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# THE CHILD FROM ONE TO TWELVE

*Psychology for Parents*



# THE CHILD FROM ONE TO TWELVE

*Psychology for Parents*

BY

ADA HART ARLITT, Ph.D.

Professor of Child Care and Training, University of Cincinnati

With an Introduction by  
FLORA M. THURSTON

Revised Edition of  
"THE CHILD FROM ONE TO SIX"

WHITTLESEY HOUSE  
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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

**I**N its original version this book was called "The Child from One to Six." Although it was addressed primarily to the parents of children of pre-school age, the major part of the material it contained was equally applicable to the problems of older children. Since its publication, it has become apparent that the title artificially limited its usefulness, in that many parents echoed the attitude of the mother who said: "My child's teacher sent your book home for me but it won't do me any good. My child is seven."

In preparing the present edition, therefore, it has been thought wise to alter the title to indicate the full scope of the book. Few changes in the original text have been made, for the chapters on Willing Obedience, Discipline, Punishment and Rewards, and Good and Bad Habits are applicable well into the late pre-adolescent period. Two additional chapters have been added particularly for the parents of pre-adolescent children, and it is hoped, that the final chapter on The Modern Parent will be of value to all readers of the book.

ADA HART ARLITT.

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI,  
CINCINNATI, OHIO.  
*March, 1931.*





## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE modern parent faces in bringing up his child problems so complex that parents of even a generation ago would have been amazed and bewildered had they been faced with similar ones. To take just one example: If one wishes to restrict one's child's contacts, instead of merely saying to him, "You must not play with such and such a child," one has to say this and, in addition, one has to tune out the radio, disconnect the telephone, stop one's subscriptions to magazines and newspapers, and turn the stream of traffic away from one's door. Until this is done, one's child will have contact with the outside world.

In spite of the fact that there are many more problems and that these are more complex than ever before, modern parents wish for their children much the same things as did the parents of other generations, namely: sound health, fine character, and an education and training which will fit them to take their places in the world as they find it.

The responsibility for obtaining all of these things lies largely with the parents. The most important period of any child's life is the period from birth to six years of age, but training must go on for at least six years

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more. If the habits set up from one to six are to function properly, the training must be kept up during the period from six to twelve.

This first period is above all others the one for setting up health habits. On these will depend the child's resistance to disease at school age, and even such things as the resistance of his teeth to decay. By the time a child enters school, he should have all the toilet and bathroom habits set up and his habits of eating and sleeping should be so well established that he can turn his attention to all of those new experiences which a school presents. The habits of eating the right amounts of fresh vegetables and of taking milk should be so well set up that even in the school lunch room the child will choose those foods which make for a well-balanced meal. He should not be struggling still to decide whether he will or will not eat the right foods, for the undernourishment which comes from refusal to eat properly will leave him less able to turn his energy and to give his time to all those new and interesting things which he might be learning in his first year in school.

A six-year-old whose toilet habits had not been set up correctly and who was undernourished spent most of his first year in school having temper tantrums, stomach upsets, and spells of fatigue, so that he learned little or nothing except a dislike for school and everything that the school represented.

A five-year-old on entering kindergarten had been

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made so conscious of his physical needs and his possible physical upsets that he spent a large portion of his time imagining symptoms such as headaches, nausea, and the like, instead of learning all the delightful games and occupations which the other five-year-olds in the kindergarten were enjoying. At the end of the year, he had learned almost nothing, except to use some of those symptoms as a way of getting out of going to school. Against such misfortunes as these, the wise parent guards his child.

There are many attitudes which early training can set up or avoid. For example, contrariness, the bane of the parents' existence, is largely the result of the unfortunate use of discipline and control.

A two-year-old came into a nursery school with all the obstinacy which an ordinary person would need to carry him through life. Whatever was said to the child was greeted with "no." When he first entered the office, his mother said to him, "Don't you want to sit down?" to which his response was a very violent "no." Then she said, "Don't you want to go into the nursery to play?" only to be met by another "no." After a series of suggestions in which the child should have been interested, the mother finally said, "All right, stay right where you are and do nothing," only to be greeted by a final and loudest "no." A boy with such attitudes could never profit by anything which the school presented until these attitudes had been unlearned and cooperation substituted for resistance.

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Many children enter school with so much resistance to authority that the first few years of their school lives must be given over to relearning.

Fears present another problem in which all parents should be interested, for a child who is afraid has his learning interfered with, roughly, in proportion to the number and severity of his fears. Children whose development has been so poorly taken care of that they develop fears on the least occasion find all sorts of new experiences disturbing instead of interesting.

Children whose temper is not under control lack emotional balance to such an extent that they are often as unpleasant to themselves as they are to others.

One two-year-old in the writer's experience had thirty-six temper tantrums in the first morning hour of the nursery school in one week's time. On the other hand, a well-trained child of the same age in the nursery school for the first time had no temper tantrums and showed no fears in the entire eight-month period during which he attended. He was able to take his own part when imposed upon and to take care of the younger children when an older child imposed upon them, but he was never sufficiently angry to lose control of himself and of that which he wished to do.

Obedience to reasonable requests, and, at the same time, an ability and a willingness to take responsibility as great as their maturity allows should be the result of

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the training of adequately adjusted children by the time they reach school age. The child of six who obeys when reasonable requests are made and, at the same time, is able to take care of his possessions, and to have a joy in overcoming obstacles and in carrying through his own plans and purposes, and has learned enough words to make it possible for him to comprehend what is going on about him has an excellent equipment for his later life.

Attitudes, health training, emotional control, and all other phases of child development involve the setting up of habits. Parents can so guide their children that desirable things which they do will have pleasant results and will get much practice and therefore become habits, while the undesirable things will not be practiced or will be associated with such unpleasant results that they will not become habits. The whole first six years of life are given over to setting up good habits and to avoiding or breaking bad habits, both of which are under the control of the adults with whom children come in contact.

The balance between wise punishment and too great leniency is a difficult one to obtain but one which, when obtained, has great influence in sound character training. The best surroundings for normal, happy childhood are a well-adjusted family and a home which is so well managed that bad habits do not creep in because of laxity in the running of the household. Happier children mean happier parents. Well-

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adjusted parents mean happier and better reared children. An understanding of the principles underlying human behavior will make for both of these conditions.

✻ ADA HART ARLITT

UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI,

CINCINNATI, OHIO.

*February, 1930.*

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## INTRODUCTION

A CHILD from birth to twelve years of age is such a rapidly growing individual that he requires rapidly growing parents to keep up with him. Although the first two or three years of a child's life are as important and as thrilling to observe as any later period, most parents are not troubled by training problems during this time. The baby is usually the source of whole-hearted enjoyment for his parents, often in spite of the difficulties they may have in feeding and caring for him. But later they may view him with mixed feelings of affection, perplexity, ignorance, and even fear. As soon as he is old enough to refuse to fall in line or begins to visit the neighbors and return with tales of how differently they do things, the enjoyment fades a bit and the parents suddenly find themselves merely parents, without training and experience to face this new child. Parents are perplexed largely because they do not understand their children. They have had too little, if any, opportunity to know many children and therefore tend to think of all children in terms of their own offspring rather than to see their own in relation to child nature in general.

The purpose of the volume which Dr. Arlitt here presents is to help parents who know little of psycho-

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logical theory to understand what children are like and how they grow. In the chapter on "How Your Child Thinks" there is an especially clear and simple explanation of the scientific facts in regard to the way a child's mind develops. In the other chapters the author has provided brief explanations and a generous number of illustrations and suggestions in order to help parents to understand the reasons for child behavior and to make clear their application in life situations which are familiar to every parent. The book does not intend to make fathers and mothers overconscious of their task nor to suggest that parenthood is overwhelming. Dr. Arlitt assumes that parents take pleasure in their children and that by means of a greater understanding of them, and a greater confidence in living with them, they will enjoy them even more.

To the parent educator this volume offers an opportunity to consider the value of a more ample use of actual episodes in the lives of children as teaching material than is usually included in the literature of the pre-school period. Obviously the problem of the educator of parents is at least threefold. It involves helping parents to understand themselves, to understand the child, and to meet the problems of growth in themselves and their children in order to expand and enrich the total life of the family. In most cases this is not a problem of merely continuing an education well begun; it is far more likely to be a reeducation requiring the modification of life-long habits and

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attitudes and the release of profound and obscure emotional strain. How this is to be done is the educator's problem of method. Parents of various temperaments, educational backgrounds, intelligence levels, and life experiences will be appealed to in different ways. Merely being told abstractly what children are like and how to behave toward them is a rather arid experience for parents. Their reeducative process must provide at least as vivid and as gripping experience as their everyday life with their children in order to compete in any way with the hour-by-hour formation of habits which it is the purpose of their reeducation to modify.

Every parent educator is familiar with the increase of interest which comes in almost any audience when incidents from real life are given, and knows how these may stimulate a consideration of other relevant experiences. Experience itself is vivid and real compared with a mere interpretation or description of experience, even though it is the experience of another person. More people seem to enjoy drama than enjoy lectures. The question is: Do they or can they learn more from one than from the other? Is there some probability that the dramatic appeal may be more effective than any other written form if presented as episodes for releasing tensions and developing attitudes as well as for demonstrating techniques? Does it also tend to encourage a study of children in terms of situations rather than in terms of isolated reactions?

One of the chief dangers of such a method of teach-

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ing parents lies in the suggestion that the situations illustrated are simple ones and that the treatment resorted to is the only or the ideal way out. Dr. Arlitt aims to avoid this acceptance of a doctrinaire solution by describing several incidents involving similar problems which show how many factors may be involved in such situations. She is especially fortunate in the illustrations she presents. The technique or attitude they are chosen to reveal is peculiarly free from distracting and confusing ideas and where more than one incident is intended to clarify a point, the common element stands out in clear relief.

In the field of research this volume offers to parent educators an interesting venture into methods of teaching parents. How parents learn is a problem almost entirely unexplored. What parents learn is also largely unknown. Attempts to teach parents by means of lectures, discussions, reports, observations, and reading have been going on simultaneously in parent study groups, and little effort has been made to determine when and how each method contributed to a parent's education. Each one of these methods may induce a number of experiences some of which may be common to more than one method. For instance, a father or mother may become aware of his opportunities as a parent by hearing some one tell about them or by reading a dramatic presentation of what other parents achieve with their children or by seeing other parents in satisfying family situations. Profitable lines of re-

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search in learning may be directed toward an attempt to discover the relative values of various ways of inducing a similar experience. It may be rewarding also to attempt an evaluation of ways of imparting information by a study of the results of a direct declarative presentation in contrast to the reproduction in words of a living episode. Because of the simplicity of its language and of its presentation, which makes it useful in work with the largest number of parents, this volume offers a unique means to research in both of these directions.

FLORA M. THURSTON.



# THE CHILD FROM ONE TO TWELVE

## PSYCHOLOGY FOR PARENTS

### CHAPTER I

#### WILLING OBEDIENCE

**I**N spite of the emphasis placed on freedom for children, the modern mother is still aware of the fact that the best freedom comes when the child has learned obedience to all reasonable commands. The purpose of obedience is both to protect the child and to give him self-control. It is not merely to make the child the least possible amount of trouble to the adults in the family. Such parental attitudes as come from the certainty in the mind of the parent that the child should obey, simply because he is a child and the parent wishes him to, result in crushing out the child's initiative or in developing a resistance to all kinds of commands—no matter how wise these commands are.

Willing obedience is really cooperation with adults. It is the observance of those regulations which make for the welfare of the family as a whole. Obedience of this cooperative sort means that the child is fitting

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into the family group, while, at the same time, he is being allowed enough freedom to develop his own abilities where these do not interfere with the development of the family as a whole.

There are a number of ways in which one may gain the cooperation of the child and therefore, teach him to obey more easily. A regular schedule for eating, for sleeping, and for resting is one of these. There are two excellent reasons for this insistence upon regularity. The child establishes a regular rhythm for being hungry and therefore eating; for sleeping; for going to the toilet; and resists much less when the suggestions to do these things are given. There are far fewer conflicts with a child if he knows when routine acts may be expected to happen.

Your child likes to live in an orderly world. He is much more comfortable when he knows the order in which events are to occur and knows that he can count on this order. He will never know that there are laws that govern the universe until he knows that there are laws which govern his home. He should have a set time for his meals, for his nap, and for going to bed in the evening, which does not vary except in times of great emergency. Even 10 to 15 minutes' variation on either side of the hour which one has set for each of these occurrences is too much. The toilet habits of the child should also be set up on a regular schedule.

Uniformity in the discipline which is given to a child is also important. Rules are statements made for



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the child's guidance, that is, standards by which he may know what to do and what not to do. When a rule is made, be sure that this rule is for the welfare of the child and the family and, therefore, sets a standard for the future as well as the present. It must not be about something so unimportant that it makes very little difference whether the rule is kept or not, for if this is the case the rule will be broken as frequently as it is kept. Real rules in the household are similar to the laws of a community. They are the laws which govern that little community—the family. They must, therefore, apply with the certainty of law.

By this is not meant such rigidity that children are actually punished for desirable activities. Two little girls had been forbidden ever to go into their father's study. They heard him complain that his books in the open-face bookcase were getting dusty. It was near Christmas and the two little girls decided to make him some curtains. They went into his study to measure the curtains and again to put them up as a surprise for Christmas. The father, instead of praising the children for the long and difficult piece of work which they had done for his Christmas, scolded them both soundly and punished them for breaking the rule about entering his study. Of course, no such stupid enforcement of laws is advocated here.

If one is allowed to break rules sometimes and obliged to keep them the rest of the time, one is in a constant state of uncertainty. Children seem to feel that they

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must always try to see if this isn't the day on which the rules do not work. A sense of security is one of the most important things which the parent can give the child, and this sense of security is not present when rules are not given in a uniform way. Moreover, the child keeps on his mind and tries to break those rules of which he is uncertain.

The author always asks her students which of the city ordinances they remember. They have lived under most of them all of their lives, they obey them automatically because they may never be broken. They do not even realize that they are obeying. Two ordinances the students always remember: the rules in regard to parking and the rules in regard to speeding. These rules may be, and often are, broken, and they are, therefore, remembered when all the laws which are obeyed as a matter of course are no longer even kept in mind. One does not drive on the left side of the street, pass through red lights in traffic, nor do any of those things which custom has shown cannot be done without serious consequences.

Such rules as are based on reason should be applied every day and the consequences of breaking them should be known to the child. Children like certainty. After they are used to living under a set of definite rules, they will remind you if, for the moment, you forget the thing which they are accustomed to do.

