "One Step Ahead: Parenting Perspectives through Time." (SD)

Offspring, 2000

Spring 2000, No. 1
(40th Anniversary Issue)
Fall 2000, No. 2

Mary Margaret Crombez and
Lisa Mangigian, Editors

A Publication of the Michigan Council
of Cooperative Nursery Schools

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Offspring
40TH
ANNIVERSARY
1960 - 2000



Offspring

40th Anniversary Issue

A Publication of the Michigan Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools

Spring, 2000 3

Offspring

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Offspring is written for parents, teachers and others:

- ❖ To provide a forum for views on dealing with young children
- ❖ To express a variety of ideas
- ❖ To promote the co-op philosophy
- ❖ To enhance our relationships with children and each other

Michigan Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools is a member of Parent Cooperative Preschools International

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Offspring

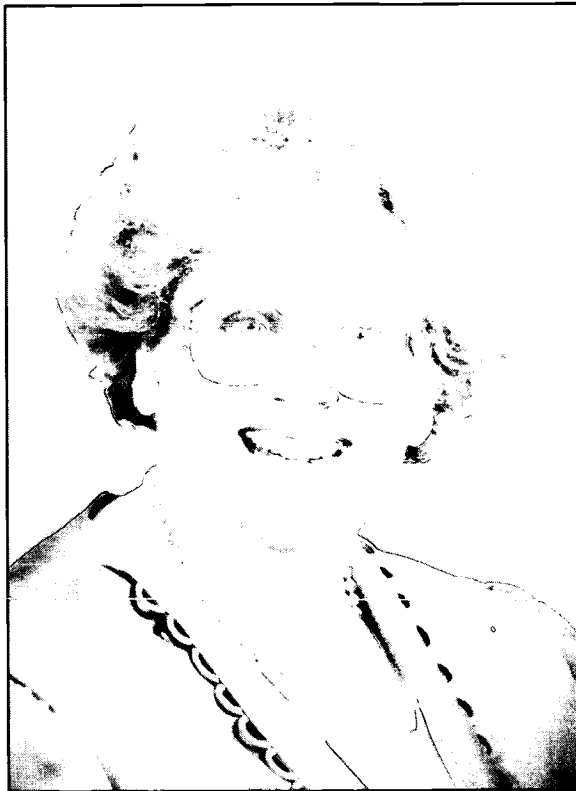
40th Anniversary Issue

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Laughing, Literacy & Learning: An Interview with Dr. Mary Bigler

By
Mary
Margaret
Crombez,
M.Ed.



Mary Bigler, Ph.D., will give the keynote address at this year's 49th Annual MCCN Conference, April 28, 2000 at Michigan State University in East Lansing. Dr. Bigler is a professor at Eastern Michigan University.

Your conference presentation is titled "Laughing Matters." Could you tell us a little about how laughing matters?

A great deal of research supports the value of laughter. Links have been found between laughter and reduction of pain, stress reduction and boosts in the immune system. Educational psychologists have told us for years that children learn best when they are relaxed and happy. They do not learn most efficiently when they are scared and tense. Laughter triggers the brain to produce chemicals that create a sense of well being and neutralize situations. Consequently, laughter really is good for your health.

Laughing really does sound like a positive influence. Laughing matters aside, parenting is a serious task requiring tremendous effort. How can we, as parents, keep our sense of humor while holding down the fort? How might our laughter matter as we parent our young children?

About the Author

Mary Margaret Crombez, M.Ed. feels privileged to be among the ranks of women who have "mothered" **Offspring** magazine during its 40 years of supporting and informing young families. Mary is a family education specialist as well as a current co-op mom, serving as co-president at the Livonia Nursery, Inc. this year.

Parenting is a serious and important mission, but I think we need to have fun while we are engaged in it. We need to delight in being parents. We need to take advantage of the silly, absurd and fun things that happen during the course of a day and laugh about them with our children. Whether it is playing with a kitten, listening to the children try to persuade you why they need another Beanie Baby™ or laughing at the fact that you put a diaper in the refrigerator, learn to laugh more. If we look and act like parenting is hazardous to our health our children will think it is a burden. I would rather they think it is an exciting and joyous adventure. We need to convey that in our attitudes. Try to create a climate, both in your co-op classroom as well as your home that encourages the gift of laughter.

What a gift - laughter - good for the body and a great way to get through the day, too! As you know, literacy is the theme of this year's MCCN Conference. Do you have any suggestions to encourage young children's love of learning and reading?

Read fun books, wear silly hats, tell jokes and riddles as you run errands, take turns reciting tongue twisters, or listen to silly songs to create opportunities to laugh while encouraging word play, listening and other pre-reading concepts.

Your suggestions certainly sound like fun. But reading with young children is so much more than fun and games. News and media reports suggest that parents read to their children daily. What can you tell us about children who have been read to on a regular basis?

Children who have been read to know the value of reading; they have an appetite to learn to read. They know the joy, excitement, and information contained in books, magazines and on the computer. They have well-developed vocabularies and know how stories are organized. Considering reading aloud is fun, simple and cheap, it sure has tremendous value!

Our children really do learn a lot when we read together. Beyond simply reading aloud, what else should parents remember to do while reading to their children?

Take time to look at the pictures. Let your children predict what the story will be about. Encourage your children to chime in when there is a repetitive part. For example, in the book *Where the Wild Things Are* by Maurice Sendak, have your children recite along with you during each phrase "they roared their terrible roars, and gnashed their terrible teeth, and rolled their terrible eyes and showed their terrible claws." While reading, stop at different intervals and ask your children what they think is going to happen next in the story. Then read on to see if their prediction is similar to the story's plot. Follow up a story with a discussion. Ask your child if he would like to be the main character or another character in the story. Keep a list of the books you and your children read together and reread old favorites.

What great ideas to keep reading aloud fresh and interesting and fun! It seems literacy really is a home and school partnership. Do you have any suggestions that would help busy parents incorporate literacy into their daily routines as a family both for their children as well as for themselves?

- 1) Plan a family reading time. Schedule 15-20 minutes each day for each family member to read whatever he or she wants to read. Schedule it so that it gets done.
- 2) Have books and magazines readily available-next to the birdcage, in the car, in the bathroom, in your child's backpack, in his/her overnight bag, etc.
- 3) Plan outings to the library. Encourage your children to check out books, care for them and return them in a timely fashion. Parents need to be a good model for their children so they need to check out books too.
- 4) Read recipes, read road signs, read signs in grocery stores and other "environmental print." Have your child read the menu when you eat out. Dictate your grocery list and have your child read it back to you. Encourage your children to read ads from the newspaper that appeal to their age and interests. Let your kids compile a "wish list" from catalogs of things they would like to have.
- 5) Tape yourself reading stories so your kids can be read to, even when you are not physically there.

• **Are there any other activities that you would recommend that combine reading with the pleasures of early childhood and parenting?**

- Keep a family diary.
- Have each family member contribute a sentence or two each day. Let very young children dictate their contribution as you write it word for word.
- Your children's artwork adds a special touch!
- Subscribe to magazines like *Ranger Rick* and *Your Big Backyard* and *Ladybug* that appeal to preschool children.
- Read the stories and enjoy the pictures.
- Encourage your children to cut out pictures from magazines. Place them in a scrapbook and have your children make up a story about the picture as you write it down.
- Read their story back to them.
- Encourage your children to write notes and cards to family members and friends for birthdays, Valentine's Day and other occasions.
- Take books along to the park and enjoy a "storytime" picnic together.

Mothers of Offspring: 40 Years of Love and Learning

By
Lisa M.
Mangigian,
M.A.



Founding Editor, Marilyn Rosenthal with granddaughter, Maddy

On the occasion of **Offspring's** 40th Anniversary, I perused through an editorial board member's coveted collection of 80 copies of **Offspring**. I was awed by the dedication of countless staff members who gave not only years but decades to producing an excellent publication.

The impressive range of article topics surprised me; Current social issues that recent editors have been less than enthusiastic to approach – such as divorce and child abuse – have already been presented! Little did we know that when we recently thought we broke ground on an article promoting multicultural practices, previous issues featured articles devoted to diversity in preschool education practices not only in the U.S., but in nations around the world.

While the topics have ranged from "A" to "Z" **Offspring** has always placed emphasis on relationships, parental and classroom effectiveness, and promoting the co-op philosophy. The very important "P" word - play- has also been given priority as has other "P" words such as prejudice, poverty, puppets, and playground safety.

Much in our world has changed in 40 years. Parenting techniques have evolved, new methods in education have been developed, yet children still play and learn. And parents still have the opportunity to learn and grow with them in Michigan cooperative nursery schools. We hope our readers have enjoyed reading **Offspring** as much as we have enjoyed editing each issue.

Working to create and maintain a first rate publication for parents and educators in Michigan doesn't guarantee fame and fortune, but it sure has been a significant stepping stone for many **Offspring** editors. We salute the mothers of **Offspring** who during their busy years with preschoolers at home gave of their time and talents to promote the philosophy of parent education and involvement. A few of the former editors are sharing their stories with you here. Along with these super "moms," many "mother's helpers" (other staff members) and a few "dads" on the editorial board have generously given of their time and expertise. Many thanks are due to all members of the **Offspring** family.

About the Author

Lisa Mangigian, M.A. lives in Dexter with her husband and three co-op graduates. After many years of juggling family responsibilities, **Offspring** and graduate studies, she is pleased to have recently completed her Master's Degree in Guidance and Counseling.

Offspring is Born: 1959-1968

Marilynn Rosenthal, Founding Editor

When my family joined the Rosedale Cooperative Nursery School in Livonia, Michigan, I looked forward to a fine educational experience for my oldest son, Dan, to the chance to meet other young mothers, to learn more about young children and, how to be a better mom. I'm delighted to report, almost forty years later, that all those things happened... and a very great deal more that I couldn't have predicted.

The co-op nursery helped me with life's greatest task: raising my children, through parent education locally and at the state annual conferences, and through watching the teacher, other parents and other children. Everyone was expected to contribute and this approach provided a unique, protected opportunity for each one of us young mothers to develop organizational skills and our creative potential.

Encouraged by the then President of Rosedale, Bev MacAnnich (who became a life-long friend), I proposed to establish a nursery newsletter. From that small beginning came *Offspring*. Working with friends **Gerry Schreier**, **Lita Zemmol** and later **Shirley Daly**, we learned: how to organize an enterprise, how to critique writing, and how to write ourselves. We also gained skills in persuading others to write for the magazine, and gained a working knowledge of the printing and distribution process. We also were driven to market the magazine beyond Livonia, beyond Detroit, beyond Michigan and beyond the USA. We learned persistence and responsibility. Along with a deep pleasure in having helped in parent education across the state, I have considerable pride in the multiple subscriptions the early Peace Corp purchased.

As I look back to those *Offspring* years in the late 1950s and '60s, I understand what a strong foundation that experience laid for my evolving career as a professor and research scholar. All these skills I began to hone with *Offspring* served me well in a variety of ways in my professional life. Although I returned to school

for a M.A. and Ph.D. -for my professional training-it was those *Offspring* years that gave me confidence and a protected arena to practice professionalism, and to see that organizations would be responsive to new ideas. It has been a joy to watch *Offspring* grow over these past 40 years, and I sincerely hope the magazine and the entire co-op movement continue to promote the original benefits while adapting to our ever changing social needs.

Gerry Schrier

My involvement with *Offspring* as assistant editor was a consequence of several experiences during the 1950s: my studies at Merrill Palmer in early childhood education, my position as head teacher at Perry Nursery School in Ann Arbor while attending the University of Michigan, my long and enduring friendship with Marilynn Rosenthal whose creative vision led to the publication of *Offspring*, and perhaps most significantly, my participation in the Oak Park Cooperative Nursery School as my own four offspring became of age.

My continued interest in parent education led to a Master's Degree in Social Work in 1975 and a private clinical practice which continues to this day. Presently, my work focuses on psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapy with adults and adolescents, supervision of graduate students and participation as an executive board member of the Michigan Psychoanalytic Foundation and the Association for Psychoanalytic Thought.

Our editorial board meetings during those first years were informal and exciting as we met late into the night discussing relevant topics, potential contributors, layout design, artwork, and photographs. While our decisions were usually unanimous, the one area of dissension centered on which of our own children should grace the cover of the magazine. We ultimately resolved the problem by taking a group photograph of all of our children together.

We were enormously gratified by the reception the magazine enjoyed by the Michigan Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools and the subsequent growth and distribution of the magazine nationally

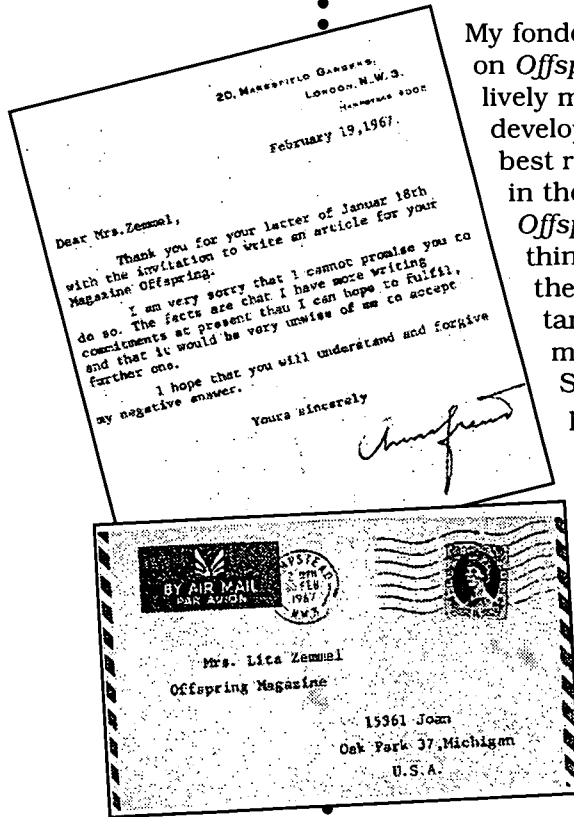
“The co-op nursery helped me with life’s greatest task: raising my children, through parent education locally and at the state annual conferences, and through watching the teacher, other parents and other children.”

~Marilynn Rosenthal

- and internationally. It's not often that one
- has the opportunity to witness the realization of a dream with the knowledge
- that one has participated in its inception
- and made some small contribution to its success.

• **Lita Zemmol**

- I am a sixty-five year old grandmother of nine. I became eligible for the cooperative nursery school movement at age twenty-four when my first child was three. Along
- the way, I had two more children, went back to school, received a B.A. and a M.S.W. Since 1972, I have worked as a clinical therapist, treating individuals, married couples and families. It's hard to
- believe that my own children now have children of their own who are entering colleges this fall.



My fondest memory of working on *Offspring* is of the late-night lively meetings discussing child development, and who would best represent our philosophy in the magazine. We wanted *Offspring* to include the best thinkers in the field, and therefore we had no hesitancy in contacting the most illustrious experts. Some would think it presumptuous to have written to Anna Freud, as I did, but I still cherish her polite note, declining our invitation to contribute an article because of other commitments. (see left) I am gratified to learn that *Offspring* is alive and thriving, and proud to have been among its founders. I

- look forward to attending
- *Offspring's* 40th Anniversary celebration,
- and meeting the many people who have contributed to its success.

**The Early Years:
1968-1980**

Shirley Daly

When Merylene Schneider and I took over editing *Offspring* magazine, our first issue included an editorial entitled "A Few Words" in praise of Marilynn Rosenthal, *Offspring's* founding editor. "We will miss her," the editorial said, "particularly the many nights we sat around her kitchen table drinking coffee, reading manuscripts, counting words, and agonizing over photographs. It's hard to forget her beautiful smile, when, long after midnight, she would look up and say, "It looks like we've got an issue-and a good one."

Merylene and I produced our first issue of *Offspring* in the fall of 1968. We both were married and had three children. I was then a nursery school consultant for the Michigan Department of Social Services, and in 1973 became a child care teacher in a vocational high school. Merylene was taking college courses to finish her Bachelor's Degree and was writing poetry and fiction. She has stayed in the publishing industry and has edited four books and co-authored one.

The process of producing the magazine went on pretty much as it had before. Except that I don't think that either of us ever looked up with a beautiful smile to say, "It looks like we've got an issue." We were always too tired to say that, much less to smile. And we had quickly learned how much work still waited for us in getting the magazine printed and distributed. Fortunately, we had the wonderful assistance of two special staff members: Sally Cox and Fran Newell. These women made our jobs much more enjoyable.

Of course, we also made many changes in the magazine through the years. For example, one small but significant and probably long-overdue change was the addition of the words, "The Magazine of the Michigan Council of Cooperative Nurseries" on the table of contents page in the spring 1979 issue. This gave more prominent credit to the Council's sponsorship of the magazine. The cost of paper, printing, and mailing was a major budgetary expense for the council although the staff consisted of unpaid volunteers.

"We struggled over every detail, from the cover photo to the drawings on the back cover. We held and attended what seemed to be endless meetings - from working staff meetings to Editorial Board meetings, to MCCN meetings."

10
~Shirley Daly

We struggled over every detail, from the cover photo to the drawings on the back cover. We held and attended what seemed to be endless meetings – from working staff meetings to Editorial Board meetings, to MCCN meetings.

And we turned into talented and ruthless hustlers, always looking for material. You might say we were beggars, since all of the material used in the magazine was donated to us. As I look over past issues I am amazed at the number and variety of articles we printed.