The nursery school children play for about three-quarters of an hour before they get their orange juice.

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One day one of the children came in just as the juice was being served. He was told to sit down at the table, but he immediately protested. "We play before we eat our orange juice," he said. Then he went out on the roof playground, ran twice around and came back and sat down perfectly contented. He had kept the schedule.

Some time ago, an outside agency wanted pictures of children in the nursery and particularly of children eating. The table was set and the children were brought in to pretend that they were eating the food which had been placed before them. They knew that they were not actually supposed to eat, but the moment they came to the table on which there was food, they said with one accord, "We wash our hands before we eat," and refused to sit down at the table before their hands had been washed. A delay of twenty minutes was necessary until the washing regime had been carried out. The children were uncomfortable when sitting at the table on which there was food, even if they were not to eat it, before their hands had been washed.

The treatment of a child who has broken rules and, therefore, has disobeyed should be uniform. He must know what to expect. It does not do to punish him on Tuesday and on Wednesday to let the whole matter be forgotten or to give him an excuse for what he has done.

A little girl who was walking home one day from

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school, crying bitterly, was asked by an older friend what the matter was. The little girl replied, "I've got a bad grade in spelling, and I don't know what mother will do to me. She might say, 'Oh, she's such a little girl and they're expecting too much of her,' and pet me, or she might say, 'A great big girl like you should be ashamed of herself for getting such poor grades,' and punish me. It would be all right if I knew what would happen, but I never do."

A child, a small boy, smeared ink on the front of his shirt just to see what would happen—just to see whether he would be punished or whether nothing at all would be said to him, and this time nothing was said.

Rules must not be so many in number that a child cannot keep them in mind. A small friend of mine whose family wished perfection from him and had given him a number of rules to that end was found standing in the middle of the room, saying: "I forgetted, is this what I does or what I doesn't?" He seemed confused so often that the family was obliged to simplify the number of rules for him.

Cut down the number of times that one speaks to the child. Speak only when it is necessary, and then expect to be obeyed. When one speaks, one should be sure that one has the child's attention. To speak to John when he is absorbed in building his block house, or in talking to his toy doll, or in looking at a picture book is often to speak when John does not hear, just

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as the adult does not hear when he is absorbed in some particularly interesting piece of work. With the young child, it is well to be sure of his attention by having him look up from his work first before one gives the command. If the child does not hear when the command has been given, one would have to repeat it a number of times before attention is secured at all. This means many commands when only a few should be given.

A little boy, aged three, was a typical example of a disobedient child. He obeyed neither commands to do nor not to do things. As a preliminary to giving advice as to what to do with Oscar, we had a student put down the number of times he was spoken to in a two-hour period. During this time, there were 47 commands to do and 73 commands to stop doing something or other, 120 commands in two hours, and not one of those commands was obeyed.

Parents must have confidence in themselves when they give directions. If the parent lacks this confidence, the children will certainly lack it. To give a direction when one feels so uncertain as to whether it is right or not, to ask for obedience when one is fairly certain that this is a thing which the child should not be asked to do are only to court resistance and disobedience. Expect to be obeyed. Take the attitude that if the request is reasonable the child will accede.

The child's attitude toward the parent is a tremendously important factor in securing obedience. He

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**must** have absolute confidence in any authority, if he is to obey. That confidence is gained and kept when the authority's word can always be trusted, and when that authority knows its own mind and has a genuine interest in the child's need. Promises must be real. If a child has been told that he may have a coveted treat, everything should be done to prevent an emergency which will deprive the child of the promised treat. Any child, and particularly a young child, finds it very difficult to understand the reasons for breaking a promise. If a promise must be broken, a clear explanation should be given, but it is far better not to promise anything unless one is sure that the promise can be kept.

If there is a good reason for permitting a child to do something which was first refused, the change should be welcomed by the parent and not grudgingly made. If a mistake has been made, it is fair to correct it and to correct it generously.

Children must always be told the truth. Much better to go out, leaving a child crying because he knows that you are going than to tell him you are not going out and then escape with no tears on his part, only to have him find out, as he inevitably will, that he is being deceived.

A seven-year-old who had been told by his mother and his father that they were not going out, went to the window a few minutes later and saw them going down the street. He turned to his companion and said,

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"There go the two biggest liars I know. They want me to tell the truth and just look at them." Surely no amount of excitement which might have resulted from the child's knowledge of his parents' departure would have been half as bad as the attitude which their deception had set up.

The authority's "no" must mean "no." If one tells the child that he cannot go to the movies tonight because he has to study, no amount of persuasion or crying or fussing on his part should alter the decision. Change it, of course, if there is a real reason, but crying, persuasion, and begging are not real reasons.

If "no" can be changed to "yes" today, it will be changed to "yes" tomorrow, and the day after, until the whole force of that "no" is gone. A boy, age seven, has never learned the meaning of "no" because every time his mother tells him that he cannot do anything he cries and begs until she says, "For goodness sake, go ahead—if you'll just let me alone."

Another child, a little girl, age four, says whenever she is told "no," "I want to do it. I want to do it," over and over again until in desperation her mother says, "Well, go on and do it then." Neither of these children is learning obedience in the right sense.

All the members of the household should work out together a general policy in regard to the child or the children in the house. If they have differences, these should be settled when the child is not about. He will not respect an authority which other people ques-

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tion. A family council in which the policies in regard to the child or to the children in the family are discussed freely and in which there is a compromise made between the different points of view is usually the wisest family situation.

The mother, father, uncles, and grandfather of one two-and-a-half-year old have a council regularly whenever there seems to be much difference in the way in which they wish to handle the child. This boy, who was extremely disobedient when there was a discussion in the family, before him, as to what he should and should not do, now that this discussion no longer appears in his presence and the adults seem to be in accord—and they will be since they have worked it out together—has become obedient.

On the other hand, a four-year-old boy, who lives in a family with five adults, as soon as he is told “no” by one of them starts on a cruise which will take in the entire household because he is sure that someone of the five adults will change that “no” to “yes.”

Another child, who lives in a family composed of a grandmother, and an aunt, in addition to his father and mother, has never learned obedience, because at least half of the time when he is given commands or is punished for doing something which he has been forbidden to do, his grandmother or his aunt will say to his mother, in the boy’s hearing, “You’re too hard on him. He’s such a little boy. You were never treated this way and you grew up all right.” or, “These



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new fads in training children aren't any good. We weren't brought up this way and look at us."

. One's attitude toward the child is of tremendous importance. One should not feel that a child is the property of his parents and, therefore, that his cooperation need not be secured. On the contrary, securing the child's cooperation is an important part of the parent's duty toward that child. The men who work together in a business organization, the people who work together in committees, the clubs who work together toward one end, do so because the members of the groups have had their cooperation secured in advance. Children work far better when such cooperation has been secured, and are much more ready to obey. One of the best ways to secure cooperation is to talk over a plan with the child when one has a difficult task for him to do or when opposition seems imminent. All parents know the look which comes on a child's face when he is about to refuse to do what they wish to have done. The story of Tom Sawyer is a good illustration of a way to secure cooperation in making a task interesting. You remember that he was told to whitewash the fence. This meant that Tom could not go fishing, and he evolved a plan that would keep the other boys from teasing him and seeing how badly he felt. When they asked him, on their way to the fishing hole, whether or not he was coming with them, he told them he wouldn't go because he was so anxious to whitewash that fence. He made the idea

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so interesting that his comrades paid him with apples and fishing lines and other boyish treasures for the privilege of whitewashing that fence. Try making the child's task interesting.

Often the tone of one's voice is enough. If one suggests that a child do something in a tone that makes him think, "Well, this is going to be fun to do," his whole attitude is quite different from what it would have been, had the tone suggested, "Now, this is just something you must do, come on."

If the child has confidence in authority and if a great many of the suggestions have been made interesting, one does not need to make everything of interest that one asks him to do. He will obey because he has learned to be cooperative and because he has confidence in you.

| Avoid trying to get obedience by bribery. "I will give you an ice-cream cone if you do this," may get obedience at the time, but the child will soon be demanding payment for any obedience whatever. The child begins to think that he must be paid for the simplest tasks. After a while he may even begin to say, "Can I disobey once and still get it?" "How many times can I disobey and still get it?" and then one knows that the limits of one's authority have been reached.

‡ If one rewards the child, the rewards should come only when the child has reached a certain standard. For example, "You have cleaned up all of your room

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today and finished studying all of your lessons. That means that you have saved time for mother, so she has time to take you to the zoo." Say this instead of saying, "If you will clean up your room and study your lessons I will take you to the zoo." In the one case, John will know he has gone to the zoo because he has reached a standard of behavior, in the other, John will think that being taken to the zoo is simply payment for having done work that he probably should have done without a set reward. When to give and when not to give a reward to a child is the topic of Chap. II, where it will be discussed at length.

Avoid conflicts unless these are necessary. Everyone knows that a conflict is an exciting thing. We also know that one of the great rewards in childhood is to be the center of attention and the cause of excitement. If your child likes the excitement which a conflict causes, this will stand in the way of his learning to be obedient, for he will stage any number of conflicts just to be a part of an exciting scene.

A little girl who would take the books out of the bookcase in spite of all punishment had driven her mother to despair. "I cannot make that child obey," she said.

When she was asked, "What does the child do when she has taken the books out of the bookcase?" her mother replied, "She comes to me and says, 'Look what I've done now,' and then just waits for the talking to and the punishment which she gets."

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Conflicts should be avoided, also, because every conflict tends to set up in the child a habit of fighting back. It must happen sometimes, of course, that one is placed in the position in which things will have to be fought through, but that should happen as seldom as possible. The following suggestions may help to avoid conflicts: First of all, warn the child a few minutes before you want him to stop his play. Say, "In two minutes I'll call you again so finish the block house or finish looking at that picture so you'll be ready to come." Children are as absorbed in their play as we are in our work. We all know how annoyed we would be if, in the middle of a conversation which we were carrying on with a friend, we were interrupted and abruptly dragged away. The very fact that we were interrupted without warning would serve to make us annoyed or angry. A little child whose play is interrupted without warning is in the same position.

If the direction has been, "In two minutes I'll call you again," one must be sure to call again at the end of that time, for if the child has been warned that he can put on two or three more blocks or look at the picture a few minutes more, and then finds that he can keep right on building or looking at pictures, he will not believe you the next time you say that you are going to call again in two minutes.

A five-year-old whose mother called to him, "Put on three more blocks and then I am going to call you to come to get washed," said, "I bet I can do at least

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ten. She'll forget." And he did, for on this occasion, it was fifteen minutes later before anyone remembered to call him the second time.

The warning that gets the child ready to obey helps in solving the more acute problem when there is company. If one says to the child, "Of course, you may come in while company is here, but when we go in to dinner, that will be the time when you must go upstairs to bed," the child is prepared and no warning is needed later when one says, "You remember we said that when we went in to dinner, it would be time for you to go to bed." On the contrary, he often goes cheerfully. If he had had no warning and had been told to leave at the most exciting part of the party, resistance would be expected as a natural result.

Negative warnings which suggest the very thing one wishes to avoid should not be given, for example, one should not say at five o'clock in the afternoon, "Now, tonight you *are* going to bed on time," for that simply encourages a child to think of all the things that he can do to keep from going to bed on time. "Now, today, I am serving spinach and you are *not* going to refuse to eat it," is a first-class way to make Johnnie refuse to eat the spinach even before it comes on the table.

A second suggestion, which will help in avoiding conflicts, is never to intimate that the child may have a choice of what he may do, if there is no choice. Give him a choice wherever you can, but if what you really

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mean is, "Now it's time to take off your wraps," you should not say, "Don't you want to take off your wraps now?" Such a remark makes the child feel that he can say either "yes" or "no" as he wishes. This method of giving a command often produces rather serious conflicts. The other day a three-year-old was asked, "Don't you want to stop playing now and come in and get washed?" His immediate response was, "No, I don't," a perfectly truthful rejoinder. Then there was a struggle to convince him that he really did want to come in, when, if the command had been given in a different form, "Now it's time to stop playing and come in and get all washed up," the chances are there would be no resistance at all. Particularly if, by the tone of her voice, the baby's mother had suggested that washing was a perfectly delightful thing to do.

Avoid the use of "don't" as much as possible. If what one wishes the child to do is *not* to slam the door, it is quite as easy and much more effective to say, "Close the door quietly," as to say, "Don't slam the door."

"Don't" has no force for children under school age. To say to the child, "Don't step in the water," is equivalent to saying, "Step in the water." A four-year-old on his afternoon walk was just passing by a mud puddle when his nurse said to him, "Don't you dare step in that puddle." Before the baby could stop himself, he was up to his ankles in mud and water. He stood perfectly still and screamed at the top of his

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voice. He had no intention of disobeying and was just as disturbed as was the nurse to find himself in the middle of the puddle. The command would be better if stated positively, "Keep away from the water," rather than "Don't step in the water." One is not losing the force of one's authority, if one gives commands in this way, but is, on the contrary, helping the child to learn to obey.

Parents often ask the question, "Should children ever obey instantly?" Yes, of course. There are emergencies in which instant obedience is to be expected. For this, it is well to use an emergency tone. Say to the child, "Now, when you come in and ask me to do things for you, sometimes I say, if you'll just wait until I finish, I will—but if you're cut, that's an emergency and I drop everything and come right away. Mother has emergencies too. When she calls you like this (then use the emergency tone), drop everything and come right away. Now, let's see if you can do that." Let the child go into the next room and see if he can obey you right away when you use the emergency tone. If he is a little child, he'll need to practice once or twice. When he has learned to recognize the emergency tone, be sure that tone is used only when instant obedience is necessary. Otherwise, the tone soon loses its original value. As a matter of fact, one reason why children do not learn to obey immediately is because there are many instances when one does not expect instant obedience. One calls the child and would

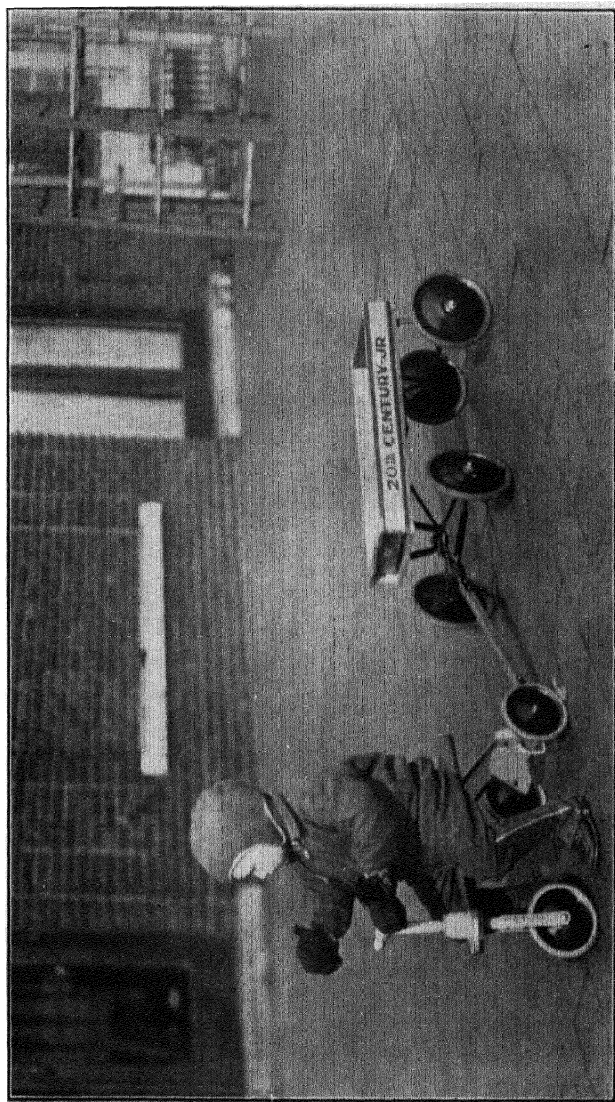
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be surprised one's self if he appeared at once. It pays to make this difference between those times when one expects immediate obedience and the times when one expects obedience at a somewhat later time.