In our constant search for articles we sought help from our families, friends, and nearly everyone we knew. The first child's drawing featured on the back cover was attributed to "Krista, age 4." Krista is Merylene's youngest daughter. (She is now 34 and works for the American Federation of Teachers.) My husband, Frank, and son, Brian, then a high school student, each contributed drawings after much coaxing, as well as my daughter-in-law, Stephanie. (Both Brian and Stephanie are professional artists now.)

Our most difficult task was doing the layout of the pages. These were the days before PageMaker, and we had to count lines and figure ratios. As editors we were often frustrated to receive the finished product from the printer and find that one misspelled word that all of us had missed. No wonder my dentist told me that I was grinding my teeth to the gums!

Still, we kept at it for twelve and one-half years, resigning with the spring 1981 issue. We had produced 25 beautiful issues. At least they seem beautiful to me. Why wouldn't they be beautiful? After all, every cover and article, every photo and drawing featured the most beautiful subject we know: children.

The Wonder Years: 1980-1990

Kaye Rittinger

My years of co-oping began in the fall of 1965 when our oldest son started at the Southfield Cooperative Nursery. I became president of that nursery the next year and at the next twenty years involved

with the cooperative movement in one capacity or another culminating with three years as editor of *Offspring*. My husband and I have three sons who all attended cooperative nursery schools.

I helped found Clarkston Co-op in 1969 and later taught at Drayton Plains Co-op Nursery, Lakeland Co-op and Northminster Co-op. While teaching I was also a student and completed a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education.

In the fall of 1984 I became a Head Start Teacher for the City of Pontiac. When this program was dissolved in the district I taught first grade and then began my present position of teaching at-risk four-year-olds.

Sheryl Pulley

I have memories of going to Karen Ensminger's basement and seeing copies of all the past issues of *Offspring* stacked all over – some on shelves, some in boxes. I remember using boxes of *Offspring* to prop up my child's bed. We seemed to overprint a lot of the time.

I also remember taking notes at workshops at MCCN's conferences and then writing up a possible article from them and then sending that rough, rough draft to the speaker asking them if they would mind polishing it up and/or rewriting the information for publication in *Offspring*. It worked almost every time I did it. It seems a bit of a hard way to get articles, but we were desperate most of the time for new stuff. And no one wanted their name on my original effort!! What it did was give them a starting place. I guess it's easier to critique and polish than start from a blank page.

I also remember running around at one conference trying to tape every workshop. What a mess and the sound quality was terrible. We never tried that again!

Through all the years of getting articles, rewriting and editing, *Offspring* continues to be a source of pride for the Michigan Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools. I'm proud to have been a part of it.

“Through all the years of getting articles, rewriting and editing, *Offspring* continues to be a source of pride for the Michigan Council of Cooperative Nursery Schools. I'm proud to have been a part of it.”

~Sheryl Pulley

The Mothers of Offspring

Marilynn Rosenthal,
Founding Editor,
 (1959-1968)

Gerry Schreier
 (1959-1968)

Lita Zemmol
 (1959-1968)

Merylene Schneider
 (1968- 1981)

Shirley Daly
 (1970-1980)

Kaye Rittinger
 (1982-1984)

Susan Raccoli
 (1982-1987)

Bethany Cronk
 (1984-1988)

Dorothy Komarmy
 (1984-1985)

Sheryl Pulley
 (1984-1993)

Sue Mikan
 (1986-1988)

Amy Ryberg
 (1988-1991)

Karen Ensminger
 (1984-present)

Amy Hockey
 (1990-1998)

Lisa Mangigian
 (1993-present)

**Mary Margaret
 Crombez**
 (1997-present)

• **Karen Ensminger**

• It was January 1983 – 17 years ago!
 • Our only child, Alex, had graduated from co-op and was now in kindergarten. I had just started The Scrap Box, a non-profit business that collects and distributes industrial discards to those who find creative re-uses for them. My good friend, Shelley Lane, was on the MCCN state board and mentioned to me that they were looking for a new coordinator for *Offspring*. I had previously been a textbook editor before Alex was born, while my husband worked on a Ph.D. and an M.D. Driving up to East Lansing once a month with Shelley sounded like fun, so I volunteered for the job. Several years later I became one of the editors. Then in 1991 I retired. Or so I thought. I stay on as an adviser, I guess because I want to make sure *Offspring* stays the relevant publication it has been in the past. And, there are a lot of very nice and bright people associated with MCCN.

Mid-Life in the Millenium:

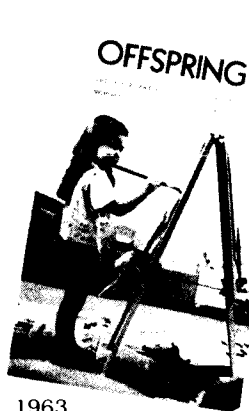
Well, it looks like we have come full circle. My seven years with Offspring have passed swiftly. I first became involved with MCCN when my oldest children, now 10 and 12 years old, were in nursery school, and now my youngest has started kindergarten. Part of me enjoys "mothering" Offspring while I know I someday may need to pass the baton on. (Fortunately, Mary Crombez will keep the torch burning with her excellent educational background and solid editorial skills.)

On a professional level, my interest in child development has evolved into a passion for adult development as well. I'll be graduating this spring with my Master's in Guidance and Counseling and hope to embark on a career helping students in higher education determine career and personal goals. Meanwhile, the experience of working with dedicated professionals and MCCN volunteers while learning about pertinent child-related concerns continues to be both professionally and personally rewarding.

~ Lisa Mangigian

I have worked with many talented people throughout the years. First when I started, **Susan Raccoli** and **Kaye Rittinger** were the editors. Later, **Sue Mikan** and I did the editing. When Sue moved, **Amy Ryberg** replaced her. Then, **Amy Hockey** came on board followed by **Lisa Mangigian**. Each person brought her own special talents to the task and worked cooperatively to continue the high quality of the magazine.

Now most of my efforts go into running The Scrap Box. Our fifth move a few years ago put us in a 9,000 square foot building, and has become a full-time (volunteer) job. It has been rewarding for me as I have learned a lot about running a business. I'm happy to say The Scrap Box shares some of the same goals as MCCN: fostering creativity; enhancing self-esteem; and helping parents improve their parenting skills.



1963



1968



1970



1988

Celebrating 40 Years!



5th Anniversary Issue



15th Anniversary Issue



20th Anniversary Issue



25th Anniversary Issue



30th Anniversary Issue



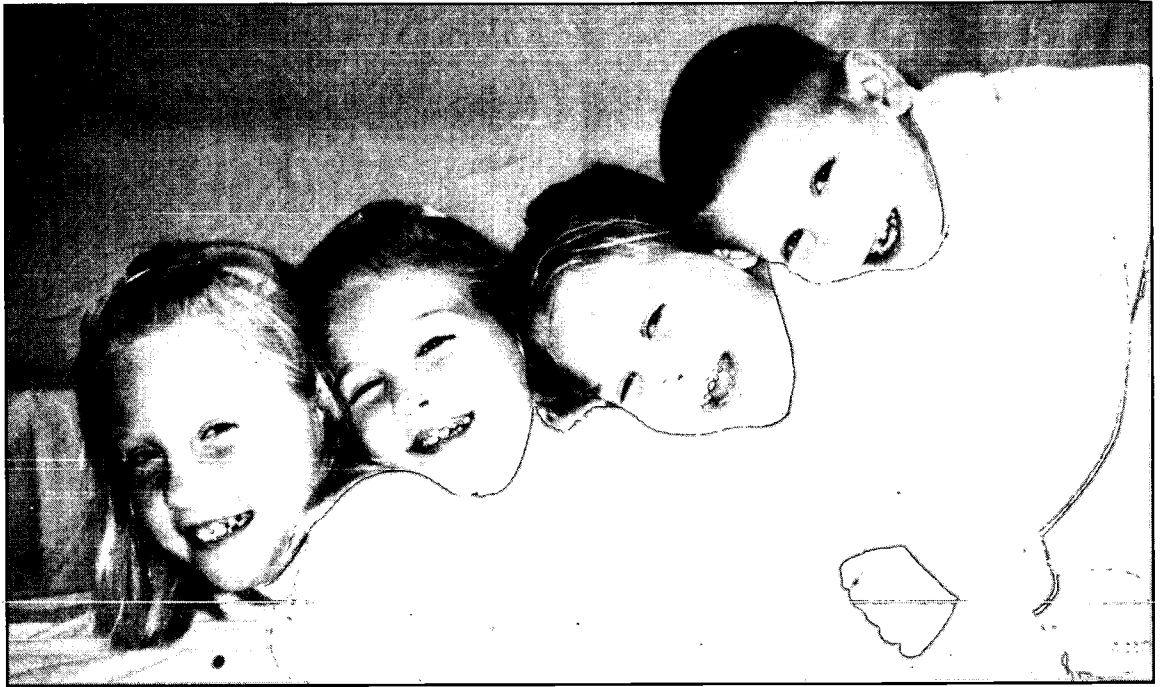
35th Anniversary Issue



Offspring
40TH
 ANNIVERSARY
 1960 - 2000

The Cooperative Nursery: Stepping Stones to Fulfillment

By
Esther
Middlewood,
Ph.D.



Although **Offspring** magazine has published topics of varying interest for all young families, its primary audience has always been the co-op family. This **Offspring** Classic was originally featured in the Spring of 1970. Many former co-op nursery families, including **Offspring's** former staff members' choices and successes in life are reflective of Dr. Middlewood's message, even after thirty years.

Nursery school for children is neither a new or unique idea. For years, families have sent their toddlers to nursery school. Some children are sent because it is a convenient method of care, others because they have no playmates at home. Some children go to nursery school to give their mother a bit of relief, while others go because their parents believe in the real value of this early school experience. Nevertheless, for many families only the child is involved in the nursery experience.

Preschool Emphasis Today

Recently, however, a new idea has emerged – the idea that nursery school can be a learning experience for the parent as well as the child. With this in mind, the cooperative nursery school has evolved. Although part of the cooperative movement may be dependent upon the fact that if mothers and teachers work together the nursery school may be

maintained more economically (by limiting the use of hired staff) this is not the specific reason for the cooperative aspect of the program. The unique and exciting value of the cooperative nursery is the practical and meaningful learning experience afforded the parents involved. Therefore, cooperative nurseries must attend assiduously to the parent education aspects of their program.

Never before in our history has our society been as intent as it is now on the preschool child, his health, his education, his growth potential and general welfare. Currently, of course, the concern is scarcely academic; but, at least, social designers and educators alike have conceded that the preschool experience is most vital in determining life styles, academic as well as personal and social. A child's sense of self-competence and worth are well defined in the preschool years. Hence, how he uses his competen-

About the Author

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cies in the learning process are established in the early years. Where then should society focus its energies? On remedial programs after the damage has been done or on the types of programs which are truly preventive? It is obviously more discerning to prevent damage and build initial strengths whenever possible.

This basic philosophy leads me to believe that we are going to see a tremendous upsurge in programs dealing with the preschooler. In recent years the parent cooperative nursery movement has grown with astounding speed. Parents believe in it.

As individual nurseries increase, more organizational structure will be necessary to perpetuate the program, to insure quality in existing programs, and to design guidelines for new nurseries. Such development necessitates not only local councils but area, regional, state, national and ultimately international councils (such as is emerging in Parent Cooperative Preschools International).

Challenge for Leadership

While the new, young mothers are engrossed in the demanding day-to-day task of nursery management, those who have become committed and who have gained a bit of expertise from a year or two of valuable experience must be ready to serve in a larger capacity. Experienced nursery school parents can move in any of several directions when released from the day-to-day tasks of working with their own preschoolers.

There are numerous leadership roles at the local as well as the state council level. State leaders, in turn, become leaders on a national level. Opportunities such as these offer increased challenges and help one acquire a sense of accomplishment. But leadership roles represent only one of many paths available for those who wish to devote their talents to the cooperative experience. Typists as well as authors are required to develop guidelines, pamphlets, and articles. Social activists are needed to chair committees to draw up proposals for Head Start programs, provide consultant boards for public school day care programs, and advise

programs in the establishment of play groups.

However, if neither administration, nor writing, nor social action is your "thing," much still remains to be done. Many public programs have a critical shortage of people – loving, caring people. It is hard to believe that anyone could come through a "co-op" experience without caring a little more about children and their families. A co-op mother can be the "caring" person who may be of help to another mother and her child. If anything, your co-op education may be just the ticket for helping other young families.

Involvement with Parent Education

A well-designed cooperative nursery parent education program serves both the parent and community well. Parent education provides for knowledgeable families and develops a sense of commitment and dedication to the needs and education of children. For instance, parents who understand the concept of a permissive atmosphere for the preschooler also understand the need for a balance of limits and freedom for the twelve-year-old. These educated parents will not continue to allow the twelve-year-old the same permissive experience of the three-year-old, nor will they exact of the twelve-year-old the rigorous conformity of former years. This applies to all areas of child development just as in discipline. Parents so equipped understand good school programs, social expectations of children, growth needs, recreational and other needs. Parents with this background eagerly lend their efforts to help society better nurture all children.

While learning about the nursery program and participating in the day-to-day routines of school, many co-op mothers develop an understanding of classroom procedures based on a clear concept of child development, basic preschool age needs, and individual differences. Nursery mothers who are "taught" these concepts through their involvement in the classroom require less teacher supervision and find the tasks of the nursery

"Never before in our history has our society been as intent as it is now on the preschool child, his health, his education, his growth potential and general welfare."

“The cooperative nursery will make a contribution to the welfare of children which is unsurpassed by any program of our time.”

• more meaningful and challenging. Furthermore, mothers who gain an educated understanding of early development grow out of their nursery school assignment into a wider use of their knowledge.

• The well-trained nursery school parent could become involved in parent education of any type. This might be through the traditional forms such as Parent Teacher Associations or it might be in a form unique to the individual community. In Michigan, for instance, many cooperative nursery mothers enter into a program known as Parent Education Associates, which is a three year leadership training program in family life education. After receiving this training, the mothers then establish small, informal study groups in their schools, churches, or neighborhoods. Or, if they so wish, they can become program leaders in already established groups.

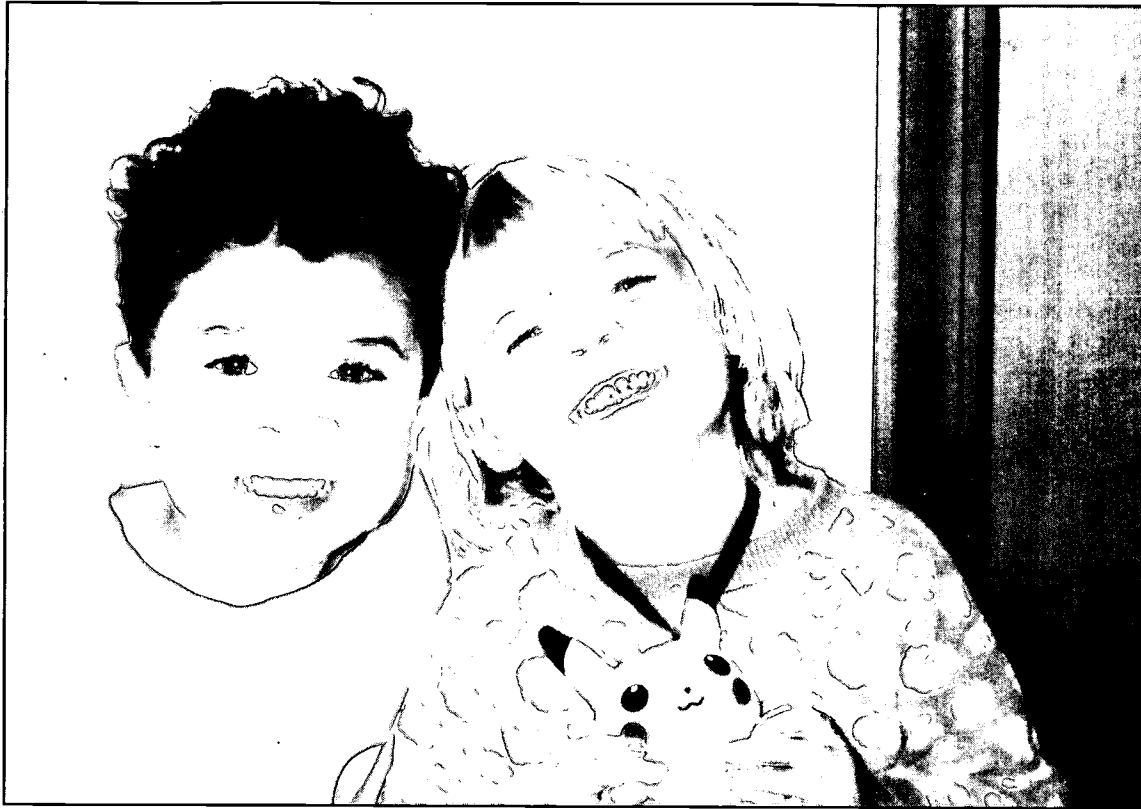
• Family life programs in churches benefit greatly from leadership by persons well informed in child growth and development. Boards of education of churches are also in need of leaders who can help establish good nursery programs and interpret such programs. So whether cooperative nursery parents' interests remain primarily with the preschool child or whether they extend their knowledge beyond the preschool age, co-op parents can offer a real service.

• There are also many opportunities for trained parents to assist in the improvement of school programs. Team teaching, in which the parent shares in classroom experience, is a natural for the cooperative nursery parent. Curriculum committees, citizen committees, and many other such opportunities are waiting for the services that can best be rendered by one who has really shared in the early education of the child.

There is an endless array of opportunities for involvement in a meaningful way in the post cooperative nursery school years. And, unless the mother continues to be involved in the growth of her child, the uniqueness of the cooperative nursery is lost. Its greatest contribution is the idea of cooperation, of the involvement of the parent, in the learning experience of the child. To terminate this at the end of the preschool years is to deny the fulfillment of a great idea.

However, remember that helping children with juice twice a month for one year does not render one an expert on growth and development at all ages. To serve this broader purpose, we must always keep before us the necessity of a continuing process of growth for parents as well as for children. If we keep ourselves aware of this, and if we see and accept our wider responsibilities in the post nursery school years, the cooperative nursery will make a contribution to the welfare of children, which is unsurpassed by any program of our time.





In all fairness, this **Offspring** Classic's message rings as clear today as it did when it was originally published in the Fall of 1960.

What is fair handling in the nursery school group? Is it fair to let Susan maintain undisputed possession of her stuffed bunny while Jimmy is told, "Share your truck or put it in your locker?" Is it fair to request that all the children settle down for a story and then to ease this demand for the restless ones, permitting them to play in some other section of the room? What about the child who is so lonely that he needs to be held on the teacher's lap, or the one who is so impulsive that he needs to be shadowed? Do these children take an unfair amount of the teacher's time? Should such children be eliminated from a group program in fairness to the others? In the cooperative nursery school we face the specific question: can a participating mother take a teacher's role, supervising the group as a whole, and still give her own child the singular response that he feels is his due? When such individual needs seem

to run counter to the needs of the group, must one be sacrificed to the other? Which one?

Our knowledge of child development constantly underlines the individual growth pattern of each child. We are also aware of the influences of home and family which bring each child to the nursery school with his own unique definition of the situation. Good group rules cannot violate the principles we hold regarding the significance of these individual variations. At the same time, we want to teach children that there are others in the world whose rights must be considered, that they are not laws unto themselves. To this end, we bring our preschool children together for a group experience. We believe that three to five-year-olds are able to move outside of the shell of self, to relate to and identify with others. We note their awareness of

About the Authors

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All for One and One for All: Meeting the Needs of the Individual Student in a Group Setting

By
Esther
Callard,
Ph.D.

“Justice is not the same treatment for all. Justice is regard for the needs of the individual. A just social order provides processes by which individual needs can lawfully be considered.”

• each other, the way they compare their
• adequacies and vie for favor, and also
• seek each other out for shared pleasure.
• We have an understandable desire to
• create in the preschool group a society
• that is fair and predictable, where rules
• are not at the whim of arbitrary rulers to
• be broken by the pressure of tears or
• attack. We want to provide a world of
• justice - not caprice. In our eagerness, we
• are apt to formulate the arbitrary. “Every
• child must,” or “No child may,” kind of
• dictum - a primitive justice to be sure.

• Justice can be measured only in relation-
• ship to individuals. Is a size seven a fair
• sized shoe for an adult woman? Are 3500
• calories a day adequate nutrition for a
• male adolescent? Is a 15 minute story
• period reasonable for a four-year-old?
• In general, yes, and when we plan pro-
• grams for groups these norms or averages
• are good for guideposts. Our equipment
• in the nursery school, the length of our
• session, the size of the chairs, the com-
• plexity of the program, all are wisely
• referred to what we know about the
• average child of this age. This is reason-
• able procedure but it is potentially unfair
• to any child who deviates greatly from
• these averages. We can reduce the danger
• by: (1) providing equipment and program-
• ming that accomodates a wide range of
• variability; (2) making individual conces-
• sions when advisable.

• The first we do quite successfully in most
• areas. For example, we buy puzzles with
• six, nine or sixteen pieces. In some areas,
• however, we do not permit such variation:
• two cookies are the limit! This is not to
• argue that all limits should be elim-
• inated, but rather to raise the question: Is
• such a point of uniformity really neces-
• sary and beneficial? Can't we let a hungry
• child have more than the limit? I can hear
• a chorus, “But if you do it for one, you
• have to do it for all.” A dangerous doc-
• trine! Children in their naive wisdom can
• see the falseness even when we logical
• adults cannot.

• I would like to cite an original experience
• to illustrate. When I first entered a coop-
• erative teaching situation fifteen years
• ago with my three-year-old son, I was
• determined that he should receive no
• special privelege. He was to call me “Mrs.

Callard,” not “Mama,” and to consider me
his teacher, not his mother. Of course,
under these conditions, he became the
most flagrant mama's boy one could
imagine. One day when he was clinging
to my side as I was reading a story to the
group, I said, “Tommy, all of the children
are sitting down in front of me. You are
one of the nursery school children, too.
Now sit down.” I looked at the faces in
front of me and noting the worried ex-
pressions, I hesitated. One little girl said,
“But he's your own boy!” I asked, “Should
I let him stay near me?” “Yes.” “All right,
Tommy, you may pull your chair real
close.” I put my arm around him. Smiles!
The wisdom of these children provided a
lesson I have never forgotten. Justice is
not the same treatment for all. Justice is
regard for the needs of the individual. A
just social order provides processes by
which individual needs can lawfully be
considered.

Let us return to some of the questions
that were raised at the beginning of this
discussion, with this principle in mind.
Remember Susan and her bunny? Susan
can be allowed to keep her bunny be-
cause she is new and feels strange in the
nursery school. Every child who has felt
strange and has been comforted by a
blanket or a toy will appreciate this and
see that it is fair. Jimmy, on the other
hand, is using his truck to tease. He
needs to know that this is divisive,
hurtful behavior and will have to be
relinquished. Don't think for a moment
that he and his friends will not recognize
the justice of this. As for the requirement
that all children remain with the story
group, most of the children enjoy the
story and want to stay with it. They are
being protected in their right by the
removal of distracting children who are
not ready for this experience. Unless you
consider that staying with the story is a
kind of punishment which should be
inflicted uniformly on the whole group, it
is hard to see how any other handling
can be justified.

What about the argument that the exces-
sively clinging or aggressive child takes
too much of the teacher's time away from
the group? The recent findings of persons
who have investigated the dynamics of
interacting groups disclose the artificial-

ity of this seeming conflict. The dangerous statement mentioned above, "If you do it for one, you have to do it for all" can with the elimination of two words become profound. In an interacting group, "If you do it for one, you do it for all." That is, if the members of the group see the child in question as like themselves, if his feelings are to some extent their feelings, your handling of him will be extended to them also. When you provide "mothering" care to your child, you are not depriving other children. Quite the contrary, you are assuring them of the goodness and trustworthiness of a mother, of her concern for her child.

Whenever the adult gives her attention to the needs of a troubled individual, she gives assurance to all. For example, when the teacher takes the time to find the lost toy of a child at the end of the day, she is telling every child in the group that his personal possessions will be respected.

The loneliness lying within every child is eased by the comforting which the teacher gives to the child in her arms. The aggressive hostility in every child is curbed when the teacher restrains the acting out offender. This should be reassuring to parents whose children demand a large share of the adult's time. As a matter of fact, every other mother in the group may be thankful for these children. Through them each child is being comforted and controlled.



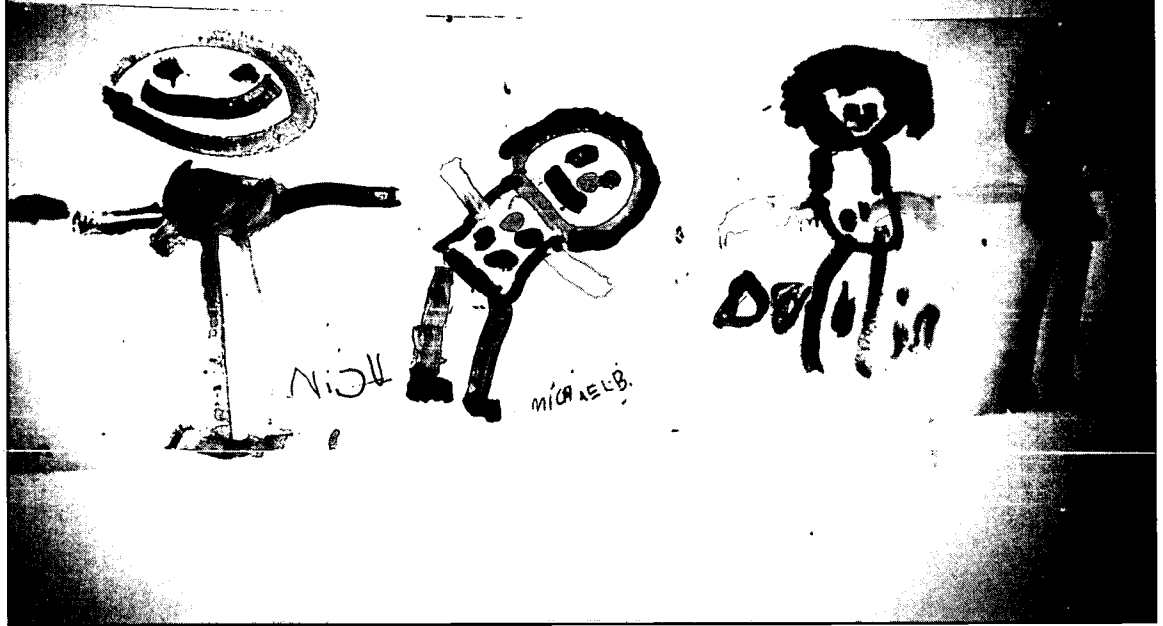
If you feel that there isn't enough time, there aren't enough hands to deal with all these problems, then you are saying, in truth, to each child, "I cannot take the time to comfort you and find your toy. I cannot be trusted to protect you from your destructive impulses." The lonely child's continued fear, the aggressive child's continued lawlessness are consequently, understandable. And the responsibility for them must lie, at least partially, in the fact that your group is too large, your physical situation too difficult, or your adult help inadequate to provide a helpful experience for preschool children.

What I am saying is that there is no such thing as a healthy group situation where the individual needs of children are disregarded. It is a mistake to think of the needs of the group and the needs of the individual as being in opposition to each other. One does not have to be sacrificed for the other. Except in the case of extremely disturbed atypical children, the process of group interaction and identification assures that what is happening to one child is responded to by all, in some measure.

“Whenever the adult gives her attention to the needs of a troubled individual, she gives assurance to all.”



Young Children and Their Art



A Friendship Mural consists of a self-portrait at the child's level of skill development and perception of self

The more children manipulate and experiment with materials, the more likely they are to integrate what they learn into a meaningful concept, and this is what we call learning!

The Creative Process versus The Completed Project

Fostering creativity at a developmentally appropriate level is the most important element of art for young children. Although craft stores offer complicated projects and art classes provide serious instruction, for young children art is a process. Through creative art experiences children learn that not everything in life comes prefabricated, in a box, with directions, to be used for only one purpose. When children are offered materials for self-expression, to use, as they would like, they create with joy and confidence (unless, of course, the process is interfered with by adults or older children). The imposition of adult standards and

models may curtail children's confidence in their own abilities and may actually block further attempts or further creative development. Sometimes the most uninteresting items that come home from school have been the most creatively satisfying for the children. Creative art expression is one thing, and appropriate project making is another. We tend to lump them together and name them art because the same materials are used. However, they are completely different for several reasons: the purpose for the child, the method of presentation by the teacher or parent and the criteria for evaluating what was accomplished. Creative art is valuable for the process. Projects are valuable for their final intended purpose.

About the Author

Jean N. Hillman, M.Ed. has a Bachelor's Degree in Kindergarten-Primary Education from Oberlin College and a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education from Central Michigan University. She has taught kindergartners, college students, and for 35 years taught preschoolers at Midland's Presbyterian Parent Cooperative Preschool. She has been married to Ralph for nearly 45 years and resides in Midland. All of her children attended "her" co-op and she taught three of her seven grandchildren before retiring two years ago. Hillman has been the recipient of numerous teaching awards including: MCCN's Outstanding Teacher of the Year, and Parent Cooperative Preschools International Honorary Life Member award.

By
Jean N.
Hillman,
M.Ed.

Facilitating the Creative Process

The key to creative art is allowing children to use materials freely. The process must always take precedence over the finished product. If the process is repeated over and over, the children will internalize it. Repetition is essential in art for young children. Children not only like repetition, but they actually need repetition. They must experiment and use a medium or skill over and over before it is internalized. Only then can they use the skill to create. Repetition is needed before children can move on to the higher level of use of a tool or material.

Hopefully, all preschool classrooms and homes offer opportunities for children to practice their basic art skills. However, using materials freely does not imply a lack of adult control. Adults facilitate by providing guidance such as:

- Creating the environment and making materials available
- Keeping hands off
- Being involved through showing interest and offering encouragement
- Offering help when needed but not doing the task for the child
- Helping children understand that what they are doing is to please themselves and not the adults
- Teachers interpreting to parents
- Maintaining a minimum of rules such as: use tools only for intended purpose, do not waste or destroy materials, and do your own work
- Letting children interpret what they are doing, but understanding that sometimes there is NO interpretation!

Constructions are an excellent example of the creative process at work. Many kinds of constructions can be built using various materials. For example, children can construct using bits of foam and packing pieces and toothpicks. Adding a few fluffs or feathers can give the construction interest and color. Wood construction, with nails or wood glue, can be completed at the workbench or at the art table. As adults we must put away preconceived ideas of how to use items, or how the end product should look. There must be no models or examples. Let the children's imaginations be their guide. Children will learn what will fit together,

what will balance, and how to design. Moreover, they will learn to use measurement and start to develop an understanding of symmetry. Finally, when this type of environment is encouraged, children will explore, plan, socialize, experiment, practice skills, create, focus, design, and discover much to our amazement.

Appropriate Use of Projects

Augmenting the creative process with projects offers young children opportunities for learning that foster creativity while developing such skills as listening and direction following. A project is similar to doing a puzzle. Children put materials together to produce a finished product. The skills developed during creative art transfer to project making allowing children to feel comfortable with the medium, making the task with a purpose easier and more fun-filled. Projects have a purpose only when:

- It has real meaning for the child. For example, after touching and investigating a real bird nest, the children make one out of sawdust dough and blue play dough eggs.
- The finished product is something to play with. For example, stick puppets to use with a finger play during story time or paper bag kites to fly outside the classroom.
- The child is able to easily complete the project with his or her level of skills.
- Each child's project is personalized to the point where it will certainly look different from another child's.





SCISSORS

Scissors can be the most misused of all art tools. We assume children will be able to cut when we hand them a pair of scissors. Cutting looks easy to the child, however, the tiny, immature finger muscles move easily and soon the child becomes frustrated. As in all new tasks to be learned, cutting is learned in developmental steps.

First, we can give children lots of pre-scissors skills: using tongs, bulb squeezers, hole punches, and paper tearing. Then, they need lots of random cutting before they can even try to cut a shape or on a line. Early cutting should consist of:

- ✧ Random cutting (cut up scraps of red, orange and yellow paper to put in a campfire of logs to simulate fire).
- ✧ Snipping and fringing: glue the snips on shapes, such as a turtle's back, a fringed placemat, or make a rainbow (see photo).

Group Projects

Group projects have been some of the most creative and successful art done in my classroom because all of the children can participate at their own level of ability and interest. However, the projects must be designed well by the teacher and interpreted clearly to class helpers. Some examples include:

● **Friendship Painting:** Everyone paints on a long piece of paper on the floor or wall. Each child paints when, where, and how he or she pleases.

● **Pass the Paper:** Four or five children draw taking turns with an adult keeping time. After a minute a bell is rung and each child passes his or her paper to the next person. When each paper is returned to the original drawer the child can keep it. It is another type of friendship picture with coloring from all the child's friends at the table.

● **Murals:** As described elsewhere in this article, murals are excellent group projects.

Integrating Art into the Classroom Curriculum

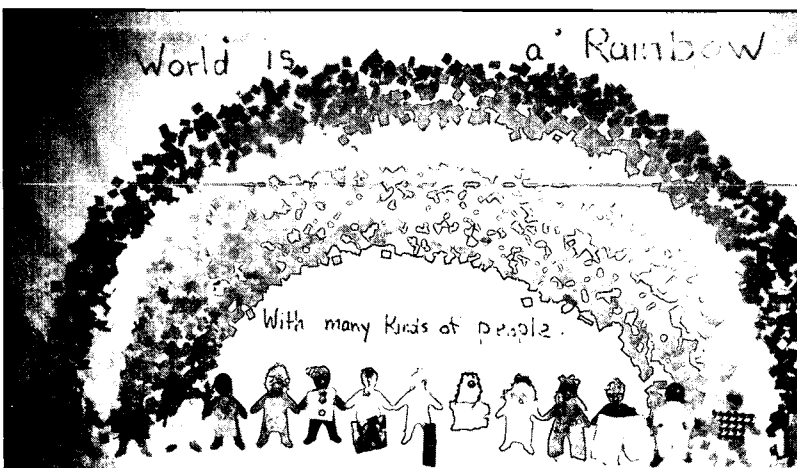
● When art is integrated into the whole curriculum it is more meaningful for the children. However, contrived projects will not enhance learning. All art must flow from the children's interests and their abilities. Practicing skills can become meaningful when, for example, scissor skills are learned and practiced by snipping hundreds of rainbow colored strips of construction paper and then using them to make a rainbow. Later, "children of the world" can be added to the rainbow to create a mural (see photo below).