There are some reasons why young children find it hard to obey instantly. In the first place, they often do not understand the words used. The little child's vocabulary is less than one-sixth of our's, so that we use many words that he can understand only if he has thought a minute. The author has seen children stand still for one whole minute thinking out what a command meant before carrying it out. If the child appears puzzled, repeat the command in the same words and then wait. For example, if one has said, "John, put on your coat, it's cold," it may be well simply to say again, "John, put on your coat" without the additional explanation, but repeating the command in the same words. If children appear puzzled, an explanation should always be given. It may even be necessary to illustrate what is wanted, to show how to put away the blocks or how to hold a fork or spoon. If on hearing the command, the child asks, "Why?" an explanation in the simplest possible terms should be given. In connection with the command above, for example, "When little boys get cold because they haven't put on their coats, they sometimes get sick. They are always uncomfortable."

One should be careful, however, that the child does not get the habit of waiting for too many commands.





Children are as absorbed in their play as we are in our work.

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A twelve-year-old who was brought in by his family because they had to speak to him so many times before he obeyed was asked, "John, why does your mother have to speak to you ten times before you do what she asks you to do?" To which he responded, "Because she always does." "Why do you obey, finally?" he was asked. "Well, you see," he said, "I know the tone that means, 'If you don't do that right away, I'm coming to make you.' When I hear that tone, I go right ahead. I don't wait for any more."

There is another reason why children sometimes appear to be disobedient. Their memories are very short. If one tells John to do something in about a half an hour, long before that half hour is passed, John has forgotten all about what he has been told to do. In fact, he has forgotten that he has been told to do anything at all.

Again, a child sometimes does not obey you because he does not know right from left. The author once saw a struggle between a boy and his family in which the sole reason for the struggle was that the father insisted that John shake hands with his right hand. The father put out his right hand. John put out his left. Repeated commands had no effect. John continued to put the hand which to his mind corresponded to the one which his father was using. John was not being disobedient. He simply did not know what was expected of him.

There are some other things that the child does not

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understand until he has reached school age. He cannot count well until he has reached the age of six, so if you send him to get five apples, he may bring you three or four or even two. If he always brings the exact number of things for which he is sent, he is an unusual, rather than an average, child.

One should keep in mind that the more "don'ts" one uses the more occasions there are apt to be for disobedience.

Children need fewer "don'ts" if they have plenty of outlet for activity, and toys that encourage constructive play. It is a child's nature to be active and no amount of commanding will keep him still. The longest time a child under five can stay still—absolutely still—is about one-half of one minute. If one gives him things with which he can play, he plays contentedly. If he hasn't enough to play with, he must be continually touching things which you wish not to have handled. He may, in time, be like that little boy Angelo Patri tells about. When he asked one of his small friends what his name was, the baby said, "John Don't." He had probably never heard his name without the word "don't" accompanying it.

Take toys with you on trips or if you are taking the child to a party at which toys suitable to his age are not likely to be provided for him. They will mean fewer commands, and the more commands one gives the child, the less, in proportion, one can expect obedience.

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Keep away from the type of control in which one makes the child behave by telling him how good his younger or his older brother is. This may make him behave for the time being but, in the long run, it may make him resist authority because he feels jealousy of that younger or older child who is being held up to him as a model. Jealousy is bad in itself and the type of behavior problem which it produces is worse still.

Keep ridicule out of your system for getting obedience. To make a child ridiculous in order to control him makes him very resentful. In time, he will throw off an authority which makes him uncomfortable or he will try to make that authority as ridiculous as he himself has been made. One small child who had been so treated always chose the time when the family had company, to act his worst. He was impertinent—he used bad words, he used his worst table manners. All of his energy was being spent in trying to make ridiculous those people who had shamed him.

Finally—no control by fears. To make a child obey because something will get him—a dog or a bogie man or the like if he doesn't obey—may make him obedient for the time being but will have two bad effects. In the first place, he becomes afraid of those things of which he should have no fear, and this may make him lie awake at night and develop all sorts of behavior problems which are worse than disobedience. In the second place, he will find out in time that the threatened

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fears never come true and then all the force of one's authority is lost, for children easily lose faith in the people who deceive them.

A small boy who had been told that if he told a story his tongue would fall out was exceedingly truthful until he was about seven and one-half years of age. At that time, he got in an awful jam and decided that he would take a chance on his tongue. He told a story. All the night that followed he was awake, worrying. His family could not understand what had happened to him. He seemed afraid and altogether terribly upset. The next morning, he felt his tongue to be sure that it was there, and then he said, "Hm, it didn't fall out. Now I know what I can do." It was some years before he stopped telling stories, which practice he started on the day he found that his tongue had not dropped out. What was worse, he lost faith in the people who had told him such an absurd story.

The habit of obedience, like all other habits, is the result of training. It rests with the adults who control children as to whether this most excellent of habits is set up while at the same time the children are trained in initiative and independence. Training in obedience to reasonable commands should always be accompanied by training in initiative and in taking responsibility.

## CHAPTER II

### DISCIPLINE, PUNISHMENT, AND REWARDS

**A**UTHORS tell us that there are three stages in the development of the idea of punishment in the social group. These same stages are also present in the development of the idea of punishment in the individual. The first of these is punishment to get even. In this, the lowest stage, the whole force of the punishment is toward getting even with the child—toward making the child suffer as the punishing adult has suffered. The attitude is “You have hurt me, so I will hurt you.” Such an illustration as the following will make clear this point.

John clumsily stumbled against a table and broke a valuable vase. The father’s fury over the loss of the vase was so great that he did not take into account the fact that the breaking was accidental, but he seized the boy and spanked him soundly. Afterwards, the father was extremely remorseful, but the damage was done. Fortunately, this attitude is rarely present in the educated parent of today.

What is actually learned when this type of punishment is administered is hatred of the parent, determination to get even with the parent, and other responses of this type. A child may avoid doing again the

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thing that he was punished for, but, at the same time, he will develop methods of retaliation.

A little boy, age five, who had been punished in this manner over a long period was found never to play with other children. The parents were greatly concerned at the child's avoidance of all social activities. They had again and again said to each other in the child's hearing that they hoped he would be popular socially, since that was a great asset both for his leisure time and for his business. That one thing, they wished for him above all others. Unconsciously, he had hit upon avoiding all other children as a way of punishing them for the unfortunate punishment administered to him.

Still another child so punished "got back" at his mother by breaking pieces of china which his mother valued highly. Apparently, they were broken accidentally but, actually, these actions were his unconscious attempts to punish.

The second attitude is that the purpose of punishment is to frighten children enough to keep them from repeating the offense or to keep others from committing it. John had taken food from the ice-box. In order to stop him, he was spanked. This might and did stop John, but the spanking and the unpleasantness which surrounded it made him dislike from that time on all of the foods which he had eaten. This included jello, custard, potato, and milk, none of which it was wise to make John dislike.



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The third attitude, and the only one of the three which the parent should have, is that the punishment shall make the child better—that the punishment shall leave him in a position to act wisely, not only when this situation appears again, but also when he meets similar situations. The same punishment may be given to frighten or to make the child better, depending entirely upon the parental attitudes in regard to it. One may say to a child, “You have been cross and irritable all morning. You have been a bad boy so you must go to bed.” Or one may say to the child, “Little boys that are as cross as this must be tired. You can go and lie down in your nice, cool, quiet bed and rest. Soon you’ll feel fine and can come back and play.” The two attitudes just described are entirely different both while the punishment is being administered and in their after effects. The one may, and often does, make the child dislike the bed, while the other makes him regard bed as a place where he can become rested and ready for more play.

Next to the adults’ attitude toward punishment, the most important thing is the way in which that adult regards individual differences. There is no field in which the differences between children stand out more clearly than in this matter of effects of different punishments. There is no one set punishment which will fit every child and less still is there one set punishment which will fit every bad act. If it were possible to think up the right sort of discipline for every bad

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habit, it would be a simple matter to step to the radio and broadcast this method so that everybody could write in his notebook, or some convenient place, this stock punishment for every bad habit. The question of the correct punishment is far from being as simple as this.

One small boy finds that the worst punishment is to have to call his mother Mrs. Brown for a few minutes. He says over and over again, "Oh, Mrs. Brown, please can't I call you Mother? I'll be good." His sister, two years younger, calls her mother Mrs. Brown just to tease her. What her brother takes as a punishment, Jane takes as a joke.

To Fred, the worst punishment is to be talked to about what he has done, but his brother Robert often says, "Mother, you haven't talked to me for a long time. Please sit down and tell me what I do that is bad."

While punishments themselves are not equally effective for different children, there are certain considerations in giving punishment which do apply in every family. The first of these considerations is that punishment should be resorted to infrequently. As Mrs. Gruenberg<sup>1</sup> says, punishment is like medicine. It should be reserved only for crises. If punishments are administered too frequently, they, like medicine, lose all their force. The child who is constantly punished soon learns to take punishment as a matter of course. In some cases, he even enjoys it. If what your child does

<sup>1</sup> GRUENBERG, SIDONIE M., "Your Child Today and Tomorrow."

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is harmful to himself or to others and no immediate substitute can be found, punishment can and should be administered at once, but, wherever possible, a substitute activity should be found for the one which you wish to stop.

Children get their ideas of right and wrong from our approval or our disapproval, as shown by punishment or by our attitudes. Children only know right and wrong in terms of the way in which people behave toward the things which they have done. One must be careful to have the punishment such that it will help the child in the development of standards of conduct. That "still small voice" of conscience comes in response to the development of standards of behavior. One must ask one's self the question, "What will this punishment do to the child?" and in the light of that, administer or not administer it.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the punishment must not be excessive. If the punishment is excessive, it may be so exciting and intense that it makes the child repeat the act. Many children who have had violent punishments for turning on the gas have continued to repeat this until a substitute punishment was found, just because the punishment was so exciting that they could not forget the misdeed.

Spanking, ordinarily, constitutes one of the too excessive punishments. At the end of a period of prolonged spanking, the child has often forgotten the cause for which it was administered in the resentment

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which is developed during this form of physical punishment. One sound slap on the hand is sometimes necessary as a last resort when the substitution of a more desirable activity has failed, and lighter punishments have seemed to have no effect. Very few children do well when spanking is used as a stock punishment. If one spansks for spilling food, and spansks for tearing up paper, and spansks for crying, and for not picking up toys, and for mussing clothes, and so on, there is no association in the child's mind between the punishment and the act. The punishment therefore is ineffective.

Most children's resentment will be aroused by forms of physical punishment, since this is in itself associated with obstruction of movement to which the child naturally responds with anger. If physical force is used, it should be used only in the earlier years. The last age for spanking, except in extreme conditions and with unusual children, is three and a half years.

For this reason, and for other reasons as well, one should never punish in anger. If one must be angry, the child should not know it. To know that he has made you furious does not add to his respect for you. It must be kept in mind, too, that some children will repeat things just to cause excitement. An angry parent who cooperates in making the child the center of attention is helping that child to keep on with his bad habit.

The simpler the punishment, the better. If the pun-

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ishment is very complex and interesting, the child may repeat what he has done just to have the dramatic experience. For the biting baby, and at least 50 per cent of the children in the world do bite at some time or other, putting the child by himself for ten minutes and telling him at the same time that children who bite cannot play with other children is sufficient to cure most cases. A tremendous amount of excitement about the same thing would merely serve to make the child continue it.

Punishment should be closely associated with the bad activity. For the child who scatters torn-up paper all over the floor, such a punishment as being made to pick the paper up before he plays with anything else is far more effective than would be a spanking, for picking up the paper is associated with tearing it up, and a spanking is not. For a child who has spilled water all over the floor, to mop up every bit of it and then to put away the cloth and mop, is again a far more effective punishment in the long run than is a spanking.

If the same punishment, such as spanking or shaking, is used for every misdeed, it is in no way related to any one bad habit and, therefore, has relatively little effect. Except in rare instances, the punishment does not help to make the child better.

Punishment should follow an act immediately if the child is young, say under five, for children forget very quickly and tend to attach the punishment to the thing

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which has just preceded it. A two-year-old was looking at a book about boats when his father came home from the office, picked him up, and said, "Now sir, your mother has told me what you have done and it is time you learned better," took him upstairs and administered a spanking. When the father said, "Now, sir, what did I punish you for?" the child replied, "Because I said I had a big steamboat." That is what he had been saying to himself while he looked at the pictures just before his father took him upstairs to punish him. When he was asked what he had done that was bad, he remembered only the experience nearest to the spanking.

Be sure both you and the child know why you are punishing him. Of course, you never said to your child when you found it doing something bad, "How many times have I told you not to do that?" but if you had said it, it wouldn't have meant anything to the child. "That" to the child is t—h—a—t, and no more. Tell your child exactly what it is you're punishing him for, very briefly, in one sentence if possible.

Select out of the situation the part that is bad. Otherwise, the child will think he is being punished for everything he was doing at that time. If your child has drawn pictures on the wall, and some children do, say to him, "You can draw on paper. That is all right, and you can draw on your blackboard, but when you draw on the wall, it makes ugly marks that we can't clean off. You may draw on the other two things, but

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we keep marks off the wall." Your child will then know that he is not being punished for drawing, but for drawing *on the wall*.