Murals

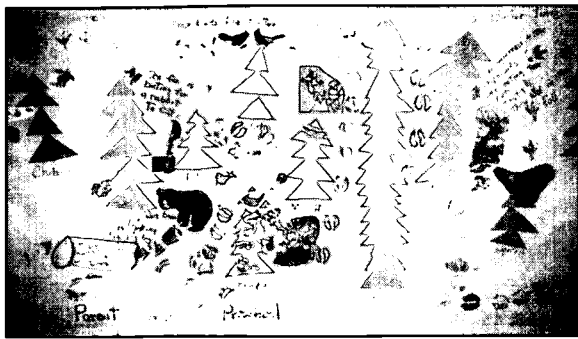
In my classroom, the rainbow mural helped to launch the theme "We are alike, We are different, We are children of the world." The art was easily and effectively integrated into books, songs, games and activities that started first with "ourselves" and then branched out to the family, community, and then finally the world. For example, in the beginning the art was simple and focused on the children themselves. The children made a family book with photos of their families. Then they built construction paper houses and glued family photos in the windows. Then the houses were combined to create a neighborhood. Adding other important places to the growing mural such as nursery school, the library and the police station extended the family neighborhood into the larger community. Thinking beyond the community may be difficult for preschool aged children but there are many wonderful resources to help young children consider the world beyond their own backyard. Art can be a springboard for this kind of discovery.

Learning about their bodies is also a fun and educational topic for young children and lends itself to many creative art possibilities. Children can learn about their bodies by using their bodies to finger-paint or make footprints. They can draw outlines of each other's bodies. At the end of the year I have had my students create a friendship mural (see photo on page 16) consisting of a self-portrait of each child from their level of skill development and from their perception of self.

Murals provide an excellent opportunity to involve children of varying interests and abilities in the process of art. Murals allow children to work at their own interest and skill level. Some children will spend hours on the mural while others will move on to other activities after just a few minutes. However, all of the artists will feel a sense of accomplishment despite their level of involvement. A mural made in the winter of green triangle trees, cut out animals of the winter forest and potato prints of animal footprints through the snow is an excellent example of a mural in which all participate and learn from each other (see photo 19-a). The green triangles must touch to make a



(a)



(b)



constructed using a sand modeling dough that dries and will not crumble (see recipe). Small boxes and paper tubes were used to construct 3-dimensional castles, where attention had to be given to balance and design as well as making it all stick together (see photo 19-c). Using the castle theme, art was fully integrated into the curriculum.

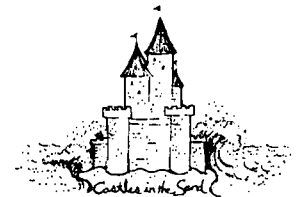
Art at Home

The early childhood classroom should certainly offer a variety of art materials to young children but the learning and exploration shouldn't stop when the child leaves school. Home should be an extension of school. At home, children should have their own tool box of crayons, markers, pencils, tape, glue stick, paste, paper punch, stapler, and scissors.

Homemade "creative activity kits" stored in jumbo zippered plastic bags could include common household items such as paper plates, paper cups, cotton balls, Popsicle™ sticks, yarn, feathers, and stickers. These kits could be offered one at a time to encourage a child's artistic expression.

Communicating About Art

When your child brings art home from school or creates something at home use the opportunity to talk about their work! Remember to ask open-ended questions and use non-judgmental language with your children. Instead of asking, "Do you want to paint?" let your child know "Bright paints are here for you to use." Don't command your child to "Paint a nice picture for Mommy." Rather encourage them to "see what the paint brush can do on the paper." It is helpful to avoid



SAND DOH RECIPES

There are many variations of this recipe, all with favorable results:

Version 1

- 6 cups sand
- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup water

• Mix well.

• Model and air dry.

Version 2

- 1 cup sand
- 1/2 cup cornstarch
- 3/4 cup hot water

• Cook over medium heat, stirring until thick. Model and dry. (This is the sturdiest of the recipes)

Version 3

- 4 cups sawdust
- 3 cups liquid starch

• Mix well.

• Model and air dry.

Version 4

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup Plaster of Paris
- 1/2 cup dry wheat paste
- 2 cups sawdust

• Mix well.

• Model and air dry.

complete tree. The footprints have to go in a linear line (not just random printing). After the mural is completed, the children are invited to tell their teachers and parents all about it. They can share what they have learned from books, songs, and their play time that adds meaning to their mural.

Another mural arose out of an interest in castles (see photo 19-b). Each child put up a gray paper "rock" being careful to connect it and make sure the castle walls would not "fall down." Pictures of knights, kings and queens, and other castle folk were cut out from catalogues or drawn by the children and posted on the mural. Castles were built in the block area. Collage castles were pasted at the art tables using pre-cut shapes of paper. And, of course, sandcastles were created in the sand table. Permanent sandcastles were



Holiday Art

Most young children are over-stimulated at holiday times. Keep artwork simple. Do not make arts and crafts more complicated to achieve results that will please the adults. There is, however, a need in our lives for tradition, and there is a comfort in the regular use of holiday symbols and motifs. But please don't stress the children with intricate trinkets!

- value judgments such as, "That is pretty."
- Perhaps, in your child's mind, the snake or mud pie they created was not meant to be pretty. Children are smart – maybe it truly is NOT pretty in their minds. Do not praise, rather encourage your child. Offer realistic and meaningful comments such as "You really enjoyed using a lot of purple," or "I like all those spots and lines you made. Look how they fit together". In general, try to comment on what you see and praise the effort more than the result.

- Listen for clues as to what your child is thinking as he or she is working. Children often talk to themselves or others as they create. You may request the child to "Tell me about it" but do not insist on an answer. It is important to avoid asking, "What is it?" A word of caution: Do not read too much into what a child has done. Perhaps the child's painting is all black because black paint was the closest jar to the child, and remember that realistic use of color happens later in a child's development. Finally, display your child's art. It's a wonderful way to say, "I value my child's efforts."

The Home Art Gallery

- Although at times the amount of art coming home can be overwhelming it is discouraging (to both child and teacher) to deposit the slightly crumpled messy paintings into the wastebasket. No matter what the creation looks like, be assured that your child had an exciting and

wonderful learning experience in the process of making it. Your response will affect the way your child looks at art in the future, so be positive about the creations that come home in your child's schoolbag. Here are some ideas to prevent art overload:

- Cut and laminate paintings and drawings into book marks
- Recycle into very personalized gift wrap
- Share the wealth; send it to relatives
- Use as stationery
- Cover with contact paper and use as place mats
- Use a large picture frame and hang as "pictures of the week"
- Start a scrapbook of artwork. (One parent took photos of large items and put the photos in a scrapbook)
- String a clothesline and hang the artwork up
- Have special pieces professionally framed and give as keepsake gifts or display in your home

Most of the young artists in our homes and classrooms will not become professional artists. They certainly do not need to learn how to paint perfectly or master the art of ceramics. However, all children will benefit from the opportunity to manipulate and use materials as they choose. As children are engaged in art that values the process rather than the end product, they develop confidence, competence, and most importantly, creativity.



Young Children's Art AGES & STAGES

Ages and Stages

A child's growth and development plays a major factor in his or her experience of art. When children arrive at the stage of drawing representational forms it is interesting to note that they draw what they know and not what they see. Color is not important to them. Objects are arranged randomly. Children do not intuitively know which end of a sheet of paper is up or down. If left to their own devices children would not draw imitations of the representational world until about age 5. Drawing would be organic and rhythmic, full of curves, circles, lines and radii. Parents and early childhood educators should be respectful of children's artistic representations, understanding that their development affects not only how they see the world but how they "picture" the world as well.



TWO-YEAR OLDS

Most two year olds fall into the random/disordered scribbling stage, characterized by the following behaviors:

- lack of motor control and eye-hand coordination
- scribbling for the pure physical sensation of the movement
- lack of direction or purpose for the marks being made
- no mental connection made between own movement and marks on the page

THREE-YEAR OLDS

Many three year olds fall into the controlled scribbling stage, characterized by these behaviors:

- improved motor control and eye-hand coordination
- scribbling with control
- interest in exploring and manipulating materials
- repetition of actions and discovery of what such actions cause to happen
- makes marks with a purpose, not by chance

FOUR-YEAR OLDS

After the discovery of making marks on purpose, children enter the basic-forms stage, demonstrating the following behaviors:

- more developed motor control and eye-hand coordination
- enjoys mastery over line
- masters the basic forms of circle, square, oval and rectangle
- makes a definite connection between own movements and marks on page

FIVE-YEAR OLDS

Most fives fall into the pictorial or first-drawing stage, demonstrating these behaviors:

- control over direction and size of line
- advanced motor control and eye-hand coordination
- ability to combine basic forms to create first symbols/pictures
- uses art to express personality and relationship to symbol/picture
- able to communicate ideas and feelings through drawing and other art forms
- ability to name artwork as a form of true communication

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Picture Books for Pre-Reading



*This article was originally published in **Offspring's** Spring 1979 issue. We present it in this anniversary issue to illustrate how so many of the topics from the past remain not only relevant as early childhood issues today, but imperative enough to be the theme of this year's MCCN conference.*

Picture books constitute a part of literature that has been given much attention over the last ten to fifteen years. Basically these are books which depend on pictures for the full enjoyment of the story. They can be totally wordless, or contain some supportive text. Usually the story cannot be enjoyed without the pictures. These books can be used effectively in the home or in a preschool facility to prepare children for reading.

Reading is a complex process. However, reading can develop naturally in children when informed adults use picture books to advantage. Through picture books, children learn to appreciate what books are for, learn to handle books, select important elements from the pictured array, identify familiar printed elements, contribute their own language for the story, interpret what is encountered visually, and predict what might occur

next. All of these contribute to eventual success in reading. Let's examine several of these ideas and the ways in which adults can help young children arrive at such skills...

Every child needs to be comfortable with books. Every child needs to know how books are handled. Lap reading or side-by-side reading (everyone facing the book) affords parents or teachers an opportunity to develop both. Several strategies are useful here.

1. Hand the book to the child. Talk about the cover. Decide whether or not the book is right side up.
2. Allow the child to open the book. Use the turning of pages to teach directionality. Point to where you are going to read upon turning a page.

About the Author

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By

Jane A.
Romatowski.
Ph.D.

“When it comes to pre-reading experiences, the world of picture books has much to offer. Such books can sharpen perceptual skills, build language experiences, and provide an interest in and curiosity about books in general.”

1. The series of books by Mercer Mayer such as *Frog, Where Are You?*, *A Boy, A Dog, and A Frog*, and *Mine*.
2. Martha Alexander’s books such as *Bobo’s Dream*, and *Out! Out! Out!*

These books present a marvelous opportunity for oral language development and vocabulary building – both significant to success in reading.

Those picture books which are supplemented with a story in print can also contribute significantly to pre-reading experiences. When the text is repetitive or predictable, or both, it becomes an occasion for relating to print in a highly successful manner. In a book such as *Fortunately*, by Remy Charlip, the picture is a clue to the pattern in print. The colorful pages always begin with “Fortunately,” and the grey-white pages always begin with “Unfortunately.” After a few pages, most young listeners catch on to the pattern and begin to “read” along with the adult. Such books are sometimes referred to as pattern books because of their predictable, repetitive text. Some “fun” books in this category are listed below.

1. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*
by Bill Martin, Jr.
2. *Goodnight Moon*
by Margaret Wise Brown
3. *The Important Book*
by Margaret Wise Brown



While sorting through the *Offspring* photo archives, we ran across this very appropriate photo from 1959 of Jean N. Hillman’s children (see her article on page 16).

These books usually generate much interest and ask to be read. Indeed, they should be re-read more than once and the young child should be encouraged to participate along with the adult reader. The rhythm of the language, pitch, intonation, etc. can all be learned in such natural settings. Following the reading of any book, encourage conversation about the book, the characters, the story, or the pictures. Care must be exercised to avoid giving the impression of chief examiner. “What was your favorite picture? Let’s see it again. Can you find it?” “Who did you like the best? Why?” are appropriate questions. Browsing through a book after reading it can present some solid educational opportunities.

When it comes to pre-reading experiences, the world of picture books has much to offer. Such books can sharpen perceptual skills, build language experiences, and provide an interest in and curiosity about books in general. The fact that “reading” together also allows for a warm relationship to develop between an adult and a child is “frosting on the cake.” For all these reasons, we ought not to neglect picture books as a rich educational resource.



This regular feature is a series designed to keep parents and educators
One Step Ahead regarding early childhood education, research, and purposeful parenting.

Reasons to Read to Your Child...

- ♥ Because reading allows you and your child time together, holding them, giving them your attention helps them know you love them.
- ♥ Because books are one way of passing on your moral values to your child. Readers learn how to put themselves in other's shoes.
- ♥ Because today's children's books are so good they are fun for the whole family – mom and dad included! (How else could a children's book like *Harry Potter* last for months on the bestseller list!)
- ♥ Because many children's books' illustrations have received prestigious awards, offering your child a trip to the art institute every evening before bed!
- ♥ Because every teacher and librarian your child meets will thank you.
- ♥ Because for that short space of time your house will stay clean and quiet.
- ♥ Because reading to children encourages them to become readers.
- ♥ Because when your child becomes a reader, you'll be able to read in peace again.

Excerpted from the Livonia Public Schools Kindergarten Parent Orientation

Becoming R.E.A.D.Y. – Free Reading Readiness Kits for Michigan Families!

On August 26, 1998 multiple institutions of the State of Michigan formally recognized the impact of reading and the influence of early learning on the overall development and positive outcome of our children.

As a result, a collaborative effort between the government of the State of Michigan, the Michigan Department of Education, the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children, several leading hospitals, a variety of corporate sponsors, and the public engagement campaign "I Am Your Child" announced the inception and first phase of a multi-phase roll-out of a new program entitled R.E.A.D.Y.! Read, Educate, and Develop Youth (R.E.A.D.Y.!) is a reading readiness kit developed to encourage families to read to their children beginning at birth. The intent of the program is to provide a R.E.A.D.Y.! kit for every family with children from birth through age four so that the children of Michigan can have the earliest start possible on learning. The kits contents are based on recent research documenting the significance of early brain development and the importance of enhancing young children's worlds with reading and interaction with their parents. The kits contain an age appropriate book, a video, a music cassette or CD, and valuable information regarding child development and activities for families.

**Call today to receive this free of charge service to the families of Michigan!
Call 1-877- 997-3239. Keep your eyes and ears open for information about how
you can optimize your child's learning potential and don't forget to
read, read, read with your kids!**

**One Step Ahead: 
Reasons to Read to Your Child**

Offspring Reference Guide: An Anniversary Abstract

Listed below is a synopsis of the articles and authors that have graced the pages of *Offspring*, from the first issue in 1959 up through 1999. Happy Anniversary, *Offspring*!

OFFSPRING REFERENCE GUIDE

OCTOBER, 1959

Cooperatives Defined	Carolyn Hawkins
Projects in the Nursery Program, Yes/No?	Esther Callard
What the Detroit Council Offers	Marlynn Rosenthal
The Mother as Teacher Assistant	Mr. Eugene Hoiby, Mrs. Wm. McAninch
Meet the State Council	Marjorie Kunz
Teacher News	Dorothy Warrick

APRIL, 1960

Parent Cooperatives Today	Dr. Katherine Whiteside Taylor
Why You Support The Michigan Council Of Cooperative Nurseries	Agnes Scott
Setting Limits with Preschoolers	Dr. William Morse, M. Jane Schwertfeger
The Differences Between Nursery Schools and Kindergarten	Maxine Nordquist
Program Aids: Movies	Esther Middlewood
Nurseries-Plus or Minus? Evaluating Your Nursery	Nellita Fithian, Helen Parks
Book Review: Room for One More	Mrs. Mason DeCamillis

OCTOBER, 1960

Effective Teacher-Parent Relations	Dr. James Hymes
Individual Versus Group Needs: An Artificial Dichotomy	Esther Callard
Editorial	Eleanor Gibson
A Challenge to Teachers The Post Session Conference	Dr. William H. Marshall
Equipment You Can Make For Nursery School... For Home	Judith Cantor
Principles of Adult Programming	Judith Cantor
Program Aids: Workshops	
Cooperative International	

APRIL, 1961

Space Needed for Human Differences	Flo Gould, Richard K. Kerchhoff
The Meaning of Play for the Child	Annemarie Raeper
Father, Kids and Co-ops	Shirley and Bill Finn
The Teacher in a Co-op	Minnie Perrin Berson
The Pillar of Adult Education... Post Session Conference	Joyce Hoiby
Program Aids: Field Trips	Betty Garlick

FALL, 1961

Meet Your Michigan Council	Agnes Scott
Adjustment to Nursery School, A Co-op Venture	Dorothy Haupt
Creative Teaching in the Light of Recent Research	Dr. Kenneth Wann
Is Your Program Too Rigid?	Dr. Norma Law
What is Effective and Wise Discipline?	Dr. David Wineman
The Teacher, The Members, The Board... Troika or Triumverate?	Val Deitch, Roz Seigal, Helen Neimark

MAY, 1962

T.L.U.C.	Dr. Glenn Hawkes
Ego Development and Nursery School	Dr. Editha Sterba
Where Now?	Esther Middlewood
Permissiveness Re-examined	Dr. Keith Osborn
Program Aid: Science in the Nursery	Mrs. Terry Denman
If You're Looking for a Teacher... ..	Dorothy Warrick
A Study of the Effects of Cooperative Nursery School Experience	Mrs. Edith King



1960



1963



1971



1983



1994

OCTOBER, 1962

Must Authority Mean Hostility?	Sara Dubo, M.D.
Simply Living Together is Not Enough	Dr. J. Clayton Lafferty
Highlights and Hazards in the Nursery	
School Curriculum	Elenora Moore
Creative Dance for the Nursery	Harriet Berg
A Nursery Checklist.....	Nellita Fithian, Helen Parks
Once Upon a Time	Carolyn Kauffman

MAY, 1963

Entertainment Media & The Fantasies	
of Childhood	Joseph Fischhoff, M.D.
A Roof Over Our Heads	Mary Frew
Money... Money... Money	Fran King
Six Films About Nursery School	
Program Aids: Arts & Crafts	Janet Carson
Individual Versus Group Needs:	
An Artificial Dichotomy	Esther Callard

FALL, 1963

The Angry Child	Dr. Jack C. Westman
Sibling Relationships Among	Morris Weiss, M.D.
Preschool Children	
A Co-op Nursery Integrates	Jeanne Barbour, Lita Zemmol, Geraldine Schreier
Much Ado About Mothers	Marjorie Kunz
Co-ops Face Their Problems	Shirley Finn, Eileen Hartley
Why Creative Drama?	Lynne Brooks Finn

MAY, 1964

Prejudice Doesn't Come Naturally	Margaret H. Bacon
Dear Parents-Thoughts from a Child	
Psychiatrist	Ralph D. Rabinovitch, M. D.
Responsibility Child-Size	Sister Mary, I.H.M.
A Child Speaks to His Parents	Anonymous
Wonderful Children-They Learn to Speak	Muriel Potter Langman
Nailing Down the Job of the Board	Mrs. Doris Schuchter
Program Aids: Music In the Nursery	Jennie Laehn

FALL, 1964

In the Looking Glass:	
Reflections on Self Image	Stuart Finch, M.D.
For The Teacher	Dr. Marjorie Sanger
Orchids to the Parents	Mrs. R. Edward Dowdy
Values for an Uncertain Future	Esther Middlewood
Program Aids: Big Muscle Act	Dr. R. Luby
Children And Sex	Wallace F. Watts
Editorial: On Human Dignity	Marilynn Rosenthal

MAY, 1965

How Much Structure in Nursery School?	Patricia Rowe Webster
Russian Nursery Schools	Dr. Helen B. Redl
Violence in Children's Play	Dr. Wm. Wattenberg
Creating Stories: Learning, Discovery,	
Delight	Claudia Lewis
Orientation: With a Broadway Touch	Caroline Kauffman
Research - Light On: Predictions of	
Delinquency	Dr. Esther Callard

SUMMER, 1965 - 5TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Space Needed for Human Differences*	Flo Gould, Richard K. Kerckhoff
The Angry Child*	Dr. Jack C. Westman
Creative Teaching*	Dr. Kenneth Wann
What is Effective and Wise Discipline*	Dr. David Wineman
Entertainment Media and the Fantasies	
Of Childhood*	Joseph Fischhoff, M.D.
Sibling Relationships Among Preschool	
Children*	Dr. Morris Weiss
The Individual Versus Group Needs:	
An Artificial Dichotomy*	Esther Callard
Dear Parents - Thought from a Child	
Psychiatrist*	Dr. Ralph D. Rabinovitch *reprint articles

FALL, 1965

Shall Preschoolers Read or Play?	Dr. Walter L. Hodges, Dr. Boyd McCandless
New Zealand Co-op Nurseries	Dr. Katherine Whiteside Taylor
Questions Parents Ask	Dr. John Collins, Marylene Schneider
Which Preschool for My Child?	Helena Guernsey
Something from Nothing	Freda Harrington
Research - Light On: Children of Poverty	Dr. Esther Callard

MAY, 1966

The Sleep of Young Children	Emma N. Plank, Eleanor H. Payne
Fostering Independence	Dr. Charles W. Davenport
A Pedagogical Cartoon Frenetic Fours	Barbara Ganz, Pete Mangiaracina
Danger in the Home	Detroit Junior League
What's Cooking	Jennie Laehn
Delray: A Different Kind of Nursery	Shirley Daly, Shirley Finn

NOVEMBER, 1966

The Sexual Curiosity of Preschoolers	Rosalind M. Sands, Hilda Fischman
The Year of the Workbench	Shirley Daly
Oh, That's Child Play	Dr. William C. Miller
Mothers in the Nursery	Ann Linn
A Co-op in Alaska	Winifred Madsen

APRIL, 1967

See How They Grow	Dr. Nancy E. Curry
Creative Puppetry	Barbara Ganz
Questions Parents Ask about Kindergarten	Louise Hammer, Marylene Schneider
Looking Ahead	Esther Middlewood
Editorial: America's Overprivileged Children ..	Marilynn Rosenthal

WINTER, 1967

Creativity: Turning the Kids On	E. Paul Torrance
Discipline with Freedom in the Space Age	R. F. Briggs, M.D.
The Taming of the Shrews	Joanne Coates
Adult Book Review: The Russian Spock	Joseph Fischhoff, M.D.
Water Play	Laura Shell

MARCH, 1968

A New View of Family Ethics	Frank D. Gentile
Play: A Way of Life	Jack C. Westman, M.D.
Children & Animals: A Photo Study	Donna Harris, Doug Moore
Adult Book Review: Teacher	Dr. John G. Chantiny
Editorial: Some Arguments against	
Early Learning	Marilynn Rosenthal
The Nursery School Teacher as an Influence ..	Dr. Bernard A. O'Brien, Dr. James Pancrazio
What's Outside?	Katherine Limperis Koulouras as told to Shirley Daly

FALL, 1968

Meanings of Death to Young Children	Walter N. J. Connor, Ph.D., Paul L. Doerring, Ph.D.
The Center of A Dream	Mary Lou Rose
All The World Is A Stage	Margarethe Wiest
Adult Book Review: Between Parent and Child	Isabel Francis Smith
Preschoolers Can Experiment with Electricity	Jess-Elizabeth Pinch
Editorial	Marilynn Rosenthal

SPRING-SUMMER, 1969

Preschool Programs for the Disadvantaged	Sidney W. Graber, Ed.D.
Some Thoughts on the Montessori Method	Emma N. Plank
A Book Review: Are You Going to Teach Today, Momma?	Shirley Daly
Teasing or Testing?	Luella M. Lutz
Research: Light On: Reinforcement Theory in the Nursery School	Esther Callard, Ph.D.
An Art Program for the Nursery School	Barbara Ganz
A Preschool Observation Class	Helena H. Guernsey

FALL-WINTER, 1969

The "Hyperkinetic" Child	Joseph Fischhoff, M.D.
To Live Is To Dance	Anna S. Fulton
Christmas in the Nursery	Ruth Bogdanoff
Can Television Really Teach?	Edward L. Palmer
Adult Book Review: Between Parent and Teenager	Haim Ginott
Guest Editorial: A Declaration of Faith in Play	Jeff Callard

SPRING-SUMMER, 1970

The Cooperative Nursery - Stepping Stones to Fulfillment	Esther Middlewood
Audio-Visual Materials-YES!	Joan Buchele, Virginia Hunt
Big Muscle Activity	Robert R. Luby Ph.D.
"What's the Matter with that Kid?"	Rene Cummins
Early Metamorphosis	Winnifred Anderson

FALL-WINTER, 1970

Nursery Schools in England	Robert J. Fisher
Opinion: "My Nursery is Over-Equipped"	Annette Jecker
Early Language Development	Bertha Beye Mathews
Playing Games with Preschoolers	Jean Nichols Hillman

SPRING-SUMMER, 1971

Education for Young Children: Looking Ahead to the 80's	Vera Borosage
Science, You and the Young Child	Marian L. Blake
Exploring the World of Science: Some Suggested Activities	Marian L. Blake

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Imagination in Childhood	Joseph Fischhoff, M.D.
Art Experiences in the Nursery	Alva Dworkin
A Special School for Special Children	Jane Schwertfeger
It's Just A Stage (Or Is It?)	Jo Marie Nardi
Noise in the Nursery	Barbara McCornack

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Education in Infancy	Esther Callard, Barbara McCornack
Changing Styles for Children's Living	Esther Middlewood
Getting It All Together In The Cooperative Nursery	Barbara Ganz
From A Bag of Stones: Some Surprises	Gretchen Wiest
A Poem	Walter Leikett

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Squabbles	Shirley Daly
Let Him Express Himself!	John Heidtke
What's Cooking	Jennie Laehn
Sand Play	Friends of Perry Nursery Scho
Playing with Ideas: The Role Play in the Development of Thought	Doris Sponseller
Guest Editorial: Cooperative Nurseries Can Influence Public Education	Alice Whiren

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The Lost Child	Mary Sullivan
Opinion	Audrey Bassett
Don't Get Hooked on Excitement	Ed. Resources Info Center, Urbana, IL
Finger Painting	Pamela Huth
Umbrellas	Ruth Wheldon
Letters to a Teacher	Jeff Callard
Does TV Violence Really Affect Kids?	Ed. Resources Info Center, Urbana, IL

FALL-WINTER, 1973

Young Children: Learning Through Living	Erma Fishhaut
A Food Center Approach to Nursery Snacks ..	Dorothy Komarny
From Donna's Sketchbook	Donna R. Holman
The Preschool and Open Education	Leah Adams
Let Them Play Batman	Barbara McCornack

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Ready for Kindergarten?	Elenora Moore
Creative Movement	Carol Halsted
The Plight of the Early Childhood Educator ...	Florence P. Foster
Music in the Nursery	Shirely Daly
Outdoor Play	Barbara Ganz

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Children and Illness	Joseph Fischhoff, M.D.
British Infant Schools	Judith Williston
Relatives are Relevant	Catherine Byrnes
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Teacher Machines	Jeanette Myers
Why Do They Do That?	Jeff Callard

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The New Zealand Play Center	Ailsa Densem
Orientation with a Broadway Touch	Carolyn Kauffman
The People's Republic of China: Children Today	Esther Callard, Ph.D. Who's
Minding the Children? A Discussion Of Margaret O'Brien Steinfelds' Book	Marilynn Rosenthal
To My Daughter's Nursery Teacher	Jaymee Seidel
Music: A Full Scale Operation	Susan Kaiser

FALL-WINTER, 1975 - 15TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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Creativity: Turning the Kids On*	E. Paul Torrance
The Frenetic Fours*	Barbara Ganz, Pete Mangiaracina
Tender Loving Understanding Care	Glen Hawkes, Ph.D.
The Lost Child*	Mary Sullivan
Much Ado About Mothers*	Marjorie Kunz
Teasing or Testing?*	Luella M. Lutz
What is Outside?*	Katherine L. Koulouras as told to Shirley Daly
A Declaration of Faith in Play*	Jeff Callard

*reprint articles

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The Art of Perceiving	Edward M. Jacomo
Two Generation Creativity	Kaye Rittinger
TV Cops and Kids: An Opinion	Richard P. Rubens
The Meaning of Play to the Child	Annemarie Roeper
Simply Living Together is Not Enough*	F. Clayton Lafferty
Design for Outside Play	Beverly Eubanks
Last Tango in Saginaw	Susie Knedlik

*reprint article

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Autonomy	Don Rapp
Alphabet for a Teacher	Anne Linn
Adopt a Tree	Barbara McCornack
So Your Kids Fight Too!	Pat Zipper
Helena Remembers	Helena H. Guernsey
A Co-op Nursery Reaches Out	Helen R. Barlett
Poison Prevention	Merylene Schneider

SPRING-SUMMER, 1977

Sex Role Stereotypes	Barbara McCornack
Thoughts on Child Abuse	Ceresnie, Starr, Fischhoff
A Haptic Approach	Yvonne Wilson, M.S.
Public Act 143	Mary Koch
Peace Education for Preschoolers	Maryellen Hadjisky
Developmental Discipline	Doris Sponseller
The Learning Process: The Child and the Teacher	Judith Williston

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A Piece of the Action	Sue Whitney
Young Gifted Children	Annemarie Roeper
Answer for a Daughter	Judith Lindenau
Novi's Nomadic Nursery	Alva Dworkin, Lane Norton
Planning for Change	Sharon Elliott, Tommy Evans-Lee, Hildegard Weems
Reflections from a President's Husband	William G. Sharffe
It's All Right to Cry	Shirley Daly
Guest Editorial: Focus on the Family	Lois A. Lund

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Helping Your Child Grow Up	Don E. Hamachek
Food for Thought	Joanna S. Nesselroad
Dramatic Play	Sharon Elliott
Understanding Aggressive Behavior in Young Children	Alice Whiren
Thus a Child Learns	Frederick J. Moffitt
Motionality	Lilo Fauman

FALL-WINTER, 1978

Imaginary Play Companions	Violet Kalyan Masih, Ph.D.
Happy Holidays	Kathryn Madera Miller
Little Ones and Art	Blythe Whalen
The Assertive Child	Mary Sutherland
The Rights of the Child	U.N. Declaration
Developing a Non-Sexist Environment	David L. Giveans
Dear Parents	Evelyn Peterson

SPRING-SUMMER, 1979

The Manly (?) Art of Getting Dirty	Arthur Orme
Preschoolers, Piaget and You	Sister Lenora Carmody, Sister Teresa Houlihan
Picture Books for Pre-Reading	Jane A. Romatowski
It's Summer! What Are We Going to Do?	Janet Webster Jones
Body Building	Linda Masser
Should They Run Before They Walk? Laying Foundations for Skill Development	Shirley Shaw
Mrs. Jones, Your Child is Not Ready For School	Carol Dean, Barbara Eckfeld

FALL-WINTER, 1979

Ricky Goes to School	Bernice Filer Blamer
Some Observations on Toys	Werner Liedtke
Yoga for Kids	Hattie Peraino
Cooperation and Competition	Irma Galejs, Dahlia F. Stockdale
A Book Review: Don't Move the Muffin Tins ...	David L. Giviens
The Effects of TV on Children: Let's Take Control	Julia A. Carroll
Mental Health	Barbara Billebeck

SPRING-SUMMER, 1980

Children... China's Treasures	Judith Williston
If This is Nature... There Must be Snakes!	Teri Littrell
Handicapped Children in Your Preschool	Anne Cairns-Federlein
Fitness for Children	Charles T. Kuntzleman
Imaginative Play Themes: The Teacher's Role	James E. Johnson, Virginia Newman
Picture Books: An Annotated List	Jane M. Bingham

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Working on Working Together	Phyllis Ivory Vroom
Footsteps: A Review	Cathie Breidenbach
The Young Child's Use of Space	Barbara McCornack
Gifted Children	Thom Buescher
Stimulating Speech	Patricia L. Weston
What is Old?	Joan Weisman
Burn Prevention for Children	Claudella Jones, R.N., Irving Feller, M.D.

SPRING-SUMMER, 1981

Physical Punishment: Fantasy, Facts and Frustration	Robert J. Green
Opinion: Changing Expectations	Stephanie Riley
The Well Being of China's Children	R. Elaine Found, Judith Williston
Art: A Reflection	Sally Van Luwen
Fantasy Play: Acting Out Stories	Virginia Newman, James E. Johnson
Planning with Literature: A Developmental Model	Rosalind E. Engel

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Cooperation and Competition*	Irma Falejs, Dahlia F. Stockdale

What is a Cooperative Nursery to You?