This illustration was cited before a class of mothers, and one mother spoke up immediately and said, "That's why Dorothy won't draw. Her kindergarten teacher has had great difficulty with her because she gets so disturbed when she has to use crayons and paper. When she drew on my wall, I gave her such a spanking that I was sure that she would never draw on the wall again. I didn't realize that she would not want to draw at all after such a punishment."

Be sure that the punishment is not a matter of the mood but of the act itself. Think how serious or how trivial the act is, and then administer the punishment accordingly. Little things seem serious when one is tired, and not at all serious when one is not. They seem equally serious to the child under any conditions. One should keep this in mind and punish always only to the degree to which the act itself has been serious.

Punish, then let the matter drop. Too much talking takes away the force of the punishment. One sympathizes with the small boy who said to his mother, "Gosh, Mom, take away my swim if you must, but stop talking about it." To talk about what your child has done is, first, to punish him again for the same thing and, second, to remind him to do it again.

Punishment should follow each time the child per-

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forms an undesirable act after the fact that it is undesirable and deserves punishment has been made clear to him. It often happens that if punishment is not given every time it is deserved, the child will try his parent out to see if this is the time he will be punished. Haven't you seen them sometimes doing things they knew they shouldn't do and looking at you out of the corner of their eyes to see if they were really to be punished?

There are exceptions, of course, to this rule. They come under still another point which is, consider the motive which prompts the act. A thing which would be disobedient under some conditions may not be so under others because the motive is a good one.

A little boy met his mother at the front gate. The thing which she noticed first was the fact that his clothing was soaking wet. She promptly took him in the house, led him upstairs, undressed him, scolded him, and put him to bed. Some time later, she went back to find him still in tears. Being a wise mother, she sat down to talk it over with him. "Your flowers were all dried up, so I watered them, and then you spanked me and put me to bed," he sobbed. She found out on inquiry that her cherished flowers had not been watered all day, and her six-year-old on seeing this had undertaken to water them himself though he had been forbidden to use the hose. In this case, the disobedience might well have been forgiven and talked over in view of the motive which prompted the act.



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A similar situation occurred in the family of a little girl who, during her mother's absence, had washed the dishes left over from breakfast; and who was punished equally severely for being wet, without inquiry as to the cause of her apparent disobedience.

Overlook some disobediences. There are a number of slight naughtinesses, which it is better to disregard than to attach punishment to. To a serious thing, one must, of course, pay attention, but there are many small annoyances which are only fixed more firmly in a child's mind when he is punished for them. Any mother knows what is meant by this. Children outgrow them if one lets them alone.

An only child is under a handicap, for the reason that every naughtiness is noticed where, if he were in a family with five other children, much would be overlooked. Never exaggerate, either in one's own mind or to the child, the importance of slight naughtinesses.

It very often happens that the act itself has brought its own punishment and further punishment will only serve to make the child resentful. A little girl who had spilled a glass of water on her mother's best tablecloth, just before company arrived for dinner, was overcome with remorse at her carelessness. In addition to being told how bad she was, the little girl was severely punished. At the end of the punishment, all her sorrow was gone and she was merely resentful. Punishment had only served to turn remorse into resentment.

Be careful not to attach the idea of punishment to

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things which you wish the child to like. If you wish your child to like to take his nap, then it is hardly fair to say to him, "You've been a bad boy, so you'll have to go to bed," because it will not be long before he thinks of bed as a punishment and not as a place in which to rest.

A boy, age twelve, as a punishment for bad behavior, had to write one hundred times, "I have been bad." Nothing could have possibly been worse as a punishment, both because it emphasized to the child's mind the fact that he was bad and because it shortly made him detest writing.

Another little boy who talked in school was told that every time he talked, as a punishment, he would have to stay half an hour after school. Going to school is, of course, a privilege for any child, but this child soon began to dislike school because he had firmly fixed in his mind the idea that school was a punishment.

One small friend of mine has decided that it is very bad to have to take a bath, because, half a dozen times when he has been bad, and the badness has also involved getting extremely grimy and sticky, he has had to take a bath as a part of his punishment. Of course, he would have had to take the bath, because of his condition, but the bath should not have been used as a part of the punishment.

When one promises a punishment, one should keep one's word. One should never threaten a punishment and then not carry it out. Children soon learn whether

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one means what one says, and one should keep one's promise of punishment exactly as one keeps one's promise of a treat.

\* One should keep all of these cautions which apply to punishment in mind whenever one punishes, but there is one caution which one should keep in mind all of the time, and that is, as has been said before, that punishment is like medicine and, therefore, should be used as infrequently as possible. If you can break your child's bad habit by any of the other means that have been suggested, do that first. When a bad habit must be broken, remember that it is better to find a more wholesome way for the child to use his activity. If one has punished the child for tearing up papers all over the floor, one should suggest at the same time something else to do with papers that is more interesting than tearing them up, or one should suggest to the child that he can tear up papers, old ones without print on them, and that it is more fun to tear them up and make a pile of them in the middle of another piece of paper. If punishment were necessary, either of these things would keep one from having to repeat the punishment a second or third time.

Again, one must always keep in mind that if one has five children, one may have to find five different ways to give punishment, for the chances are that the five children in one's own family will react very differently to the same punishment.

Keep punishments away from the child's life as far

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as possible, exactly as one would refrain from the constant use of medicine except under a doctor's direction.

### *Rewards*

No discussion of discipline would be complete unless it included a full treatment of when and how to give rewards. The greatest reward which any child can receive, as has been stated in the chapter on "Habit Formation," is a sense of achievement. To arouse an interest in what one wishes done and, therefore, to make the child feel that the effort expended in accomplishing the task is worth while, is one of the best ways to make him feel that much desired sense of achievement.

Rewards which involve actual payment of some kind should be given with extreme care. They should never be given as bribes. To say to a child, "If you will clean up the floor, I will give you an ice-cream cone" is to put him in the position of feeling that this job actually requires payment. To say to a child, "If you will be good, I will take you to the park," is to make him feel that being good is a thing to be paid for.

As has been said in the chapter on "Habit Formation," the same rewards may be given in quite a different way. "You have been so good that you have saved time for Mother, so she now has time to take you on a trip or to make ice cream for you," makes the child feel that he has actually aided in the running of the

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home and that such assistance which saves time for the adult members of the family does mean actual treats for him because of time saved. Rewards should come because the child has added to the pleasant atmosphere of the family or has saved time by being of help or has achieved some standard.

To bribe a child is nearly always to make him feel that he can, by bargaining, raise the price. Many children bargain as a game. Some such statement as, "It's twice as hard to be good today as it was yesterday, so I should have two candies instead of one," is not unusual where children have been paid to be good.

To wear a ribbon because he has eaten his breakfast, or to put a little star on each day when he has cleaned his teeth and washed his hands and face properly, or even for a dry day, often helps a child to acquire the habits which one thinks advisable, but these rewards should be given only when other things have failed, since they are after all not closely connected with the habit which one wishes to establish. With many children, this type of reward loses its force in a few days or weeks and helps but little in the final establishment of the activities which one wishes to become habitual.

Rewards should never stimulate the child beyond his capacities. Children who are offered unusual treats if they make high grades in school, as many authorities say, may be tempted to cheat solely for the purpose of acquiring the reward. A child who has been offered a watch for outstanding performances in elocution or

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athletics, when he has not shown capacity in either of these fields, would be forced beyond his strength or made ridiculous in striving for a reward which he can never honestly earn.

One type of reward which can be given is the sense of achievement which the child gets from competing against his own record. He can know that he has done eight examples in arithmetic this week where last week his limit was six. He can even draw a picture of his increase of capacity on a large piece of paper marked off in squares which indicate the number of examples done correctly. One boy who made such a record had found addition extremely difficult. The greatest fun which he had in doing his addition was in charting his own progress on this graph. Competing against one's own record is an excellent type of habit to develop. This may be used extensively in setting up good habits.

None of this discussion is intended to indicate that a child should never be paid for any services which he does in his home. A full discussion of when and how children should be paid for such services is included in the chapter on "Money."

## CHAPTER III

### GOOD AND BAD HABITS

**S**CIENTISTS who deal with children from infancy to school age agree that this is the most important period in the life of any child. All parents, then, stand in the position of the most important educators whom the child will ever meet. The basis for habits of thinking straight, of telling the truth, of having a high code of ethics, is laid down in the first six years of life. Good behavior for the rest of the child's life depends upon the habits of good behavior set up in the first six years. Even those health habits, upon which the child's whole future health depends, begin while the child is still in the home under the parents' care—that is, in the pre-school period. All education which a child will receive when he enters school will be colored by what has gone into his education in his home.

A child who enters school with wholesome mental attitudes, for example, cooperation, interest in new things, willingness to learn, emotional balance as shown by few temper tantrums and fears, will learn much more rapidly than will the same child if he comes in bashful, full of fears, and so contrary that his answer to any directions is a "no" attitude.

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A two-year-old baby came into the nursery group at the University three years ago. Its mother's first suggestion was, "Don't you want to sit down?" to which the baby responded, "I don't wanna." Her next suggestion, "Wouldn't you like to play on the slide?" was followed by the same reply from the baby. After four suggestions as to what the baby might want to do, the mother finally said, "All right, stay here and do what you want to do then," to which the baby responded again and more violently, "I don't wanna." Such an attitude would make learning in school or making any social contacts almost impossible.

Good health habits mean that a child will have fewer illnesses and, therefore, will have more time in school during the year in which to profit by such learning situations as are offered there. Children who enter school with poor health habits are frequently ailing and lose time unnecessarily. Children who enter school with habits of resistance to authority, obstinacy, temper tantrums, overtimidity, and the like have to spend a great portion of their time in overcoming these bad habits. If these habits are kept up, the child loses most of what is valuable in school instruction and in social contacts with the other children.

One of the most important things for parents and, in fact, for all individuals to know is how good habits may be built up and bad habits broken. There are certain general principles of habit formation, such as the following, which are so much a matter of common-



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sense knowledge that we do not stop to see how great is their importance.

Anything which the child does which has pleasant results, that is, makes him more comfortable, gives him what he wishes, makes his discomfort less, will tend to be done over and over again, whether it is good or bad for the child in question. Every time an act is done, it makes the habit of doing that act stronger and stronger. In a word, the more practice one has, the more certain one is to repeat what one has practiced. It is not only done more rapidly and more accurately but it tends to be done more often than other things which one has practiced less. For example, if a child has opened the ice-box door once, the tendency to do that again is heightened. If he has done this eight or ten times, the tendency may be so strong that it is difficult to pass the ice-box door without opening it. If he has been allowed to practice this one hundred times, it will be difficult to break him of what has now become a set habit. If, each time he has opened the door, he has also taken something he likes to eat from the ice-box, the habit will be set up all the more strongly, for he has had both practice and pleasant results. It may be a sufficiently pleasant result if he has just looked in to see the delightful array of things which the ice-box contains.

A third general principle of habit formation is that one tends to do what is suggested to one by the situation itself or by words from some other human being;

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for example, if attention is called to one's nails by the fact that there are hang nails surrounding them, one is more apt to bite the nails and the surrounding skin. A child who goes to bed in a noisy room with toys, which suggest activity, scattered all over the floor, tends to be wakeful rather than sleepy, because wakefulness is suggested by the things around him.

A fourth general principle is that if one practices what is bad as often as he practices what is good, one is just as apt to use the bad habit as the good one. Good table manners practiced only when there is company, while bad ones are practiced at all other times, will mean setting up habits of bad table manners—not good ones.

A final principle, of which we all are aware, is that there must be outlets for activity. If what a child is doing is bad for him, even though it meets some need, it is far wiser to find something else for him to do which will take the place of this thing which may become a habit or may have become one than merely to punish. With all of these things in mind, it will be relatively simple to profit from the study of how to break bad habits.

### 1. *Breaking Bad Habits*

In every case of a bad habit, the first thing to do is to find out why the child keeps repeating this thing which one does not wish him to do.

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Is there anything in the situation which stimulates him to do the undesirable act ?

Is he being put in a situation in which he is paid to do what one does not wish him to do, *i.e.*, is he being rewarded for this bad habit?

Is he practicing what one does not wish him to do as often as he practices the good habit one wishes to build up ? Is he rewarded as often as he is punished ?

Is this act meeting a need which is a natural part of child life and which is not being met in the right way?

And, finally, has the child any other outlet for that impulse which prompts his deed?

Each of these questions should be answered in the positive or in the negative before one begins to change the conditions to such an extent that the bad habit will be broken. For example, is the child being stimulated to be bad like the children in the following illustrations:

John keeps getting up from the table to play with his kiddy-kar and his truck which are always on the floor beside his chair. The first thing to do in this situation is to be sure that the kiddy-kar and the truck are not in the dining room when John begins his meal. Make it interesting for John to put those toys somewhere else, for example, to put the cars in a play garage (a corner of another room will do) before going to dinner. When the two things with which John plays

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are no longer there, he is much less apt to get down from the table.

Jane always takes the books out of the bookcase. She does this because the bookcase door is left open and a book or two have been left on the floor. As soon as the bookcase door is closed, she stops taking the books out of the bookcase. She has no longer any suggestion to do the thing which one does not wish her to do.

In what other ways may one place the child in a situation which makes it practically impossible for him to avoid doing what one wishes to keep him from doing? Reminding him constantly of things that one does not wish him to do is another way of stimulating him to do them. Edward is being taken for a visit. When Edward's mother takes him to visit a house which he has visited before, she says to him, "Do you remember the last time you were here, you turned on the water in the bathtub, put tooth paste all over the stairs, drew on the walls, and played train with the best chairs. You mustn't do any of those things this time." The chances are that Edward wouldn't have thought of any of those things now, but once reminded of them he must do them, and he does. To say to a child when leaving him at the school door, "Now, you mustn't cry when I go," is a good way to suggest to that child that he cry as soon as he has been left, and he does. To keep saying to a child over and over again, "You must not bite your nails," "You must

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not bite your nails," "You must not bite your nails," is a good way to fix that action so firmly in the child's mind that he cannot help biting them. Did you ever have the experience of knowing that you must not do something and thinking of it with all your might for days? If you have, then you know that somewhere during that time in which you were thinking about the thing you didn't want to do, you found that you had done it. Children are just the same in this way as are adults.

If one wants John to keep his fingers out of his mouth, one should say to him, "Your fingers are wet. We must keep those fingers dry, mustn't we," instead of saying, "John, you must not put your fingers into your mouth."

Next to placing a child in the situations as described above, we have the second of those reasons for the child's repetition of a bad habit; that is, rewarding him for doing what one does not wish him to do. One must remember that the greatest reward for the child under five is to be the center of attention and the cause of excitement. Perhaps that is why your child is repeating the thing you wish he'd stop.

Jane takes the books out of the bookcase every day and when you ask her mother what she does after the books are out of the bookcase, her mother tells you, "She comes to me and says, 'Just look what I've done,'" James opens the ice-box door, and if you don't say any-

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thing about it to him, but just close it, he says, "Mamma, please scold me. You forgot."

Albert hasn't wanted to go to bed for his afternoon nap. He says every afternoon, "If you put me in bed, I'll scream and yell and pound on the door." His mother says that she gets so excited when he says that, that she can hardly talk to him. Don't you know why Albert tells her he'll scream and yell? He likes the excitement it causes. One authority has said that the one weapon which the adult has that no child possesses is indifference. Very often a little indifference, a little ignoring of the child, while at the same time one sticks to the point one has made, will have a wonderful effect. If Albert had been put to bed and had been allowed to cry it out and to stage his scene with no attention whatever for three or four days, he would have tired soon of putting out all that effort for nothing.

What other rewards may the child be getting for doing the thing that you do not want him to do? Without meaning to have it so, you may actually be paying him for it. Jane will not eat fresh vegetables at her dinner. In the middle of every afternoon when Jane's dinner has been very light, she gets a jam sandwich and a piece of cake. Who would eat dinner in the middle of the day if she could be sure of a party in the afternoon when she didn't eat at noon?

When Alice will not eat dinner, or at most, eats only a little meat and a little potato, she gets an extra helping of

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dessert because she “has to be nourished.” If you were a child, wouldn’t you eat very little dinner if that meant two helpings of a dessert you particularly liked? I think probably you would. These children are being rewarded for doing the things that their parents do not wish to have them do.

When a child is destructive, or is being what an adult calls “naughty,” he may be satisfying a need which has not been met. One boy who took things to pieces all the time and could not be persuaded to let even his toys alone was found to have no toys suitable to be taken apart and put together again. He had no blocks and no set of tools and wood. He did not even have any clay or sand. In order to break him of the habit of taking apart the things which should be left whole, this boy was given a set of tools and some wood and some large building blocks. These he played with to his heart’s content. At the same time, he was cured of taking apart the handsome mechanical toys in which, after all, his only interest was the extent to which they could be taken to pieces and put together again.

Another child who “would drive his kiddy-kar” on books placed on the floor, in spite of the punishment which he invariably received, was cured of this when he was given large flat blocks on which to drive the car. These, of course, made a better train track than did the books. All these are instances of how wholesome outlets may be provided for a child’s urgent

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needs. Find out whether what your child is doing is meeting a need that you can meet in a more constructive way.

There is another point to watch out for when your child does something that you do not wish him to do. Is he rewarded as often as he is punished for the same act? James has the habit of never taking a "no" as final. As soon as he is told, "No, you cannot go out," he starts in to beg and persuade and fuss. That is certainly a bad enough habit. The reason James never takes "no" as final is because about half the time that "no" is being said, if James can keep right on fussing and persuading enough, that "no" is changed to "yes." If you want your child to break his bad habits, be sure that you are not rewarding him as often as you are punishing him for this same thing.

One way, and perhaps the simplest way, to break a bad habit is to make it impossible for the child to do the act which one wishes him to forget. James will knock the vases off the low table by the door. If no vase is placed on this table, this trouble will stop. It often happens that, with a very simple thing, it is better to remove the cause than to cure the habit in any other way.

Here are some other examples: A little boy bites his nails because the skin around the nails and the nails themselves are always rough. One good way to help him to break that habit is to manicure his nails so well that there are no rough pieces of skin or any rough



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edges. His attention then will not be called to his fingers.

James breaks his toys as soon as the nails begin to come out or the pieces begin to come unglued. A simple way to cure James of taking his toys to pieces, if this is the cause, is to go over them at intervals and reglue pieces which are coming apart, and smooth off rough places on which James may pull. These are all illustrations of habits involving things so simple that probably the best way to break these habits is to remove the conditions which suggest them.

Have you found something else for your child to do instead of the thing that you want him to stop doing? Substituting something else for the habit that you want him to drop is the very best way to make him stop. See first whether the child is being stimulated to do the thing that you don't want him to do. See next if you are rewarding him for doing what you don't want him to do, and stop doing both of those things if you happen to have been doing them. Then find something else for him to do that will take the place of the thing that you wish to have stopped.

A little baby, aged sixteen months, who would pick up the fluff off the floor and put it in her mouth, was stopped by being given a small waste basket in which she could put everything that she picked up. When the waste basket had a lot of things in it, the child and her mother made a great point of going outside to empty the basket. Of course, the baby put some things in the

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basket that shouldn't have been on the floor, such as mother's thimble, so the contents of the waste basket had to be examined carefully before being thrown out; but this was a small matter compared to that of having the baby put things in its mouth.

Another child who would open the ice-box door and play with the things inside (you know this baby, don't you?) was told, "You can help mother whenever she sets the table. You can bring her everything that she needs from the ice-box. Boys that are big enough to help to set the table are big enough to keep the ice-box door closed except at meal times."<sup>1</sup>

Another child who would turn on the gas was told that he could have his own little rag to polish the rod at the bottom of the stove. That was baby's place. Gas plugs were mother's place. "Baby polishes the rod." "Mother touches the plugs."<sup>1</sup>

A child who would climb up and look at the clock was told, "You can look at that clock whenever mother is there. She will open it for you. We look at clocks when mother is there. We keep away from clocks when mother is not there. When you want to look at the clock mother will come." For the next three days, the mother had to come in at least five times a day to show the clock to the child. At the end of that time, the child's curiosity was satisfied. Satisfy curiosity whenever you can, since curiosity is a need of the child.

<sup>1</sup> See FENTON, J. C., "A Practical Psychology of Babyhood," Houghton Mifflin Company.

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Another child who would pull father's books off the table was given a pile of books of his own and told, "This is baby's pile. Baby plays with this pile. Father plays with this pile. This pile is mother's. Mother plays with this pile. Baby plays *only* with his pile." Then mother kept her hands away from the baby's pile of books and so did father. The child soon learned to play only with his own pile.

Activity is essential in childhood. If a legitimate outlet for activity is not discovered, a child may continue an act even though he is punished for it, or he may turn to another activity equally undesirable. It is necessary to find a substitute for whatever you do not wish a child to do, for even punishment often fails unless a substitute can be found. It becomes so unpleasant to stop one's self doing things one wishes to do that one does them and takes the punishment that follows.

A small friend who came to visit the seven- and eight-year-old boys in the family was asked to supper. He said he was unable to stay because he was on a diet, and visiting for meals had been forbidden. He started for home, got as far as the gate, and returned, asking, "What have you got for supper?" He was told in detail and at the end of the list of foods he said, "All right, I'll stay. I'll get a whale of a licking but it's worth it." It often is "worth it" to be punished rather than to forego a forbidden pleasure, if no substitutes have been found for it.

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We have spoken very little about punishment, because punishment should be used as little as possible. Whenever the habit is so bad that it hurts the child or someone else, however, punishment may need to be used. This punishment should be as nearly as possible the result of the act itself.<sup>1</sup>

The following is a summary of the material which we have just discussed. When your child has a bad habit, ask yourself these questions:

1. Is this thing that my child is doing meeting some need which I have failed to meet; for example, is it the result of curiosity which should be satisfied ?

2. Am I rewarding this child for keeping on with this habit, for example, does it make him the center of attention and the cause of excitement ?

3. Is he being rewarded as often as he is being punished for the same act ?

4. Have I tried to find something else which he can do in place of this habit, and is that something else of equal interest ?

5. Am I making it almost impossible for him to escape doing the undesirable act ?

### *2. Setting Up Good Habits*

In the discussion on breaking bad habits, we said that there were two ways of making a child keep on doing what one did not wish him to do. These same

<sup>1</sup> Read the chapter on "Punishment," in "Your Child Today and Tomorrow," by Sidonie M. Gruenberg.

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ways are the ones that make him set up good habits. The first of these is putting the child in a situation in which he is bound to do the thing one wishes him to do. The second is making pleasant what one wishes him to do.

Give your child ample opportunity to practice the thing which you wish him to do. Little children learn most things slowly and forget easily. If politeness is the habit one wishes to set up, give the child opportunities to practice it not only with strangers, but with the family and everyone he meets, and set him a good example. If it is the habit of cleanliness, then be sure, for instance, that your child washes his hands every time he eats—not just sometimes—for practice once in a while does not set up a habit, because, in the meantime, he is practicing the opposite habit of being dirty. If he is to learn to pick up his clothes, let him have the fun of doing this daily and by himself. Put your child in a position to be reminded not by you, but by the things themselves, to do that which you wish him to do.

A child tends to do over and over again, and therefore to make habits of, those acts which he finds interesting and pleasant. There are four main classes of things that make children like their tasks or that make their occupations pleasant: (1) the sense of achievement, that is, having accomplished something by themselves; (2) being the center of attention or the cause of excitement; (3) praise; (4) some sort of reward,

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such as a trip to the zoo or an extra privilege of some kind.

A sense of achievement is essential to happiness. The desire to accomplish something by one's self comes from the instinctive drive to self-assertion. All of us are pleased when we complete a piece of work which has required our best efforts. Children feel the same as do adults. An adult should never help a child so much, at any point, that the child loses the joy which comes from carrying out its job. A skilful parent will give only enough help to prevent failure or discouragement and make success possible. A little girl, aged three, was building a bed for her doll. She was loading a wagon with large blocks, one at a time, and taking them to the place where the bed was being built, then setting up each one carefully. A thoughtless "grown-up" rushed to the child and said, "Oh, that's such hard work. Let me help you," then carried the remaining blocks herself and began to put them in place. To her surprise the child burst into tears and said, "I do it mine ownself." If the blocks had been really too heavy for the child, the adult might have asked the child if she wanted help or might have invented some easier way which the child would be willing to use.

A three-year-old who was bravely buttoning his coat had this job taken out of his hands by another "grown-up" who promptly buttoned all of the buttons. The small boy equally prompt and more clever unbuttoned them and started out to get again the thrill which was

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always his when he knew that he had buttoned every button by himself.

The sense of joy in achievement should be kept throughout life. Parents who help their children constantly, or who reward their children for doing what they should do because of joy in the job done, take away from them one of the best of the character traits—doing a job thoroughly for the joy of the work.

Whenever a task is in itself apparently uninteresting to the child, one should seek to make it interesting so that he will have joy in achievement. "Play is the child's work" and a little of the play spirit often turns work into the child's play. Children will learn in their play to do things which it would be almost impossible to teach them unless a little play spirit had entered into the learning.

A little boy who had never learned his addition and subtraction learned both readily enough in playing store. Another one who had not learned his tables learned them when he played that each table was a dragon to be conquered and he a soldier who conquered the dragon. He made a mark on his wooden sword for each table that he learned. Still another child to whom it seemed to be impossible to teach good table manners learned beautiful manners through playing game after game of tea party.

Your child does the thing at first because it is interesting and pleasant. He continues to do it because he has set up a habit. Children learn to clean up

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crumbs and spilled food as a part of the nursery-group routine. After a year at the nursery, some of them insist on getting down from the table, at home, and brushing up spilled food, in spite of their parents' protests. They are uncomfortable while spilled food is on the floor. A habit once set up will keep going by its own force in just this way. After a year's training in putting away all kiddy-kars and trucks, the sight of such objects in the middle of the floor at meal times is enough to make three or four of the children stop whatever they are doing to put them away. \*

As an illustration of making delightful things which are usually uninteresting and unpleasant, one may take the toilet habits of nursery-group children, most of whom are under three and one-half years of age. These children take great delight in operating a soap machine and in using their own towels, wash cloths, and combs marked with their own emblems. After they have had the delightful experience of doing it for themselves and have had their share of praise, they need no encouragement from an adult. If they are allowed to go through the whole process without adult interference, this makes it fun. Contrast with this the attitude of a two-and-a-half-year-old who, when it is time to wash for meals, is summarily seized and scrubbed, often to the accompaniment of a running fire of more or less cross comment as to how dirty he is. No wonder the latter begins to dislike washing and, in time, to do everything in his power to avoid it. He has



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none of that sense of fun and joy in a job well done which comes from seeing a clean face and hands appear through his own efforts, and smooth hair take the place of "hair on end." If one has already set up a dislike of washing, then such devices as those suggested by the Child Health Association are excellent and may be used to change the child's attitude. Through these, he learns to dramatize the act of washing himself. The towel is a sail, the tub a ship in which he takes voyages, and even the soap is a part of the play.

One's attitude toward the child's occupations and activities is a great factor in making him feel that what he is doing is interesting. If one takes the attitude that "work is fun," the child will like it. If one takes the attitude that this is "something that just must be done," whether the child likes it or not, he may do it, but he will certainly not seek for a chance to repeat it and it will, therefore, not become a habit easily. The difference between work and play, between the pleasant and the unpleasant, is often just an attitude, and the desirable attitude is the result of early training. That making things interesting, and therefore fun, will help to set up almost any habit may be seen from the behavior of twins, aged three and a half. To these twins, cod-liver oil is given at the end of the day as a reward for being good. When they have been superlatively good, their reward is an extra spoonful of codliver oil.

Very often the tone with which one sets a task is sufficient. If one suggests doing a thing to the child

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in a tone which says, "This is going to be unpleasant, but you'll have to do it anyhow," he is not apt to think that this is a pleasant task and to wish to repeat it. If, on the other hand, one says in a tone which indicates that what he is going to do will be fun, the child looks upon it as a delightful thing to do.

The second of the things which makes children's activities pleasant is being the center of attention or the cause of excitement. Praise, which is the third of our categories, makes him the center of attention also. Being told that he has done his work well, that the house he has built is a good house, or that his clothes that he has put away look beautifully neat makes him feel both that he has attracted attention and that you are proud of him.

Praise should be given only for work that is good. It is unfair to a child to praise him when he has not even attempted to accomplish a task. Children should learn, and learn early, that praise comes as a result of accomplishment and not merely because they are children and one is fond of them. Praise gives the child the center of attention and makes him the cause of excitement exactly as does unwise punishment or excitement on your part over the errors which he has made. One should see that a child becomes the center of attention and the cause of excitement when he is good, rather than when he is bad. Unfortunately, one sometimes makes the mistake of giving the child attention and letting him see that he has caused excite-

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ment when the thing that he has done is bad, rather than good. He should never become the center of attention or see that he has caused great excitement when he has done something which you do not wish him to repeat.