A Piece of the Action*	Sue Whitney
What is Old?*	Joan Weisman
The Learning Process: The Child and the Teacher*	Judith Williston

*reprint articles

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Discipline: Prevention not Punishment	Dan Hodgins
The Impact of Development on Children's Behavior	Marjorie Kostelnik, Ph.D.
Play - More Than Just a Game	Gregory E. Bell
Intergenerational Education: Building Between Young and Old	Patrick Ginnane
Book Review: The Coming Parent Revolution	Susan Raccoli
Editorial	Susan Raccoli, Kaye Rittinger

1982: NO. 2

Field Trips and Resource People- Stimuli to Learning through Play	Janice Dulin
Field Trips... Just Around the Corner!	Margaret Leitch Copeland, Ed.D.
Planning for Troubled Children in the Co-op Program	Sharon Elliott, Ed.D.
Sign Language. More Than a Language	Ellison Horne
When Not to Help: Promoting Independence in Preschool Children	Anne K. Soderman, Ph.D.
Book Review: The Disappearance of Childhood	Susan Raccoll

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Questions Parents Ask... Talking About Sex with a Preschool Child	Mary W. Paonessa
Singing: Baby Steps Toward Musical Literacy	Susan Raccoll
Common Sense and Parenting	John R. Bernardo
Speaking, Listening, Being Understood and Understanding Others	Verna Hildebrand
But Why Do Young Children Write?	Thomas M. Buescher
Look Around You	Barbara Malcolm French

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De-Stressing Children: Wellness for Children	F. Paul Pearsall
A China Experience	Barbara Schuster
How to Encourage Language Growth In Your Preschooler	Ellen M. Wahi
Sound and Silence: Their Importance During Preschool Storytime	Nancy Schmalz
Some Thoughts on Nutrition For The Preschooler	Roxanne Claus
The Late, Late Show	Susan Raccoll
Parent Discussion Series	Betty Garlick

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So Don't Punch! An Interview with Louise Bates Ames	Susan Raccoll
You Aren't Shy	William L. Coleman
Spotlight on Research	Dorothy M. Komarmy
Treats without Guilt	Susan Raccoll
Help on the Horizon	Elizabeth Emerson
Simple Outdoor Hikes	Kaye Rittinger
Co-op Programming and Why	Sheryl Pulley
Parent Discussion Series	Betty Garlick
Emergency Dental First Aid	

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Play is Hard Work	Jeanne E. Brown
Learning Through Play: Good Games Can Guide	Elisabeth Beaujot, Linda A. Smith
The Importance of "Doing Nothing"	Polly McVickar
Waterless Wonderland	Yvonne Albright
More Treats Without Guilt, Plus One for the Guilty	Susan Raccoll
The Three C's of Successful Parenting	Hazel Miller Karbel
Parenting Discussion Series	Betty Garlick
Surviving in the Supermarket	

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Hurry Now, Pay Later: An Interview with David Elkind	Susan Raccoll
Developmental Kindergarten: A Time to Grow	DiAnne M. Pellerin
A Young Five Program: Another Option	Sally Moss, Marion Wehner
Parent Discussion Series	Donna Howe
Come On - Buckle Up!	Michigan Office of Highway Safety Planning
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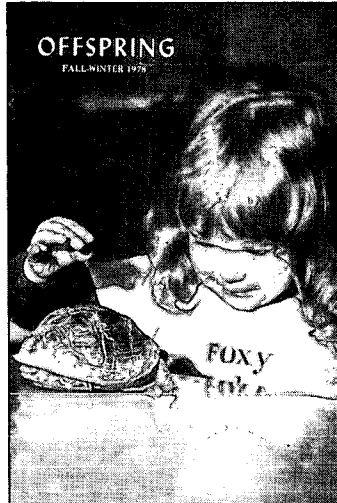


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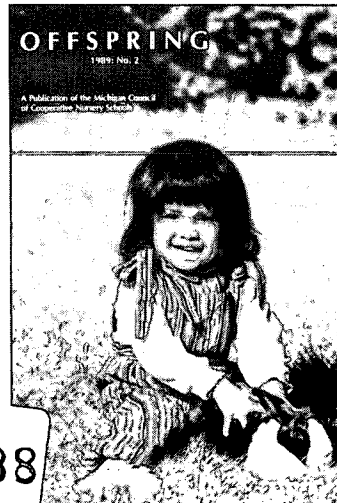
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Offspring is written for parents, teachers and others:

- ❖ To provide a forum for views on dealing with young children
- ❖ To express a variety of ideas
- ❖ To promote the co-op philosophy
- ❖ To enhance our relationships with children and each other

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Growing Cooperatively: One Family's Story

By
Suzanne
Arnold



This photo appeared in the original 1988 article.



This photo is from 1998, 10 years later, and the easel hasn't changed a bit!

Now in its 41st year, *Offspring Magazine* has a treasure-trove of articles worth reprinting. This article originally appeared in 1988 yet we're certain you'll agree... easels haven't changed much, and neither have we!

One of the best decisions I ever made as a parent was to enroll my children in Cooperative Nursery School. As a young parent in a new community, I asked a friend for advice as to an appropriate pre-school for my three-year-old. At that time I had no idea how much her suggestion would mean to myself and my family.

Like most new parents, I had done some reading about parenting, but the cooperative pre-school is what really shaped my philosophy of child rearing. The nursery experience helped me learn about children through participation, observation, example, and educational opportunities. Instead of reading stereotyped accounts of various ages and stages, I could see for myself and get a much more objective view of what childhood is all about.

Each of my children has special memories of nursery events we shared. When my husband and I were involved in their "school" experiences, we learned how to help them by giving them the chance to explore and inquire at their own pace and according to their own interests. We could see that although all children do not grow at the same rate, they each progress when their body and minds are ready.

The "always available" easel is a good example. When Keri, my eldest, started nursery, I couldn't wait for her to produce a "work of art," but the more I coaxed, the less interested she was in painting. When she finally succumbed to my not-so-subtle hints, the results were less than fantastic. I discovered that she was not much interested in producing a work

About the Author

Suzanne Arnold is a former Chairman of the Flushing Parent-Child Nursery School, which she attended with her three daughters. She is now a first grade teacher in Atlanta, Georgia.

of art. What she liked to do was mix up the colors or try to cover the whole paper with thick, gooey poster paint. Fortunately, the teacher was there to gently inform me that most children start out that way, but that as they grow and develop their artwork progresses. Sure enough, during the two years of nursery, my child did change and progress. And as time went by, I became more relaxed and less tempted to push or "teach." I was able to enjoy each of my children's development without the worry that perhaps they would never achieve the growth that I perceived as appropriate for their age.

Observing a large group of children over an extended period of time was also educational. Since children go through similar stages, we had an opportunity to preview the "coming attractions" and get some insight into dealing with our own children when they reached a particular stage or behaved in a typical manner. Some of the things I learned to accept and deal with were: separation anxiety, difficulties in sharing, temper tantrums, and shy or aggressive behavior. I found certain behavior that I was concerned about or disliked did not seem to last forever. I had a chance to observe which parental reactions seemed to have the most positive effect on children. Most importantly, I was able to be more objective and less critical of my own child. I still overreacted at times and did not handle all situations well, but I was able to accept my children and love them even when I was not pleased with their behavior. I also had confidence that the whole family would survive the difficult times if I did not turn them into power struggles.

Perhaps the strongest influence on my parenting was the example that our excellent teacher provided. She handled the most difficult situations calmly and without threats or punishment. She emphasized positive discipline and showed how you could accomplish better results by guiding a child to appropriate behavior than by punishing him or her for past transgressions. She never raised her voice and could intervene to prevent negative behavior by placing her arm around the child and gently but firmly telling the child how to handle the anger or frustration. She would say things like,

"Tell Johnny you would like the next turn on the tractor," just as the child was about to punch Johnny. The fact that she recognized his needs and told him how to express them, seemed to have a calming effect on the child.

She also emphasized the importance of following through as a tool in teaching children to trust others and thereby increasing their ability to share and accept limitations. If you told a boy you would let him know when there was space at the workbench, she made sure that you found the child and gave him the next opportunity.

She gave children a chance to prepare for changes in activities by saying things like, "In a few minutes it will be time for music," or "We will be putting the art materials away in a little while, so if you would like to make a turkey, you may do it now." I learned to respect my child's needs through these examples. She pointed out how irritated even adults get when they are involved in an activity and someone insists they "come at once."

The fourth aspect of the cooperative nursery that had a strong effect on my family was the various formal "Parent Education" activities. As members of the nursery we were required to make every effort to participate in the special parent meetings. We learned through lectures by our teacher and guest speakers, role playing, audio-visual, and informal group

"The cooperative pre-school is what really shaped my philosophy of child rearing."



“We were also encouraged to attend lectures and workshops put on by area organizations and the MCCN Conference.”

• discussions. We had a chance to discuss
• various aspects of parenting in a comfort-
• able environment with the expertise of a
• caring professional available to guide our
• thinking and interpretations.

• I'll never forget our teacher's hilarious
• example of a child's right to “own” some-
• thing. She asked us to imagine that we
• received a beautiful fur coat or a new
• Corvette for Christmas. Then she asked
• how eager we would be to share our gift
• with our best friend. Would we call and
• offer to let them use it the first week?
• That example did more to help me accept
• my child's difficulty in sharing than all
• the child rearing articles I have ever read.

• We were also encouraged to attend lec-
• tures and workshops put on by area and
• state organizations. The variety provided
• allowed parents to select the topics that
• were most beneficial to them personally.
• I have attended workshops on everything
• from “how to make healthful snacks” to
• “how to help your child accept a death in
• the family.” I have heard lectures by
• leading experts like Louise Bates Ames
• and David Elkind. The variety and quality
• of the education I have received would
• rival a lot of formal child development
• curriculums.

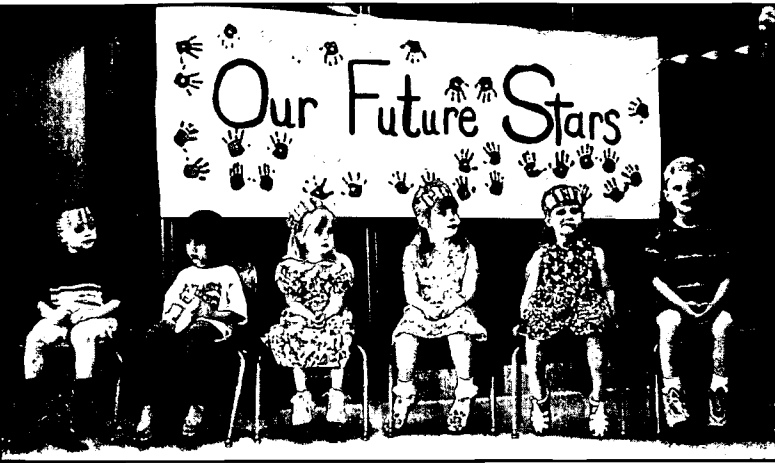
The word that best applies to our family's experience in the cooperative nursery is “nurturing.” As parents we were nurtured to develop our own interpersonal skills, and those skills enabled us to provide an accepting nurturing family for our children. We discovered that children really do learn and grow by playing. We learned that we did not have to push them to achieve, but just needed to provide a variety of experiences that were appropriate for their development.

I sometimes wonder who gained the most from our six years of “going to school together.” When I asked my children what they liked best about nursery school, they immediately recited a long list of experiences including: playing in the play house, going down the big slide, shaving (this from my twelve-year-old daughter!), putting on make-up, playing with the pretend flowers, building with the blocks. The list continued, but I do not take shorthand. Anyway, their response made me smile because I had shared those experiences with them, and I know I grew as much or more than any of them.

When my last child started kindergarten, my friends asked me if I cried when she got on the bus. I didn't, but I did cry on her last day of nursery school. The years spent together there helped us grow into the close, loving family that we are today and helped the children form the confidence and enthusiasm it takes to function in our fast-paced world.



EDITORIAL NOTE: Mark your calendar now and plan to celebrate and educate with MCCN at its 50th Annual Conference, April 27-28, 2001 in East Lansing, Michigan on the campus of Michigan State University.

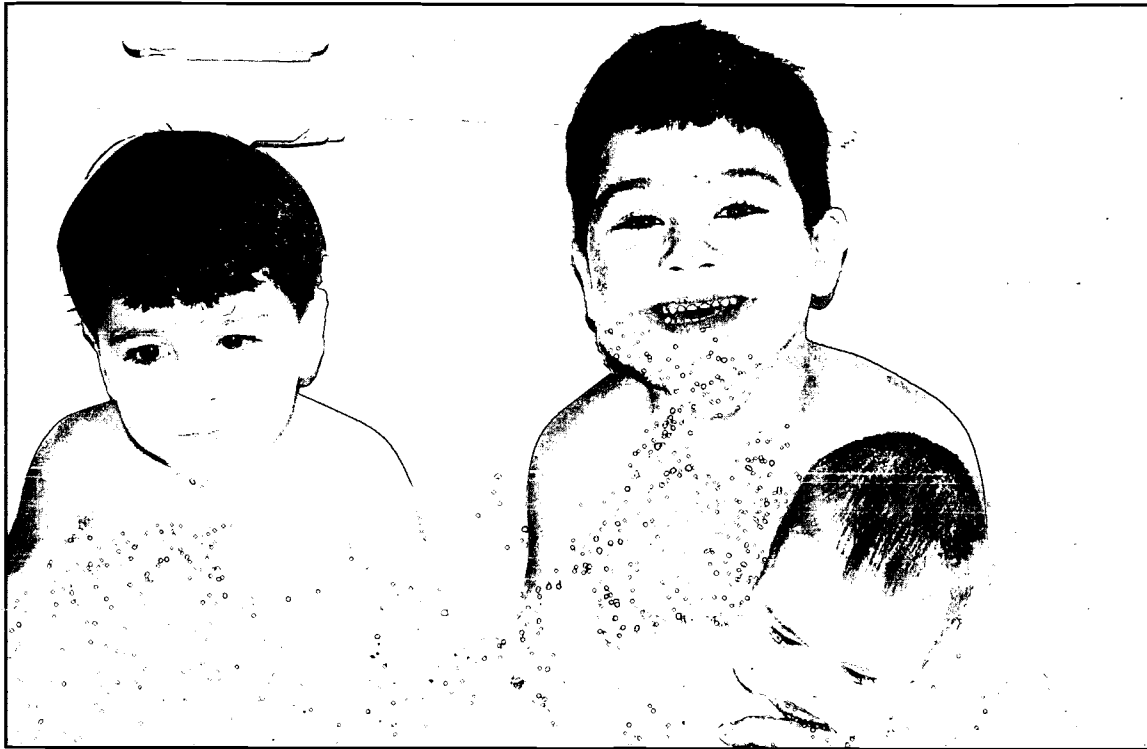


"We discovered that children really do learn and grow by playing. We learned that we did not have to push them to achieve, but just needed to provide a variety of experiences that were appropriate for their development."



Nurturing Neurology: The Family's Role in Early Brain Development

By
Mary
Margaret
Crombez,
M.Ed.



In order to understand children, it's important to understand how they work, and what makes them tick. Recently, media frenzy has surrounded the topic of early brain development. It has been the cover story of magazines, television specials (The First Years Last Forever – hosted by Rob Reiner) and the topic of several new books.

The news about the brain and the impact of the early years on its lifelong capacities is tremendous. This article was written not to encumber parents with a greater sense of responsibility but to educate parents about an issue of crucial importance. Knowledge is an empowering influence. So, rather than overwhelm you, this information should help you feel empowered to know that you are truly making a real difference in your child's life. Please know that you are already exemplary parents simply because you've made a commitment to your children and your parenting by being involved in a cooperative nursery school. This commitment, to be available and accessible to your children during the important early years of learning, will be one of the most significant investments you will ever make in your parenting career.

Recently scientists, researchers, and early childhood development and education specialists have published extensive early brain development research. Interestingly, most of the findings could have easily been discovered within the walls of co-op nursery schools. The research documented what parents and co-op nurseries have known intuitively for generations – children learn a great deal in the first years of life. And although much of the news about early brain development isn't necessarily new or innovative, one thing has become

crystal clear – early learning is critically significant to future brain development. In order to understand this connection between early learning and future brain function it is important to understand just a bit about the brain and neurological development. The first part of the human body that develops after the egg and sperm unite is the neural tube, the beginning of the neurological system. Pictures of the earliest stages of embryonic life show a large spherical shape with a tail. The sphere grows to become the brain and the tail, the spinal

About the Author

Mary Margaret Crombez, M.Ed., enjoys being a full time mommy as well as the Membership Chair for the Livonia Nursery Co-op.

column. The brain and spinal column share its tissue with only one other organ of the body, the skin. Remarkably, the tissue that connects us with the outside world, the skin, also connects us to the one thing that makes us competent, capable and aware, our brain and neurological system. This brain-skin relationship is critical throughout early development.

How the Brain Works

The brain and neurological system are made up of neurons. Initially, as an embryo, the brain produces more neurons than it could ever use. Pathways develop between the neurons to connect them so that information can be shared from neuron to neuron allowing the brain and the body to communicate information. These neuronal connections are called axons. As the little embryo sorts, stores, and utilizes information, the neurons become connected by axons. Thus, when the baby is born, it already has a solid ear-to-brain connection for its mother and father's voice because it has heard these voices over and over again and has established solid connections for these voices long before birth. Neurons that don't get connected fade and atrophy. The adage, "if you don't use it, you lose it" applies even before birth. At birth, the brain goes through another major growth spurt, readying and preparing the neurons and axons for the surge of new connections that will inevitably occur following birth. After birth, the brain continues its massive growth and requires a tremendous amount of input to guide and condition the connections between the neurons.

At birth, many connections are present. As the child grows, the density of connections multiplies exponentially. For example, the embryo's connections for the sound of mom and dad's voices multiply. The brain establishes connections for the same voices but in different ways overlapping the many sensory signals the baby perceives. The connections for the voices are now paired with the feel of the warmth of a cuddle in the parent's arms. The connections for those voices now lovingly repeat one particular word over and over again (the baby's name). And connections now pair

that voice sound with the visual appearance of who that voice comes from. Although many, many new connections are formed from minute to minute and hour to hour, during early development, the amount of space of neurological tissue remains virtually the same. The number of neurons stays fairly constant. The only real change is the number of connections created within the brain. During the first three years or so the brain makes as many connections as possible. The brain makes connections regarding the visual inputs it receives, pairs those with the auditory inputs that coincide, and then augments those connections with other connections including the emotions associated with the experience or the kinesthetic or physical activity associated with the experience. In this way, the brain receives as much information as possible so that it can do its best to interpret, understand, and respond to experiences now and in the future.

But, the connections only remain if they are utilized. Connections that do not actively receive electrical impulses, input from the world, atrophy and fade away. Therefore at birth, there are a large number of synaptic connections, by age six there are a significant number while by age fourteen, synaptic density decreases to reflect the loss of unused axons. The number of connections

"The first part of the human body that develops after the egg and sperm unite is the neural tube, the beginning of the neurological system."



“Our interactions with our kids while the windows in their brain are open can influence learning.”

- decrease as the child grows because only
- the connections that receive regular input
- survive. The connections, which have
- limited or infrequent use, are pruned
- away. This pruning process does, of
- course, reflect some amount of efficiency
- in the way the brain works, but it can
- also reflect the neglect of connections that
- could have proven useful had they only
- been utilized. We do, in fact, only use a
- small portion of our brain. Imagine what
- our potential could be if we kept
- a few more of those pathways healthy
- and active.