For young children, one cannot stress praise too much as a factor in setting up good habits. Praise the child for the successful part of what he has done. If one simply concentrates on the mistakes which he makes, for instance, in picking up his toys or cleaning his room, and fusses about those mistakes, one is making the occupation unpleasant, not pleasant, a thing which often is not realized until too late. Praise him for the part which he has accomplished and suggest, "Now we'll pick up this toy and close this drawer and then our job will be done." Instead of saying, "Just look. You think you have cleaned up your play room but you left out a toy and this dresser drawer is wide open."

Making the child the center of attention because he has done something which you wish to have him do is as excellent a way to make him do what you want him to do as it is to keep up his bad habits. Show the pleasure which work well done gives you. Make him the center of attention, but not by contrasting him with his brothers and sisters when he has done something particularly worth while. This will emphasize to your child the fact that he gets his attention as a result of doing things which receive social approval, rather than

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as a result of doing something which is neither good for him nor for his family.

One should always remember to praise the deed—not the child; for example, not “You are a good boy to have cleaned up your room,” but “That is a splendid job you have done in cleaning your room.” Not—“You are a wonderful child to have jumped so far,” but “That is a fine jump you have made.”

A trained nurse who has for a long time been doing health work with young children tells me that one way to make all of the children drink milk is to call up and shake hands with those children who have drunk milk, but to leave unnoticed those who have taken no milk. In a short while, all of the children are coming up because all are drinking their quart of milk a day.

Now, as to the use of the last of those ways of making things pleasant, namely, rewards. Rewards should be given only as a last resort, in setting up good habits. If rewards are given, they should be given only after the child has reached a certain standard. It is unwise to say, “If you will stop biting your nails, I will give you a ring.” It is wiser to say, “People who bite their nails do not wish to call attention to their hands. When your nails are long enough to make your hands look well you may have a ring.”

If one says to the child, “If you will be very good, I’ll take you to the zoo,” one puts him in the position of having to be bad sometimes in order to insure that

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a reward will be offered. If one gives him the same treat in this way, "Now, you've been so good that you've saved time for mother so that we can go to the zoo," an entirely different face is put upon the matter.

A small boy, aged three, was very anxious to have an engine and a wooden train, but he would cry whenever his mother left the house. His mother might have said, "If you won't cry when I leave the house, I'll give you an engine," but that would have suggested the idea of being paid to stop crying. She offered the reward, but in quite another way. What she said was, "Only little boys cry when their mothers leave the house. Little boys are too small to have trains. When you are a big enough boy to have learned not to cry, you will be big enough to have a train." The child said, "I'll be a big boy." Each time she left the house thereafter, he said, "I'm a big boy." At the end of a week, the crying was cured and the train was given to him.

Rewards, in the sense of bribing the child to be good, tend both to stimulate him to be bad in order to receive rewards when he is good, and to give him the idea that he has to be paid often for doing those things which should have been done without pay.

One mother offered her child a penny for every good paper in arithmetic. At the end of six weeks, the child said, "But spelling is hard too, and I should have a penny for spelling." Shortly after she came in with the statement, "Arithmetic is two times as hard as spelling,

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so arithmetic gets two pennies." At the end of a year, a good paper in arithmetic was costing a quarter and the mother had to stop the system of bribing altogether. If one uses a reward, it should be, as has been said, a reward for reaching a standard and not payment for being good.

There are three main ideas, then, to be kept in mind when setting up good habits. First, give your child a sense of joy in achievement. Second, be sure that he has an ample chance to practice what you want him to learn. Little children learn very slowly and forget very easily, and they must have many experiences with doing the thing that you wish to have them do if it is to become a habit. Finally, be sure that the things which you wish your child to learn to do are coupled with pleasant results, not unpleasant ones. If one keeps these things in mind, one finds that setting up good habits is not nearly so severe a task as one has been led to expect.

## CHAPTER IV

### HABITS OF SLEEP, REST, AND ELIMINATION

THE three most important habits to set up in the preschool period, aside from emotional control, which will be discussed in the next chapter, are habits of sleep, rest, and elimination. Children whose physical habits are perfectly established at kindergarten age, as they should be, are free to turn their attention to learning all of the new things which are presented to them. Children who are still learning correct toilet habits, correct habits of sleep and rest, and correct habits of eating, must have these processes, which should now have become almost automatic, on their minds.

#### 1. *Habits of Sleep and Rest*

In discussing sleep in connection with childhood, it must be remembered that sleep is to the adult a thing to be sought for as an escape from too burdensome and too tiresome tasks, as a source from which new strength can be gained for attacking tomorrow's task, and the like. With children, sleep is quite a different matter. As soon as the child has passed beyond the period of

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infancy, that is, has reached the creeping and walking period, he begins to get all sorts of interesting experiences from the things which are around him. These experiences are so interesting and absorbing that he does not wish to leave them to sleep. In fact, they become so fascinating that even after he is in his crib, sounds, or the sight of some particularly interesting object with which he has played during the day may tend to put off the hour at which he falls asleep or at which he begins his rest. The infant, as Blatz<sup>1</sup> states, has very few things to shut out, so that many parents who have had no difficulty with children in this period, in which there was little stimulation to fight against, now find themselves with troubles both at the nap hour and at the hour at which the children are put to bed for the night.

All children must be active, and they must be constantly experimenting except during periods of sleep. The child may not be able to arrive promptly at that state of lessened movement which is necessary if sleep is to come as soon as he is placed in bed. On the contrary, he may find it extremely difficult to relax. All adults are aware of the fact that they must relax entirely before sleep actually comes. Children are unaware of this fact, but it is as true for them as it is for adults. Any unusual excitement or tension means putting off the hour at which sleep appears until a much

<sup>1</sup> BLATZ, W. E., and HELEN BOTT, "Parents and the Preschool Child," p. 73, Wm. Morrow & Company, Inc.



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later time than is desirable. Adults under strain may keep turning over and over in their minds new ideas and may actually do excellent work during these periods of strain, or they may, on the contrary, simply mull over the unpleasant events or circumstances which are causing this disturbance. Such mental activities are far from restful, and, if they are allowed to take the place of sleep for any length of time, produce serious bodily conditions. The sleep of children is not disturbed by such trains of ideas, but it may be disturbed by an inability to relax, due to any one of a number of things.

The first prerequisite in avoiding problems in regard to sleep is, as in the case of avoiding feeding problems, absolute regularity in schedule. Sleep, hunger, and all other bodily functions appear to operate rhythmically. An individual who has been trained to sleep at 7:00 p.m. will find it difficult to stay awake beyond that time. On the contrary, an individual who has gone to bed sometimes at 7:00, sometimes at 9:00, and sometimes at 11:00 will often find that sleep does not come until the latest of the hours at which he has gone to bed. It may even be postponed beyond that time. Children are affected in the same way by irregularity in the bedtime schedule.

The factor next in importance to regularity of schedule is the physical condition of the child. Nervous children or children who are excitable and high strung often find it difficult to achieve the relaxation

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which necessarily precedes sleep. Cameron<sup>1</sup> suggests, for these children, taking them to the sleeping room as quietly as possible and then letting the child put each article of clothing on the chair as if he were putting it to bed. At the end of the undressing process, bed and sleep have been so strongly suggested that the child goes to sleep with little resistance. Moreover, negativistic tendencies which are apt to appear in children who are vigorous as well as in those who are nervous tend to disappear, according to Cameron, when the child feels himself in the rôle of director of the whole bed situation as he does when he puts his clothes to sleep in this fashion, and then climbs into bed himself. Strong suggestion that sleep is expected, and this does not mean constant talking to the child about sleep, of course, is a good way to set the child's mind in the direction of expecting sleep.

Slight illness, digestive disturbances, and exhaustion from too little sleep, too much stimulation, or too tiresome play may operate upon the child as does a too strenuous day upon the adult—that is, leave him too excited or too worn out to go to sleep. In this connection, it must be said that children should not enter into rough romps or exciting games after the supper hour. Exciting games in which the child is chased or mauled or worked up in any way leave him unable to sleep.

A little boy, whose father returned home from the

<sup>1</sup> CAMERON, H. C., "The Nervous Child."

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office early three times a week and played rough games with the child, was found to postpone the sleep hour on these three evenings by as much as an hour and a half.

Still another group of children, in the same family, who played Indians immediately after dinner were found to have the sleep hour postponed on any evening on which the Indian game occurred. Play of a quiet sort with blocks, sand, dolls, stories, and looking at picture books are all good activities for the hour before bedtime.

No quarrels with the child, no nagging and no exciting punishments should occur just before the bed hour. Since this is the time when children are tired and somewhat cross, it is also frequently the time at which such quarrels and corrections occur. Quarrels merely leave children in a worse state than they were in before. Quarreling about the child's failure to go to sleep is one of the most potent factors in causing sleep problems. No one has ever been able to force sleep to come, as any adult who has had a brief period of sleeplessness will be willing to testify. The more one attempts to force oneself to sleep, the less successful one will be. With children, even the desire to sleep disappears when quarrels or attempts to use force come into the situation.

Children often develop mild sleeplessness during periods of physical disturbance. These are greeted with excitement or anger or even mild irritation on the

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part of the parents. Such parental attitudes often cause what might have been a passing phase, due only to a physical state, to develop into a serious problem.

A fourteen-year-old who had slept normally until he had a digestive disturbance over a period of three weeks was then wakeful from time to time. His mother, his father, his grandmother, his two aunts, and all of his uncles made John's sleeplessness the most frequent topic of the family conversation. Whenever one met a member of the family, one had to listen to John's latest symptoms. When the digestive disturbance had passed, John was still sleepless and his sleeplessness did not stop until long after the family had ceased to make him the center of attention and the cause of excitement by constant conversation about what was to be done with him and what was to be done with his sleepless state.

Occasional lapses from the ideal number of hours of sleep should cause as little excitement as do occasional variations in appetite.

Indigestible meals or too heavy meals at night sometimes cause sleeplessness. The author has on record the case of a child who, for his supper, ate two large bowls of cereal, two strips of bacon, an egg, two helpings of fresh vegetables, one lettuce sandwich, and a glass of milk containing a large percentage of cream. After such a meal, an adult would have had difficulty in sleeping. Yet this child was urged to eat this unusual quantity of supper.

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If ideal conditions could be secured on the physical side, they would be as follows: a dark room far removed from noises of the street and undue noises in the household; one or more open windows, through which a draft does not blow directly on the child; clothing which is sufficiently warm but not heavy and which, though tucked in, will not hamper too greatly the child's movements. The latter two can be secured in any household, as can that one precaution which should always be observed—that the child should sleep alone. All toys which suggest activity should be put away out of sight.

On the side of parental attitudes, there may be several things which produce sleeping difficulties. The parent may have dominated the child too much throughout the child's entire day or, in fact, throughout the child's entire lifetime. If there is anything upon which the force of authority has no effect, it is sleep. The child may use this one weapon—sleeplessness—to fight the too dominating adult. He may have been made so negativistic that he resists sleep even at great discomfort to himself. Children who are too frequently corrected, who feel the force of authority to a too great degree are apt to find the one weapon which disturbs the family most and then to use that weapon. If sleeplessness constitutes such a weapon, it will be used, and no amount of authority will be effective. One treatment in these cases is to ignore the sleeplessness as far as this is possible.

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One must attack the whole problem of discipline during the day as well as at night, if stubbornness and negativism are the cause of the child's sleeplessness.

A three-year-old boy, who was an only child and constantly forced to be as nearly perfect as his parents could make him, developed sleeplessness as the one way in which he could defy his parents. One can make a child do almost everything except eat, sleep, and have correct toilet habits. Of these three things, sleep is the most difficult to force. This little boy had hit on sleeplessness as the one way to fight against overdomination and, until a sane method of discipline was substituted for continual force, defied his parents in this manner.

The parents' best plan where the child is behaving in this fashion is to consult the psychologist or psychiatrist who can outline the best treatment for obstinacy for their particular child. Since children differ markedly, it is not wise to start on a plan of treatment which has been successful with the child of one's next-door neighbor or of someone of whom one's friends have heard. Obstinacy is in itself so serious a personality difficulty that even if it did not affect sleep or eating, it would be important enough to be treated by itself.

There are other factors which the parent may control. Constant disturbance of the child during the period at which he is supposed to be falling asleep is one of these. The author has in mind a child who was

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reported because he took an hour and a half to fall asleep in the evening. A very brief series of conferences with the family disclosed the fact that the mother first went into the room, pulled the shades at the proper angle, tucked in the child, handled the things on the dresser and then went out. She was followed a few minutes later by an aunt who went through exactly the same procedure and whose excuse for coming in was that she wanted to see whether the boy was asleep or not, and to make sure that he was comfortable. The aunt was followed slightly later by a grandmother, who in turn was followed by an uncle. The father appeared to be the last person to interrupt the child's sleep. No child under such a constant stream of attention and stimulation could possibly have slept. Neither can a child sleep if one is constantly going to the door to see if he has fallen asleep. This in itself constitutes reason enough for continued wakefulness.

Sleep should decrease with increasing age. The following table gives the approximate number of hours' sleep required:

|                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| Birth to one year, from 20 to 15 hours, including naps       |
| One to two years, from 17 to 14 hours, including naps        |
| Two to three years, from 15 to 13 hours, including naps      |
| Three to five years, from 14 to 12 hours, including naps     |
| Five to six years, 12 hours at night, 1-hour nap if possible |

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There is an enormous individual difference in the number of hours required for each child, as Blatz and Chant<sup>1</sup> have clearly shown. One child may need 13 hours of sleep where another may do excellently on 12. Some children take a nap of 2 hours' duration each afternoon; others, a nap of 1 hour, while still others, after the age of three, could do away with the nap entirely.

The amount of restlessness which is present during both night and day periods of sleep and rest varies markedly from child to child, as does the length of time which it takes the child to fall asleep after being placed in his crib for his nap or his night's sleep.

There is so much individual difference in all of these respects that it is well to consult the family physician, who knows the child, as to the exact amount of sleep and rest which this particular child should have.

The nap depends also on the age of the child. The author has noted that many children who are at the age of three refuse to take naps. These children are probably best handled by being told that they must rest a few minutes, that they do not have to sleep if they do not want to, but that they must rest. In many instances, sleep again appears. In others, children merely rest 15 to 20 minutes. In a few cases, they rest for as long as 45 minutes. The work of Blatz and Chant shows that in most instances day sleep was

<sup>1</sup> BLATZ, W. E., and HELEN BOTT, "Parents and the Preschool Child," p. 85, Wm. Morrow & Company, Inc.



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not present after five years and in only a few cases did it last until the sixth year. This is probably as true of children in other cities as it is of the children in Toronto on whom this study was made.

Outdoor exercise has a great influence on both the nap hour and on evening sleep. Children who are wholesomely tired from play out of doors tend to sleep far more readily than do children who are kept at quiet play indoors.

A three-year-old child who had come from the South to the North was found to have the amount of sleep drop from 12 hours in the night and a daytime nap to 6 hours at night. Outdoor play and a complete absence of comment on the fact that he had not been sleeping caused a great improvement and finally resulted in a return to the normal number of hours of night and daytime sleep and rest.

A final point remains to be treated. All fears should be kept away from the bedtime hour. There should be no games and no stories which arouse fear. There should never be any indication to the child that anything may "get him" in the dark if he does not sleep. The association of the "Bogie Man" or "thing which may get the child" is enough to prevent sleep or to cause undue restlessness and even night terrors. If the child is suffering from night terrors, the child's physician and psychiatrist or a psychologist should probably be consulted to determine the cause.

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### 2. *Elimination*

Habits of elimination should be fairly well set up by the end of the eighteenth month and should be on their way toward perfection by the end of the third year. Dry days usually precede dry nights by some months. Every parent should consult the family physician as to when to begin training for the dry habit and for regularity of bowel movement, but it is fair to say that in practically no case should training be put off beyond the end of the first year. As soon as the physician feels that this training should be begun, the parent should chart the times at which elimination occurs during the day and place the child on the chair a few minutes in advance of the time at which elimination is shown by the chart to have occurred previously. In spite of the fact that most parents think that there is no regularity in this process of elimination, a daily record kept over a period of a week will show that this regularity is nearly always present to some extent. Immediately after breakfast is an excellent time to place the child on the chair, as are the periods immediately after waking, after the bath, and after the nap.

In setting up toilet habits, one should keep in mind that the same chair should be placed in relatively the same position in the same room, there should be few, if any, toys around to distract the attention of the child, and no games should be played. The introduction of toys, play, and games at the toilet period is apt to

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distract the child's attention and to make him feel that this is a time for play rather than for elimination.

At first, the parent will have to place the child on the chair, by the clock. It is useless to leave it to the child's memory or to hope that he will show sufficient intelligence at this immature age to let you know in time to prevent accidents. As soon as your child can take the responsibility for telling you, let him do so, and praise him slightly for being such a "grown-up."

Punishment should never be used in connection with the chair situation nor should the child be told that one does not feel that he is learning habits of elimination. He should never feel that he is failing or that he cannot learn, since the discouragement which such an attitude engenders is one of the most important factors in preventing children from acquiring correct habits of elimination.

Parents should realize that even after the child is partially trained, accidents may occur. New situations of any kind, excitement, or illness may cause a falling back to an earlier stage. The number of accidents may increase. A child who has been dry during the day for weeks may show occasional inability to control himself. Encouragement during these periods and a confident attitude, together with the correction of the physical disturbance or other cause, will usually bring the child back to the degree of control which he has had before the unusual situations, the excitement, or the illness came in to interfere with the dry habit.

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There is wide individual variation in the ease with which children learn bladder and bowel control. Some children are well trained at 18 months, whereas other children do not have complete day and night control until the age of three.

Mrs. Woolley<sup>1</sup> gives the following statements as to the most common reasons for failure in developing correct habits:

. . . first, postponing the period of training beyond the natural time for it; second, conducting the training in such spirit that the child's antagonism is aroused and he comes to desire to wet his clothes or his bed to annoy the adults and get his own way; third, making the bad habit the occasion for emotional scenes of an exciting kind, in which case the child may keep it up just for the satisfaction of being the center of the stage and the object of so much emotional solicitude; fourth, using such severe methods of training and surrounding the child with an atmosphere so repressive and unhopeful that he develops a fear of wetting which is in itself enough to make him do it. He gets obsessed by the idea of doing it instead of being filled with a faith that he can keep from doing it. A child who is anxious to please, and at the same time afraid that he cannot, is apt to be betrayed into this type of obsession. Fifth, there is the failure resulting from undue emotional dependence upon the mother; a vague desire to continue the period of infancy and to enjoy the kind of maternal care given to infants may be the determining cause. No

<sup>1</sup> WOOLLEY, HELEN T., "Enuresis as a Psychological Problem," National Committee for Mental Hygiene, New York, 1927, pp. 4-5.

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case is simple enough to display only one of the situations suggested above, but in most instances one or another of them seems to be outstanding.

The most important factors in securing control are regularity in placing the child in the toilet situation, an attitude of encouragement, not putting the responsibility up to the child until he is old enough to take it and then giving him as much responsibility as he can take, but no more, and the avoidance of punishments and fear states in connection with the toilet situation.

## CHAPTER V

### EATING HABITS

THE average parent realizes only too well the importance of setting up early those good habits of eating which are so necessary for the mental and physical health of children. The first consideration in setting up these habits is regularity in schedule. There is a definite physiological rhythm which produces hunger, and this hunger is essential for normal eating habits.

In early infancy, the child is fed at three- and later at four-hour intervals. Gradually, for bottle feeding, one substitutes the regular three meals a day with perhaps the mid-morning fruit juice. As soon as this substitution has been made, a regular schedule should be adhered to. Blatz and Bott state that it was not an unusual thing to find a 15- to 20-minute variation in the time for meals even when the family insisted that their schedule for eating was absolutely regular. Such irregularities should not be present.

Equal in importance to regularity in schedule is the care with which attitudes toward eating are set up at the time when weaning is taking place. It is, as Blatz <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> BLATZ, W. E., and BOTT, HELEN, "Parents and the Preschool Child," p. 49, Wm. Morrow and Company, Inc., 1929.

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states, a far more difficult thing for the child to learn to eat than it is for him to learn breast or bottle feeding. Sucking reflexes are present at birth, and all that is necessary to set them off in the normal infant is a touch on the lip. Food habits at the weaning period actually involve changing this set of habits in regard to food and placing in their stead a much more complicated system of movements and adjustments. The infant must learn to bite and swallow, and only slightly later to use a spoon to pick up food and get it into his mouth. Anyone who has watched a baby learn to eat will see the enormous amount of effort which must go into the simple activity of getting food into the mouth instead of spreading it over the chin, cheeks, and even the hair. At the same time that these motor adjustments are developing, he must also become accustomed to a variety of tastes and textures, ranging all the way from those of the consistency slightly thicker than milk to those which, like meat, require a fairly prolonged chewing. Unless the parent is willing to take the time and to make the effort necessary to develop in her child the attitude that solid food is interesting and delightful, the child may refuse to give up bottle feeding and may persist in this refusal even as late as four years of age.

A four-year-old boy who was entered in the nursery group because he presented an unusual feeding problem was found to take nothing but bottle food in the form of milk and one of the patent food preparations,

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with an occasional egg added to this liquid diet. When the baby protested against taking things from the spoon, the parent instead of making the spoon feeding interesting by her attitude and perhaps by the playful method by which the food was administered, did not take the trouble to train the child properly. The longer he continued on the bottle diet, the more fixed became his purpose not to take solid food. A long period of retraining in the nursery school was necessary before John learned to eat and like the diet necessary for normal health and growth at his age.

A glance at the number of habits which any child has to learn before he sits at the table and eats solid food with a fork will show the number of things which go into what appears to the adult to be a relatively simple set of adjustments. Much training will be necessary to show the child how to use proper utensils and particularly how to use them correctly. During the early period, children use their spoons and forks awkwardly. Frequently, as much food is spilled on the face and on the napkin as actually reaches its supposed destination—the mouth.

Very little if any comment should accompany the child's first attempts at feeding himself. The parent is indeed fortunate if the child learns the use of tools readily. The author has often seen three-year-olds in the nursery group who were still spilling food in spite of practice from the time at which they first showed interest in feeding themselves. No parent should fuss



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with a child who learns slowly. On the contrary, the child should be encouraged by the attitude of his parent but not too much talking should go on.

At this point, when the child is beginning to learn the use of tools, the parent should keep from feeding him, merely in order to make the process less messy. Learning will not go on unless the child has an ample chance to practice. He should be praised rather than blamed by the comments which are made. At no time should he be laughed at, since it is possible to shame him so much that he will try every possible way to get some adult to feed him, rather than to suffer from being the source of amusement. On the other hand, there are children who will continue to eat messily in order to have their sense of the dramatic satisfied, that is to say, in order to remain the center of attention during the meal hour.

Parents must realize that the eating process will be necessarily slow at first—lifting food into the mouth, chewing, and finally swallowing are very real jobs to the child. During the early stages of learning to feed himself, a child may be helped, if toward the end of the meal he appears too tired to finish of his own accord. This help should be diminished as he gains more and more control over his spoon, and should finally disappear entirely.

Young children should not be kept at the table during the entire time if they are allowed to eat with adults. If your child has finished the first part of his

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meal, he should be allowed to get down and play until dessert, or his dessert should be served as soon as the main part of his dinner is finished, preferably the latter. No child can sit still and do nothing. Children will misbehave in one way or another if no wholesome activity is provided for them. They may well develop a habit of dawdling if kept at the table with adults during three or four courses of a dinner of which they can eat at most two courses.

The introduction of new flavors into the child's diet should be done very carefully. No conversation should precede this and no comments should be made. A very little of the new food should be given at a time. It should be placed on the plate with other foods which the child likes, in order to allow him to make the association between liked foods and the new flavors. It is well to serve a special dessert with this new flavor, particularly if it be a fairly strong one, and to encourage the child to have the ideal of "clean plate" in order to obtain the dessert. If too much bulky food is served with the new food, your child will probably have enough long before the dessert is reached. The new food will probably not be eaten under these conditions.

Fruit and vegetable juices may be given as early as the child's physician permits, since tastes are acquired more easily in the earlier period of the child's life. Strong flavors will nearly always produce a turning

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away of the head. The child should not be forced to take the new food at this time, but he may be given it the day after and the day after that without any force whatsoever until the food becomes interesting to him.

The attitude of the parent toward the new flavor is tremendously important. The parent should act as if he liked the food, but this part should not be overplayed since children become suspicious of too much emphasis. New food should never be introduced during the periods at which the child's appetite appears to be at a low ebb. Introduce these new foods during periods in which the child's appetite appears to be unusually good. It often happens that new foods will be eaten if prepared in one way where they would be refused if prepared in another. If such is the case, it is well to present the food in a new way—asparagus on toast, for example, if presented as logs on a boat will often be eaten where the asparagus presented without the toast would not be touched.

If food has been spoiled for the child by high seasoning, the same food may again be served after a period has elapsed only if it is served in a new way, and if the original taste is somewhat concealed.

Some authorities state that there would be little trouble in introducing new flavors after the weaning period if fruit and vegetable juices were given early.

What the family does at meal hours may distract a

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child and make it difficult for him to finish his meal. Quarreling at the table, too much talking, paying too much attention to the child, or excitement of any kind do not help the young child to eat well. Neither does constant stimulation, due to being surrounded by his toys or being spoken to constantly by a number of adults, help him to eat normally. Conditions of both these types should be avoided.

A four-year-old who is an only child is allowed to place a whole line of woolly and wooden animals around the outside edge of his plate. At least one animal must be offered each spoonful of food which he takes up. He spends so much time on these playthings that he eats far too little nourishing food.

Another four-year-old is so busy listening to his elders' conversation and talking to an admiring audience himself that there is practically no time left for the tiresome business of eating.

In a number of instances, the parent will find that feeding problems have already been set up. The child may dawdle at the table. He may be finicky in his choice of food, and he may actually refuse to eat an amount which will insure adequate growth and development. For these conditions, there are a number of causes. The only way which the problem may be handled in an individual case is to make an analysis of the possible cause presented and then, when the cause has been found, to eliminate it.

The first thing to eliminate in the case of any feeding

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problem is any abnormality in physical condition. Have a thorough physical examination made of your child to determine whether there are any physical defects. Any diseases of the respiratory tract appear to be particularly significant in causing a lack of appetite. The author has seen a number of cases in which children who were operated upon for bad tonsils or adenoids showed an increase in appetite as soon as they had fully recovered from the effects of the operation.

The too tired child often presents feeding problems. If your child is getting too little sleep, if he is constantly the center of attention and therefore overstimulated, if he does not have adequate rest, or if he plays so hard that he comes to the table exhausted, he can hardly be expected to have a normal appetite. In a study made of the number of hours of sleep which one very finicky child was having, it was found that he had a sleep allowance which would be barely adequate for a mature adult and that his long day was unbroken by either sleep or rest periods. His appetite had constantly to be stimulated by new and unusual methods of preparing ordinary foods.

A rest before eating often produces an increase in appetite. Lying down on a couch or bed for 15 or 20 minutes is sufficient. No force should be used in getting the child to take this rest, since he will become more worn out from the struggle than rested from lying down.

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A nervous child four years of age for whom the noon-day meal had always been a time of struggle because he was too fatigued by active play to have any appetite, was encouraged to play quietly with blocks for an hour before meals, then to rest for ten minutes on the couch which he pretended was a sleeping car or a berth on a boat, and this change produced a gradual increase in appetite.

After all, the most important factor in setting up good habits of eating is a good healthy appetite. Any physical defects or physical disturbance, such as insufficient sleep, too many temper tantrums, and the like are apt to have a profound effect on the degree of hunger.

Ask yourself these questions if your child is not eating. Does this make him the center of attention and the cause of excitement? Do his family comment frequently on his poor appetite? Does he get more attention when he doesn't eat than he receives at any other time? Are all the neighbors asked as to what they would do with a four-year-old boy who has no appetite? If any of these things are being done, it is well to have them stopped at once, since these aggravate feeding problems even where there are no physical causes present, and in themselves may produce feeding problems.

A four-year-old who had been a feeding problem for the past two years was found to be the main topic of conversation in his family. One grandmother, two aunts, an uncle, his mother, and his father either

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talked to him or about him during the major portion of the meal. This resulted in self-consciousness, a desire to show off, and a desire to dramatize himself—all of which prevented his attending to eating the thing for which he was really at the table.

Again, the feeding problem may be due to the fact that the family has been so insistent as to the child's eating that they have aroused his antagonism, and his refusal to eat arises from a species of obstinacy. This type of behavior is called "negativism."

A third cause, lying solely in the attitude of the family, is the expectation that the child will not eat. In cases of this type, the family sits at the table and announces that the child will probably not eat, or, without saying anything, they sit in an attitude which shows that they are expecting him not to eat what is placed before him. There are many cases in which all or one of these causes are producing the difficulty, whether that difficulty be refusal of food, poor appetite, or finickiness about food.