Windows of Opportunity

- Neural connections neglected in the early
- years disappear. Regaining those
- connections may, in many cases, be quite
- impossible. Consider, for example,
- language development. All children are
- born with the capacity to speak every
- language on earth, as long as they make
- the necessary connections in their brains.
- For example, when exposed to foreign
- language sounds young children readily
- replicate them while adults have much
- more difficulty. For these adults, the
- ability to make those sounds disappeared
- many years ago simply because they

weren't exposed to the sounds and were unable to form connections in their brains for the sounds.

Language learning highlights a very important aspect of brain function. There are certain capacities for which there are windows of opportunity. These windows are either opened or closed. Our interactions with our kids while the windows in their brain are open can influence learning. The ability to produce certain sounds falls into this category. Research has determined that a 14-year-old brain may be quite unable to replicate certain sounds if it has not been exposed to them. This information has led many school systems to alter their curriculums to adopt foreign language programs at the elementary level.

Some of the brain's learning windows remain open for long periods, others for shorter periods. But without question, the vast majority of the connections necessary for adequate function are made most efficiently during the first three years of life, and then through the next two years until age five. After the age of five, further connections may still be made, but it has been theorized that the process becomes more difficult and less efficient over time. Now that you have a knowledge base, what can you do, as a parent, to help your child's brain develop to its fullest potential?

Opportunity Abounds

As parents, we must be diligent about offering as many opportunities for learning to our children as possible, but we must also do so in a child-friendly, unhurried way. We hear so often about the child who is so busy that she misses out on the joys of childhood. Fostering healthy brain development does not require hurrying your child through advanced, accelerated learning. You'll be amazed at what the neuroscientists and early development theorists have suggested to enhance optimal brain function. I'll bet you're already doing most of it!



In order for healthy brain development to occur, and to stimulate the most neural connections, families can follow ten simple guidelines established by the *I Am Your Child* campaign. The *I Am Your Child* campaign (a public engagement campaign sponsored by the Reiner Foundation to increase public awareness of the importance of the first three years of life) has outlined a number of principles that promote healthy parent/child as well as teacher/child interactions.

Parents as well as teachers should:

- ♥ *Be warm, loving and responsive*
- ♥ *Respond to the child's cues and clues*
- ♥ *Talk, read and sing to the child*
- ♥ *Establish routines and rituals*
- ♥ *Encourage safe exploration and play*
- ♥ *Make TV watching selective*
- ♥ *Discipline with love and understanding, use discipline as an opportunity to teach*
- ♥ *Recognize that each child is unique*

Parents should:

- ♥ *Choose quality child care and stay involved*
- ♥ *Take care of yourself*

(I Am Your Child, 1997)

How do these principles promote healthy development? The complex neural networks of the brain form as a result of a child's interactions with the world. The world to a young child is an ever-growing and adapting set of relationships with other people and the experiences that those relationships bring between parent and child, child and siblings, child and teacher, child and peers and so on. For example, consider the first guideline: be warm, loving and responsive. The brain and neurological system have only one similarly constructed organ, the skin. The first and most adept mechanism for building relationships is through the sense of touch. The newborn baby soothes in its parent's loving arms. The toddler, experimenting with independence, finds security on his



mother's lap. An excited child is calmed and a distracted child focused by a gentle hand on the shoulder. This noninvasive, non-threatening interaction allows the neurological system to help the child resume more appropriate or desirable behaviors. Touch connects us but it also lays the foundation for promoting healthy brain development. The message for parents and teachers is a simple one – touch the child, human interaction is critical! Parents as well as nursery programs can positively influence brain development simply through respectful touching. Each of the 10 guidelines is similarly valuable.

“Fostering healthy brain development does not require hurrying your child through advanced, accelerated learning.”





“Touch connects us but it also lays the foundation for promoting healthy brain development.”

The following activities relate well to the guidelines and can easily be infused into your daily routines to improve your child’s early brain development, increase your responsiveness to your child, and enhance your parent-child relationship:

- ♥ *Learn to massage your child.*
- ♥ *Encourage hugging in your household.*
- ♥ *Learn to interpret your child’s engagement and disengagement cues. Or the “I’m ready and willing to do some learning right now” cues or the “I’m ready to relax now” cues.*
- ♥ *Respond as immediately as possible to your child’s needs.*
- ♥ *Communicate! Verbally, non-verbally and melodically (significant research exists to support the relationship between music/singing and enhanced thinking skills).*

The research is out; the results are in. Developing strong, healthy brain-body connections today will make all the difference in our children’s lives tomorrow. And more than anything, it is our presence in our children’s lives today that is so irreplaceable to their future tomorrow. Our presence as we touch, talk and sing to our children creates the neuronal pathways that will lead them on their way. Our work as parents and teachers during these precious early years sustains life-long connections of love, respect, and self worth and aids in the development of healthy, strong brain-body communication. Our persistence in acknowledging our children’s positive characteristics and reinforcing their growth and development will be self-evident in the years to come. So persevere with the knowledge that your support and nurturing will lead your children on a path of unparalleled fulfillment.

EDITORIAL NOTE:

A reference list for this article can be obtained by contacting the **Offspring** coordinator at nrayer@ameritech.net

Playing with language routines

- ♥ For example, when building with blocks say “up, up, up” and when they fall say “ka-Boom!” Use the same phrase each time to make it a routine.
- ♥ Repeat the same sequence of words for the same activity. Example: While folding towels say, “Fold in half, in half again, in half again,” your child will begin to associate the word “half” with the amount it represents.

Playing with communication, verbal and non-verbal

- ♥ Help your child explore communication via listening – play “red light, green light”, “Red Rover”, “Mother, May I”, or play “Directions” – have your child follow your directions to complete a task. For example, when in the tub, assign a number to the amount of scrubbing for each body part, scrub your belly five times then scrub your feet ten times.
- ♥ Help your child explore communication through observation – Play “Simon Says,” play “What’s Missing” – place 10 objects on the floor, have your child cover his eyes, remove one object, have your child identify the missing object; make this game more difficult by using alphabet, number, or shape puzzle pieces.
- ♥ Play “First Sound I Spy”- I spy with my little eye something that starts with the “k” sound (answer: a car).

Playing with communication, melodic

- ♥ Sing and dance throughout the day.
- ♥ Communicate with your children as if you were in an opera. (*Tommy the Rock Opera* works as well as *The Barber of Seville*).
- ♥ Listen to music. All forms of music are fun, be eclectic. Interested in classical for kids? Try Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, or Prokofiev’s *Peter and the Wolf*.

Playing thinking games

- ♥ Play “I spy”-using colors or shapes.
- ♥ In the evening, have your child describe what she ate all day or what she did.
- ♥ Add the emotional piece of intelligence by playing “The Emotion Game” – say, “Hello, my name is Buddy” expressing different emotions, have your child guess which emotion you’re expressing.
- ♥ At the end of the day, have your child reflect on the best thing that happened that day and the saddest thing that happened that day.

Obviously, the home is the first place to optimize early brain development but the preschool classroom is also important to our children’s future. With this in mind, learning environments should...

- Envision the care and education of young children to be respectful, needs responsive, and nurturing.
- Utilize a curriculum that addresses each of the critical areas assessed in the brain research including children’s cognitive development, social development, emotional development, physical development and communicative development.
- Encourage teachers, aids and “working parents” to be sensitive, responsive, and stimulating in the learning environment.
- Utilize a curriculum that promotes the principles for healthy interactions advocated by the *I Am Your Child* campaign.
- Encourage appropriate hugging practices. (*Cooperatives are safeguarded regarding touch due to adequate staffing and the presence of observant participants in the classroom.*)

“Our work as parents and teachers during these precious early years sustains lifelong connections of love, respect, and self worth...”



Indulging Daydreams: Encouraging Imaginative Play

By
Margaret
Packo



How many times have your children said, "What can I do? I'm bored!" Easily tired of television or playing with the same toys, they seek our suggestions for making life interesting. Often, just a few simple ideas can lead to magical discoveries. All it takes is a little wishful thinking, a daydream, and a nudge in the direction of the world of imagination...

Introducing our children to their imagination is quite a gift. So much is locked up inside their little heads bursting to get out. For many children, imaginative play is hidden, only a daydream or wish away. With a little permission and some gentle coaching the amazing world of make-believe can burst to life. As parents, all we need to do is spark that flint and they'll entertain themselves (and us!) for hours. To begin, account for wishful thinking. Listen to your children. What do they love? What are their interests? Even very young children have interests. Are your children intrigued by science or the arts, do they enjoy sports or music? What captures their attention when you're out and about? Watch your children's responses to the world around them and then use these moments for creative exploration. Does your child turn every round disk into a steering wheel? Does your child notice every airplane that flies by? Nonverbal toddlers and preschoolers

alike can often be seen "flying" across the lawn, arms extended, motors zooming, thrilled by the sight and sound of those white streaks of airplane exhaust in the sky. It is in these moments of creative discovery when you've identified the daydream, that you can nudge the wish along. Encourage your children to pretend, for example, to be a pilot or a race car driver. Extend their exploration by showing them pictures of a cockpit or take a look at the dashboard of the car with all its dials and buttons. Offer objects around the house to bolster their creative, imaginative play. It is not necessary to purchase that \$300 battery-operated truck to pretend to be a truck driver. In fact, this might actually inhibit creativity. Instead, give your children ordinary household objects (a pan lid, an old record album) and let them guide "their car" and their imagination into overdrive. Other interests can be nurtured in the same way.

About the Author

Margaret Packo has a Bachelor of Arts in Speech and Drama and recently resigned after ten years as an elementary school drama teacher for Infant Jesus of Prague School in Flossmoor, IL.

Is movement your child's means to self-expression? Foster their wishes and dreams with a simple suggestion. Place your moving child in front of a mirror and let their motions motivate them. Even famous ballet dancers use mirrors. It helps to see what you're doing and how you're doing it. Encourage your child to imitate the movements of dance in whatever way seems natural to them. Let your child imagine, in his or her own mind, what the dance looks like. Encourage your child to experiment, create, invent, and occasionally even copy from the real world. What is important is not that they get it right, it is that they are creating and discovering in their own mind what could, should or might be right.

As your children begin to feel comfortable exploring creative self-expression, their experiences with and access to the world around them become more and more valuable. We all know that children love to imitate. So don't be surprised to observe your children re-enacting scenes from your daily routines. Children are keen observers. They watch adults in all situations, good and bad, and want to be just like them. Washing dishes, fixing the car, changing the baby's diaper are all sights they see and want to imitate. They also want to copy what they see on television. So, remember to be selective in what they watch, but more importantly, watch with them and talk about what they see. Help them to begin to understand the difference between what is real and what is pretend or acting. Talk about acting and what the actors do. Then explain that the actors are just pretending; it's their job. Assure your children that when the actors go home at the end of the day they go home to their real family, in the real world, just like we do.

Most of the fun in creating a vivid imagination is the process itself. And as your children grow the process will inevitably become more complex. The act of simply imitating day-to-day events may be replaced by more elaborate expressions of creativity. Parents can aid in this process by providing "prop boxes" (boxes loaded with interesting articles

that can stimulate creative thought) or by filling a trunk with old clothes, adult and children's sizes. Additionally, homemade or store-bought puppets can be provided to stimulate advanced exploration (the handy parent could even build a puppet theatre but a blanket draped over a box, safety gate or chair can inspire just as much creativity). As your child's imagination grows the story-telling aspect will become richer. As this happens, help them develop their ideas. Start by talking about the story idea. Encourage your child to write down a few simple lines, include a few stage directions. Hunt in the closets for costumes. Teach your child the steps of creating. Practice the lines, the movements and pretending or acting. Then let your child perform their story or play. If you have a video recorder, record it several times teaching them to improve or change things. Allow younger children to sit on your lap and look through the viewfinder as you record. Older children can quickly learn to operate the video recorder and be taught how to properly care for it. Some toy companies make kid's camcorders but you may even be able to find an old camcorder in a garage sale just for the kids.

Strengthening a child's imagination is as important as developing other skills. Imitation is an excellent learning tool, repetition is good practice for later school skills, and outlets for creative self-expression make life interesting. So, the next time your child hops like a bunny, dances like a diva, conducts a symphony, laughs like a hyena, or pretends to fly like an airplane why not join them because parents can encourage their children's imaginative play by demonstrating that adults use their imaginations, too - even you!

From Imaginative Play to Artistic Expression -

*Introduce your child to the experience of live theatre at an early age. Shows like **Sesame Street Live** or **Disney on Ice** or even the circus let children participate in a fantasy world oriented to their level.*

The author wrote the following play for preschool aged children. Why not let your family's daydreams bring it to life this winter?

"WHERE DID THE GRASS GO?"

by Margaret Packo

SCENE — A winter day. Inside. Child 1 and Child 2 are looking through the dining room window.

Child 1:
LOOK AT ALL THE SNOW!
WHERE DID THE GRASS GO?

Child 2:
I DON'T KNOW.
LET'S GO SEE.

Child 1 and Child 2 get dressed in their winter clothes - coat, scarf, mittens, hat and boots

Child 1:
I'M WARM NOW.
I CAN GO OUTSIDE NOW.

Child 2:
ME, TOO.
I LOVE THE SNOW.

They go outside.

Child 1:
LET'S PLAY!

Child 2:
OK.

They play.

Child 1:
WHERE DID THE GRASS GO?

Child 2:
LET'S FIND OUT.

They dig with shovels to find the grass.

Child 1:
I CAN'T FIND THE GRASS.

Child 2:
ME EITHER.

Child 1:
WE WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL SPRING.

Child 2:
OK. I LOVE SPRING!

~ THE END ~

Supporting Separated and Divorced Families



As many as one million families this year will decide that their marriages are no longer workable and that divorce is the best solution to their problems. Because most divorces occur in the first seven years of marriage, families with young children are the most vulnerable. As breakup, and restructuring of the family unit takes place, those of us who work closely with these parents and children often find ourselves trying to provide additional support to help them cope.

"Getting a divorce when you have young children is like being thrown into the sea. Your first thought is survival, and it's hard to think about what is best for anyone else."

~ A.R. in Los Angeles, CA
(Newman, 1998)

Stress and the Transitioning Family

The separation and divorce of their parents is one of the most confusing and disturbing events most children will ever experience. Since not all families are the same, it is possible that losses are greater in those families where respect and love

were expressed often and openly before intense personal problems took over, fracturing spousal commitment.

In other families, relationships between parents, and between parents and their children, may have been so loosely organized that they hardly existed at all. Despite close or troubled interaction, however, it must be recognized that the foundation each particular family builds is **its** foundation, no matter how shaky. When it comes crashing down, no family member escapes unhurt.

Children are more fragile than adults in any crisis because they are in the process

About the Author

Anne K. Soderman, Ph.D., was a cooperative nursery school teacher for seven years prior to returning to Michigan State University for a Master's and Ph.D. in Child Development. An accomplished author, Professor Soderman has been a faculty member at MSU since 1979. Anne has three grown children and a wonderful four-year-old grandson who is now in nursery school and loving it.

By

Anne K.
Soderman,
Ph.D.

of developing the ability to understand events, express their emotions and thoughts effectively, and think about how to solve problems they encounter. Thus, they are family members at especially high risk.

Children have a lot to lose – the potential loss of a developing relationship with one parent, and, perhaps a dramatic change in income support or life style. They may suffer loss of extended family support, familiarity of neighborhood or school, friends, home, and a general sense of security. Childhood may be aborted suddenly as children are urged inappropriately to help parents deal with intense disappointment, hurt, or outrage. There is confusion, as parents become less consistent in discipline or parent by mood, depending upon how well they are coping with the divorce process on any particular day. Holidays can become exhausting marathons of celebration with parents, stepparents, and extended family.

There are other social and emotional spinoffs to the loss of the dual-parent family unit for a young child. We know that each parent potentially provides something important for a child's development: male and female role models; the stability that is necessary for the normal separation process to occur, enabling children to move out beyond the family arena; resolution of the Oedipal conflict, which is dealt with between three and six years of age; and the powerful presence of two parents to reinforce discipline codes and behavior expectations, leading to more mature moral development.

Stress, which is a natural human reaction when change and uncertainty occur, is particularly high in children whose parents are divorcing. The very people that they have learned to rely on in tough situations are engulfed themselves in their own tough situation. As a result, they may be unable to respond very well to the pressure their children are experiencing.

Understanding the Preschool Child's Reaction to Divorce

There is evidence that young children, two years to five, suffer the most severe short and long term effects when their

parents split up. They are highly susceptible to instability in daily routine and family life and are more dependent on the family as a source of nurturance and help. They are also intensely hampered by childhood interpretations of events. For example, because of the magical-thinking characteristics of this age group, preschool children can make up macabre fantasies about why one parent has left. They often feel responsible in some way for the break-up: Maybe, because they were naughty, they caused a parent to leave; they wanted Mother or Daddy to go away, and now it's really happened; after being punished, they were angry, wished something bad would happen, and now it has. Tremendous guilt feelings can result.

Rules are absolute at this age and, to the child, consequences are unrelated to intentions. Therefore, "If Daddy can leave Mommy because they weren't getting along very well, Mommy may leave, too, unless I'm really good!" The possibility that such a thing could happen strikes fear into the hearts of young children.

Many begin "hanging around" the remaining parent, keeping a desperate eye on the situation, even getting up in the middle of the night to see if the parent is still there. They may become too eager to please in order to avoid the imagined impending abandonment. When this happens, children are said to become "relationship oriented." They tend to bend with the situation in favor of what they perceive another person wants, rather than developing and practicing strong internal control. Implications for later situations involving peer pressure are obvious.

Play behaviors are often negatively affected, and these children sometimes show an inability to play creatively, to verbalize out loud during their play, or become involved in free expression with art media. The double danger in this decreased interest in expressive play is that, in this age group, play functions as a mode for emotional expression, something these children need for discharging the tension of the crisis they are undergoing. Ironically it is because of the crisis that many of them are cut off from this particular outlet.

"Stress, which is a natural human reaction when change and uncertainty occur, is particularly high in children whose parents are divorcing."

“Educators affect millions of children each year. They need to remember that teaching involves not only the three R’s but also the preparation of children to deal with their feelings and the people around them.”

*~ Robert Allers,
school psychologist*

• Defense mechanisms are commonly used
• by highly stressed young children
• (Wallersten & Kelly, 1996; Soderman,
• Eveland & Ellard, 2000; and Kostelnik,
• Stein, Whiren & Soderman, 1998). They
• often regress to some behaviors common
• in an earlier, more comfortable stage in
• their young lives. Thumb-sucking,
• bedwetting, wetting or soiling their pants,
• throwing temper tantrums, and prior
• eating problems may appear, adding
• worry and frustration to the burdens
• already being carried by their parents.
• Obviously, these are behaviors that can
• also be troublesome in the preschool
• classroom and, when the cause of the
• problem is misunderstood, the behaviors
• may be extremely irritating to teachers.



Children may refuse to play with other children, expressing their anger in more hitting and kicking. They may indicate increased preference for adult companionship or comforting in favor of playing with other children; others may begin interacting with children younger than themselves in order to exercise more control. Some will spend inordinate amounts of time engaged in solitary play with toys they played with earlier in their development.

While children are resilient and almost all eventually recover, their problems can be intensified when their parents are unable to successfully restructure family life following divorce. Parents may continue to hurl insults at each other whenever

possible, using their children as an audience. Ex-spouses who are unable to resolve their angry feelings may later use their only link with each other – their children – to vent their hostilities or to maintain some sort of control over each other. Children may be used as hostages to obtain child-support payments, as spies to find out what the ex-spouse is doing, or as messengers to carry information back and forth. Confusion may continue to ride high for young children who are forced to adjust to the different lifestyles in a stepfamily. Parenting approaches they encounter on the weekend with the non-custodial parent or stepparent may be more lax or more rigid than the approach taken in their custodial situation. Most stressful can be a child’s lack of opportunity to see grandparents because of hostility on the part of parents, a family matter that has currently reached the U. S. Supreme Court. Unfortunately, adults who terminate relationships in an attempt to reduce their own pain can seriously add to a child’s discomfort and loss of support networks.

Teachers' Role in Stress Reduction: Helping Parents and Children Cope

Increasingly, teachers are being called on to respond to the needs of these children and families. Early childhood educators dedicated to helping children grow intellectually, morally and emotionally are sensitive to the fact that it is impossible to ignore the impact social change has on family life and, in turn, on children's abilities to function in their classroom. Why teachers? School psychologist Robert Allers notes that "educators affect millions of children each year. They need to remember that teaching involves not only the three Rs but also the preparation of children to deal with their feelings and the people around them." Children of divorce, he says, do not have to be scarred and damaged; however, what happens to them depends heavily upon the response of those in a position to help.

Children spend a large part of their waking hours in the school environment... an environment that may be the most stable one surrounding them at a particular time in life. In short, the only continuity some of these children experience during a time of family crisis may be that represented by the school. Educators can provide tremendous amounts of support if they are sensitive to the anxiety felt by many of these children, rather than simply working to get rid of the negative behaviors that result. This requires recognizing signs of stress in the young child, working with parents to alleviate as much stress in the child as possible, and providing resources for families to help them manage their own ongoing stress. It's not difficult to recognize a stressed child. They often look stressed. In addition to the behavioral responses described earlier, they may be more charged up and nervous than usual or more passive, moody and withdrawn than usual. When compared to other children, they may exhibit slumped or rigid posture. There may be increased physical complaints and aggressive behavior. Speech may become more shrill and rapid, and they may just become more difficult than usual to manage, to communicate with, and to direct.

Whenever we notice physical, psychological, or behavioral changes in a child, it becomes imperative to contact parents as soon as possible. It's possible that parents may have become so preoccupied with their own problems that they haven't noticed the changes. It is also possible that they observed the changes, are worried about them, too, but don't know exactly how to address them. They may be relieved to have another adult who shares their concerns, particularly if the professional has some helpful ideas about how to modify the situation. Sometimes this calls for communicating with children more clearly about the fact that they had nothing to do with the "grown-up problems." Adults may have to be more patient and provide more personal attention and appropriate information to the child about what the future holds. They may need to help children become more aware of their own feelings and the full effect of their behavior on those around them. Books for preschoolers about the topic of divorce and emotions such as Marc Brown's (1988) *Dinosaur's Divorce* (a particular favorite of many preschool teachers), Pat Thomas's (1998) *My Family's Changing: A First Look at Family Breakup*, Kathy Stinson's (1997) *Mom and Dad Don't Live Together Anymore* and Jane Aaron's (1998) *When I'm Angry* can be very helpful to children struggling with these changes. Children's librarians are knowledgeable about many others and are glad to work with parents and teachers to share relevant selections.

Without adding to parents' guilt, it's often helpful to acknowledge that family transitions are stressful both to their children and everyone else in the family but that, given time, adults and children do recover and go on to adapt successfully. Parents need to know that this is more likely to happen if:

- Parents share information with children to assure them about what is going to happen on a day-to-day basis as a result of the transition.
- Parents provide as much continuity as possible by keeping children in the same home, same neighborhood, same school, same worship community, and on a similar schedule.

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“Educators can provide tremendous amounts of support if they are sensitive to the anxiety felt by many of these children, rather than simply working to get rid of the negative behaviors that result.”

- Parents are able to cooperate positively and fairly with one another in their parenting responsibilities, finding a common ground related to discipline, financial matters, and visitations.
- Parents move as quickly as possible to restore diminished capacity to parent, to provide effective discipline, to be sensitive to their children’s needs, and to separate the child’s needs from their own.
- Parents maintain or restore their own good mental health by seeking counseling help when challenges of the transition become overwhelming.
- Children are allowed to sustain a close and loving relationship with the noncustodial parent and are not caught up in a loyalty bind about who they would rather be with.
- Children have a positive father-child relationship, actively fostered by the mother, whenever possible.
- Children are not overburdened with responsibility for a parent’s psychological welfare or required to serve as an instrument of parental rage.
- Children experience a good stepparent-child relationship when remarriage takes place.

As teachers, we can share some of these ideas with parents, acknowledge their efforts toward reducing their children’s stress, and reinforce their resolve to do so. We can also provide for them a list of available helping professionals and agencies, keep in touch with both custodial and noncustodial parents whenever possible, listen empathically to them when they speak of their own stress, and let parents know we want to work cooperatively with them to support them and their child during this stressful time. A parent evening for the community could be planned with a focus on the topic of transitioning families. Any number of excellent videos on the subject are available and could serve as a stimulus for discussion. Local psychologists who deal frequently with divorcing spouses are usually willing to contribute their services as a speaker. Family courts are beginning to structure valuable monthly programs that focus parents more directly on the need to work toward unity in their parenting for the sake of their children – even if their own relationship cannot be restored.



Families can be made aware of these and other community resources geared toward easing the stress of family divorce. A few printed, well-written resources that can be recommended are:

Bienenfeld, F. (1995). *Helping your Children through Divorce*. Emeryville, CA: Publishers Group West (1-800-788-3123).

Michigan Family Law Journal. *Special Issues: Visitation; Adjustment to Divorce; Putting it Back Together* (Each issue contains helpful articles such as "Coping with Stress," "Surviving the Breakup," "Dealing with Anger," etc.) \$5.00 each. Order by calling 517-484-2535.

Neuman, M. G. (1998). *Helping Your Kids Cope with Divorce*. New York: Random House.

Speak Out for Children - The Quarterly Newsletter of the Children's Rights Council, Inc. 300 "I" Street, N.E., Suite 401, Washington, D.C. 20002-4389. Phone (202) 547-6227.

Many of the families we serve are changing. As their needs change, our roles and responsibilities as teachers will also change. While we must know where our ability to support parents is appropriate and warranted - and where we need to put them in contact with other professionals with different expertise, there is much we can do to buffer the ups and downs parents experience. When we do that, we add immeasurably to their potential to restore their own family health and stability, the most important elements in enabling children's optimal development.

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Four Generations of Mothers



On the occasion of *Offspring's* 40th anniversary I would like to share my reflections on the parenting process within a historical and sociological perspective. As a grandmother who cherishes her time with out-of-town granddaughters I have observed distinct differences between my generation and my daughter's. When I think about my mother and grandmother's generations the differences in parenting styles and lifestyles is even greater. While certain commonalities are present across the generations, such as commitment to family, great contrasts are also present. A casual glance at their photographs reveals interesting differences. Deeper still is a fuller story, which I would like to share with you. First, let me introduce my family.

A Century of Child Rearing

This is the story of four generations of mothers and their families and almost 100 years of childrearing. The story begins with my Grandmother Gussie, born in Austria in the early 1870's; my mother Helen, Gussie's 4th child, born in Austria in the 1890's; me, Helen's fourth child born in Detroit Michigan in 1930; and another Helen,

my daughter, born in Livonia, Michigan in 1960. These women are part of an immigrant family whose history reflects the history and transformation of many immigrant families in the United States. These four mothers represent continuity and change, growing knowledge and literacy, love and learning – all essential components of the co-operative nursery school movement.

By
Marilynn M.
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Ph.D.

About the Author

Marilynn M. Rosenthal, Ph.D., the founding editor of *Offspring*, is a Professor of Sociology at the University of Michigan, and Director of the Program in Health Policy Studies. She is also the proud grandmother of 2 granddaughters who live close to the place where her grandmother first settled in America.

“Today, the co-op nursery movement stands for supporting the family by promoting and supporting love and learning.”

the age of Dr. Benjamin Spock. These parents were part of a generation that was more aware of what was known about the needs of children. So this mother was better educated and knew that meeting children's physical needs was important but not enough. The idea that children's social and emotional needs were equally important was taking hold at this time.

Cooperative nursery schools were very popular, and the parent education programs were highly esteemed. This mother learned a very great deal through the parent education meetings at the co-op nursery that her three children attended, and through observing the teacher, other mothers and other children at the co-op. This was an era of child development enlightenment, access to experts and the popularization of expert knowledge. Indeed, this mother helped start a parent education magazine - **Offspring** - as a way to educate herself and other young mothers of the time on the latest ideas.

This family continued to understand the importance of the family as they moved several steps even further from traditional ideas. The father was no longer the patriarch of the family; it was a more but not completely equalitarian marriage.



The father was still not intimately involved in child rearing... and this was the expectation of the time.

Daughter Helen's Story

Helen married at thirty after earning a master's degree at a major university and after five years of independently supporting herself. She had the same educational opportunities as her brothers. She met her husband at college, and they chose each other. Ironically, they have settled in the city where grandmother Gussie first lived.

This Helen was the first generation to choose a husband out of the ethnic and religious background of the family. However, her husband has the same strong commitment to family that is part of her heritage. She approaches parenting, at this stage of her life, as a vocation. Her two little girls are growing up in a home where the father is fully involved in child rearing. This father comes home from a demanding job to help give the girls a bath and read to them at bedtime even if he has to go back to the office later in the evening. This is a father who exchanges anecdotes with his colleagues at the investment house he works for about who is the most proficient parent. This father is intimately involved in raising his daughters... and this is the expectation of the time.

Helen and her husband attend parenting classes. They have read all the latest books on bringing up children. They know how to "talk so their children will listen," and they can "listen so their children can talk." They are endeavoring to raise their children to be "siblings without rivalry." Like many of you they are serious consumers of parenting advice and information.

In their home there is a major emphasis on the emotional and social needs of their daughters. Each daughter's individuality is embraced, and opportunities to make individual choices are encouraged. Outside of the continued emphasis and loyalty to family, the old traditional ideas have faded into the background.

Four Generations

With four generations of mothers we see four generations of distinct child rearing practices. What can we see in terms of change? First, the authoritarian parenting style has given way to a more egalitarian authoritative style where discipline is always balanced by love and mutual respect. Education levels in general have risen. Well-researched and documented knowledge about the needs of children has been dispersed, and parenting information is widely available now. For most of you it's just a click away on your computer screen. Society has moved from the industrial age to the age of information. The impact of affluence and material goods has also affected the parenting process.

Most importantly we see changes in the roles of mothers and fathers. Women today have an increasing number of choices to make. They can choose their marriage partner, their family size, and their lifestyle. The changing role of the father from distant patriarch to intimate caregiver has been a most welcomed and beneficial change.

In four generations we see streams of continuity as well. All of these mothers took responsibility for the protection of their young while their responsibilities have changed and expanded. Many mothers also work professionally outside the home. Still, in the four generations of my family, mothers remain the ones "who hold it all together." Mothers will always be the heart of the family.

Overall, we see greater choice, greater knowledge, and greater affluence. Traditional wisdom has given way to expert knowledge. The autonomous enlightened family has replaced the rigid, traditional family. Yet still we see families with their eternal strengths and endless weaknesses.

It is heartwarming for me to understand the role of the cooperative nursery school movement in all of this. The founders and promoters of this movement and philosophy, including Katherine Whiteside Taylor and Carolyn Hawkins, had a clear understanding of the role and needs of the family during WWII when



"Many mothers also work professionally outside the home. Still, in the four generations of family, mothers remain the ones "who hold it all together." Mothers will always be the heart of the family."

they started a co-op nursery at the University of Chicago. Today, the co-op nursery movement stands for supporting the family by promoting and supporting love and learning.

Remarkably, my daughter Helen, lives four miles from where her great grandmother Gussie lived when she first came with her family to America. They are four miles and four generations apart. Despite the differences both of these mothers share a commitment to family and to being a good mother though how we define a "good mother" has changed through the years.

All of us involved in cooperative nursery schools are dedicated to nurturing children in our homes, schools, and neighborhoods. And today we have more tools to help us in our parenting tasks. Women in my daughter Helen's generation have the advantage of knowledge, education and the remarkable support for love and learning offered by the cooperative nursery school philosophy as they pursue the greatest and the most difficult challenge life has to offer: raising children. May the mothers of today's generation of families prosper in this absolutely essential task.

One Step Ahead:

Parenting Perspectives Through Time

Parenting Perspectives Through Time:

Books that offer insights into how we were raised
and how we're raising our own children



Parenting has never been an easy task. But the expectations of both parents and babies have changed over time. These books explore how parenting styles, expectations and responsibilities have shifted through time and how these shifts have affected the care our children receive.

The Vital Touch: How intimate Contact with Your Baby Leads to Happier, Healthier Development By S. Heller

Parenting practices vary dramatically from generation to generation and culture to culture. Sharon Heller's book, ***The Vital Touch: How Intimate Contact with Your Baby Leads to Happier, Healthier Development***, examines parenting practices supported by research as well as the test of time (in most cases, centuries).

A developmental psychologist, Sharon Heller's book explores the "Power of Touch" from the aspects of psychology, physiology and emotional relatedness from an evolutionary and sensory perspective. She offers documented evidence for a number of issues that we parents face everyday as we go about the business of parenting. *The Vital Touch* offers suitable options to consider and substantiates them with research regarding parenting predicaments such as spoiling, sleeping, feeding and the like. *The Vital Touch* also explores how "Out of Touch" our Western culture appears to be in terms of how we handle our babies and young children. Our social challenges (such as work, maternal isolation, limited extended family) and misconceptions about appropriate parenting practices are analyzed and assessed from a variety of perspectives. The book closes by offering recommendations for "Getting in Touch". The author acknowledges the dilemmas of parenting in our culture today-isolation for at-home mothers, daycare for working families, limited social outlets for babies and their families. But, thankfully, *The Vital Touch* suggests a number of ways families as well as childcare providers can incorporate time-tested, research-approved child rearing practices into their lives.

Heller, S. (1997). *The vital touch*. New York: Henry Holt and Co.

The Continuum Concept By J. Liedloff

Although published more than two decades ago, this anthropological look at family life and parenting in a tribal, hunting/gathering society offers interesting and enlightening perspectives on our own choices in parenting. You might be surprised by the freedoms of very young children as they explore the village, realizing the world we live in today dramatically limits our children's investigations of their "world." However, you may also be provoked by our society's lack of parental support as compared to other cultures. Of course, our family life could never be compared to that of a tribal group in a completely different part of the world...or can it? Sometimes it's just worth a glimpse into another's world to get a grip on your own.

Liedloff, J. (1977). *The continuum concept*. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison Wesley Publishing Co.

Our Babies, Ourselves: How Biology and Culture Shape the Way We Parent By M. Small

This book examines parenting and child rearing from a relatively new perspective. The author introduces the field of ethnopediatrics, the study of how culture, evolution and biology interact relative to young children. Certainly parenting styles vary from culture to culture but to what extent and how do these variations influence infant behavior, parental responses to behavior, and overall development. Typical aspects of parenting young children are compared and contrasted from various cultural perspectives enlightening the reader as to their own choices and their consequences, good, bad and indifferent.

Small, M. (1998). *Our babies, ourselves: How biology and culture shape the way we parent*. New York: Doubleday.

Offspring

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