Dawdling may be caused by any of the physical causes previously given and by the fact that the child receives unusual attention during the dawdling period. In two families, with whom the author has had recent contact, the only time at which the older child received much attention from the family was at meal time. Meal times were, therefore, prolonged unduly in order to prolong the attention.

Finickiness, that is, refusal of many foods, may be

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due to any physical cause or it may be due to the fact that the child finds himself much talked about because of his likes and dislikes. It may be due to natural dislikes of some foods; or to the fact that new foods have been introduced when they were poorly prepared or badly seasoned; or to an expression of dislike of certain foods by other members of the family.

A five-year-old who was brought into the author's office because of his extreme finickiness began his conversation with a catalogue of the things which he would and would not eat. Evidently, to him, the most interesting part of his behavior was his likes and dislikes in regard to food. Investigation brought out the fact that this child was the constant topic of conversation and that his family were as interested in his food peculiarities as was the boy himself.

There are certain foods which because of their strong odor or peculiar texture produce dislike in many children. In introducing these foods for the first time, great care must be used, since their peculiarities of taste and texture are in themselves sufficient to affect the child unless pleasant associations with them are built up. That many tastes may be acquired can be seen from the average adult's liking for olives and caviar, the taste for neither of which seems to be natural.

A number of cases of dislike of foods have been due to the fact that they were prepared poorly or seasoned without regard to the child's natural taste. Spinach served with vinegar, chowder so badly cooked that



## EATING HABITS

there are lumps of floury glue floating around in it, and highly salted asparagus are only a few of the things which children do not like—instances with which the author has had experience.

In a number of cases, the child is refusing certain types of food because of audible comments as to their distastefulness by other members of the family. Such comments as: "I've always hated milk. It makes me sick"; or "Why should he eat that green grassy stuff that you call spinach? I hate it myself"; or, "Green beans look like worms. I don't see why you have them," are hardly calculated to make the average child like these foods.

A friend of the author's once announced at the table that he wished spinach were crossed with poison ivy so no one would ever have to eat it. Since this was said in front of three young children, it could hardly be expected that they would relish the dish. All three refused, and two of the three had temper tantrums when attempts were made to make them eat it.

The following eight rules for setting up good habits of eating were arrived at after much staff discussion, and are reprinted here from an article published by *Child Welfare*.

1. Set a good example—eat everything on your own plate.
2. Begin training early.
3. Serve new foods in very small portions until the child gets used to them, then increase portions gradually.

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4. Never talk of your food dislikes nor those of any other member of the family in the child's hearing.

5. Do not discuss any of the child's passing whims in regard to food.

6. Develop the attitude that a good appetite and a liking for all foods is a thing to be proud of.

7. Keep the diet simple with few sweets and very little seasoning.

8. Do not let the child eat between meals even if he has eaten almost nothing at the preceding meal. Unless your doctor has advised a special diet, give him only water or fruit juice.

Observance of these rules would do away with many feeding problems, and strict observance of them in the infant period would avoid most of the feeding problems which now develop.

It must be remembered in this connection that the average parent is so aware of the necessity for feeding his child the right number of calories contained in the correct distribution of foods that great nervousness accompanies any of the minor variations in appetite to which all children are subject. Lack of appetite at a single meal or even at one or two meals, if the child is in good health, should arouse no excitement and should certainly not be a subject for much comment. Many problems are started by the amount of excitement which the child causes when he eats very little at a meal or when he refuses to eat certain foods.

## CHAPTER VI

### TEMPER TANTRUMS AND QUARRELING

NEARLY all young parents are puzzled when they discover that their children become angry at what, to them, appears to be nothing of importance. They will shortly learn, these parents of young children, that any interference with the purposes which the child has in mind or any stopping of motion, such as holding the child's hands at his side, and the like, will produce anger. As long as the child lives, unless he is badly trained, he will show some anger or irritation when his purposes or his movements are interfered with.

There is one inherited cause for anger and that is interference. If one wishes to try the experiment on any normal adult, one has only to step up behind him when he is unaware of your presence, grasp his arms firmly and hold them at his side. Anger appears almost immediately and disappears only when he discovers that this has been done by a friend.

Similarly, anger can be aroused by slapping an individual on the back or grabbing his arm from behind as one comes up to him on the street. The behavior which

## THE CHILD FROM ONE TO TWELVE

is present in infants, in response to obstruction of movement, is carried over to these two types of adult experience. From anger at the mere obstruction of movement, the maturing infant passes to anger at anything which interferes with carrying out whatever activities he is performing.

At about six months, many children show anger and irritation during the dressing process. Holding the arms to get them through the sleeves of the child's clothing, tying the cap on his head, and the like constitute restriction of movement which the baby objects to by crying and temper spells. Watson comments on the fact that the dressing process conducted in a playful way will not produce these anger spells. This appears to be true, but, in using this playful method of dressing, the parent must be careful not to have the idea of play become so firmly fixed that the child, as he matures, will prolong the dressing process unduly in order to prolong the play period.

Anger, like all other human behavior, is subject to the laws of habit formation. The more often anger is called out, the more easily does it appear. From the very beginning of the child's life then, occasions for anger should be avoided wherever possible. Methods of avoiding these occasions for anger are discussed at length in the chapter on "Obedience," where the point is made that habitual anger interferes very much with training the child to be obedient.

In the discussion of fear, the point was made that

## TEMPER TANTRUMS AND QUARRELING

fears should be avoided wherever possible and reconditioned <sup>1</sup> whenever they have been built up.

Anger, on the contrary, should not be trained out. It serves an excellent purpose if it is not carried to the point of temper tantrums. Under the stress of mild anger, the individual may actually accomplish more work and overcome obstacles heretofore apparently insuperable. People who are mildly interested in reform movements in the city actually accomplish very little, but once the cause underlying these movements produces anger, the movement is carried to a successful end. A mothers' club whose members are interested in a new building in a mild and unemotional way will probably never get this building where a mothers' club, the members of which are aroused to anger at the crowded conditions in which the children are being taught, will carry everything before them if an intelligently planned program is presented to them.

The ability to become angry for righteous causes, is, therefore, definitely an asset. Children who show no resistance to unjust demands or to adults or children who impose upon them are in a poor condition both to gain those experiences which are necessary to the education of every child and to overcome those obstacles which society and natural forces place in the way of human beings.

<sup>1</sup> By reconditioning is meant retraining. The child who has been reconditioned responds in a different way to the situation in which he has been trained, for example: Children who have fear of dogs and run away at the sight of them, on being reconditioned, that is, retrained, actually approach dogs and pet them.

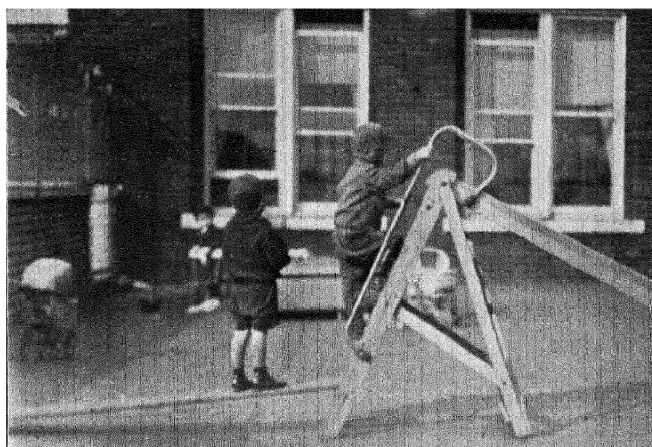
## THE CHILD FROM ONE TO TWELVE

Parents may help a child to attach anger to righteous causes and to avoid anger states when these are unnecessary. The first requisite in such teaching is the avoidance of unnecessary conflicts since the habit of becoming angry is set up, exactly as is any other habit, by practice. Tormenting the child or fighting out every issue with him, or any of those attitudes, which produce conflicts should be avoided wherever this is possible.

If the child has confidence in the adult with whom he comes in contact, he will learn to attach and detach anger states in accordance with adult statements. One says to the child, "Big boys do not get angry about that"; or, "Every big boy should be angry when smaller children are fought by bigger ones." One tells the child whether he should or should not be angry in this or that situation and, in time, if one has his confidence, the child will become angry at times when anger is socially desirable and inhibit his anger except under unusual provocation at those times when anger is socially undesirable.

No child should have temper spells after the age of two, since temper spells mean a child who is disturbed physiologically. Do you remember how you feel for some time after you have been intensely angry? You feel stuffy, your head probably aches a little, and you don't want to eat, or, if you do eat, you have indigestion. After a severe temper spell, your child suffers from some or all of those symptoms.

What makes children have these spells? In the first



Slides are good but play on them should be carefully supervised.



Toys are excellent substitutes for "Don'ts."

*(Facing page 94)*





## TEMPER TANTRUMS AND QUARRELING

place, if your child gets angry frequently, have his physician give him a thorough physical examination. One of the most important reasons for temper tantrums is physical disturbance. Children who are kept up too late at night, who are given indigestible food, or who are taken about too much, and children who are shown off whenever somebody comes to the house, tend to show their fatigue by being cross and irritable and by having temper spells. Children with poor teeth, bad eyesight, particularly weak or defective eye muscles, poor breathing capacity due to adenoids and other causes are apt to be cross and irritable, just as are tired children. Malnutrition and digestive disturbances are particularly apt to make children irritable and prone to temper tantrums. Malnutrition often causes disobedience, because the child has not sufficient energy to carry out commands.

After you have found out whether your child is physically in good condition or not, ask yourself whether he is being controlled too much. Find out how many times he is being spoken to. The case of the little boy who was spoken to 120 times in two hours is a good illustration of wrong treatment: 73 times he was told not to do things, and 47 times he was told to do things, and he obeyed none of these commands. This boy had temper tantrums because he was being bothered too much. If there are many people in the family, be sure that all of them are not helping you to control that child by giving him commands every minute or

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two. They should all help you by finding out what your rules for the child are and by letting him alone unless these rules are broken. This means rules about serious matters only. Speak to your child when you need to, but give him ample time by himself and plenty of things to play with so that you will not have to fuss with him more than once in a long time. To control a child too much produces other conditions which are as bad as temper tantrums. Some children become so obstinate that they will do nothing that is asked of them, while others finally give up the struggle and let themselves be controlled so completely that they are unable to think of or to do anything by themselves. It would be a hard matter to tell which of those conditions, obstinacy or complete suggestibility, is the worse for the child.

Phyllis, aged three, would allow any child in the nursery to take from her any toy with which she was playing, no matter how much she appeared to be interested in her play. Her only response to the fact that she was being deprived of something that she liked was a pout with an occasional tear. She never resisted, no matter how much interference she had during the school day. Such complete lack of resistance was abnormal, so an investigation was made as to the cause of this behavior. It was found that Phyllis had been made to give up everything to her two-year-old brother. She was never allowed to resist or object to any commands which were given to her. Her life at

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home was one continual giving up of everything that she had and everything that she wished to do. By the time she had reached four years of age, she was in poor condition to get for herself any of those experiences which are necessary for any child's education. She could play with nothing long enough to know its properties. She could not carry out her own purposes long enough to develop ability to pay attention over long periods nor could she develop the ability to overcome obstacles. All of that had been trained out. Nothing could have been worse for Phyllis or for the younger brother, who was as domineering and selfish as Phyllis was suggestible and lacking in resistance.

The third thing to look for is, what does my child get out of these temper tantrums? Have people laughed at him and made him think that he was cute? When he has a temper tantrum, do we give him everything he wants to keep him quiet? Does he get the center of the stage the minute he begins to have a temper spell? If any of those things are true, they should be stopped at once. Temper tantrums are not funny nor are they cute. They are serious behavior disturbances.

Alice had temper tantrums for a period of three years. Every time she had a temper spell, her mother, two aunts, a nurse, and a grandmother came immediately to the scene to see what was happening. As long as Alice could stop the entire family and call them to wherever she happened to be, by a temper spell,

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she continued to have tantrums. As soon as the family paid no attention to her, the spells died away, but very slowly.

Parents should keep in mind that behavior difficulties do not die over night. If one is treating temper tantrums, one must make up one's mind that they will occur less and less frequently but that they will not stop suddenly except in rare instances. Occasionally, children require a period of six months' training before such tantrums are stopped.

Sometimes parents think that temper tantrums are funny or cute. Not so long ago, the author was asked by the uncle of a three-year-old boy, "Do you wish to see something cute?" The uncle was assured that the author had no interest in the matter. Nevertheless, the uncle began to tease the child. In five minutes, the three-year-old had a violent temper tantrum in which he screamed and knocked his head on the floor, whereupon the uncle said, "Now, isn't that cute? He looks so funny when he is mad that way." Such behavior on the part of the uncle was laying the foundation for much trouble for his young nephew. Lack of control, such as was started by the uncle's treatment, may even carry over into adulthood.

Lillien Martin<sup>1</sup> cites the case of a successful business man who was subject to violent outbursts of temper, due to early training, somewhat similar to that

<sup>1</sup> MARTIN, LILLIEN, and CLARE DE GRUCHY, "Mental Training for the Preschool-age Child"; Harr Wagner Publishing Co., 1923.

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described above. In the case of the business man, it was the custom of one member of the family to place toys just out of his reach. When the child, by much struggling, got the toy in his fingers, it was taken away from him and again placed beyond his reach. For such treatment, there is no excuse.

If your child is not having temper tantrums, but simply gets angry when things do not go exactly as he wishes them to, he is just behaving like a natural child. Say to him, "Big boys don't get angry over that," and then if possible go away and let him think it over. On the other hand, you will want your child to get angry at some things. Say to him, for example, "We fight when little people are hurt," or, if you notice that he lets all of the children of his own age take his toys from him and if he is over two years of age, say to him, "We give people turns when they ask for our toys. We don't give up our toys unless people ask nicely." You must expect your child to fight when he is being imposed upon. You don't want your child never to be angry but to be angry only when there is just cause.

Your children will begin to quarrel about the time that they begin to play with other children. This is to be expected, and parents must not pay any serious attention to such quarrels unless the children fight to the point of being hurt. Your child will forget the quarrels long before you do and for an adult to interfere is only to make the child take seriously what would

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amount only to a passing mood. Let your children argue things through with each other, except when they are disturbing the grown people unduly. People learn their social adjustments by those very quarrels which disturb grown people so much. Many children actually enjoy the sisterly and brotherly fights.

A mother who had interfered in a quarrel between a four-year-old and her five-year-old brother was astonished to hear the girl say as she left the room. "Isn't mother mean. She won't let us have any fun. She won't even let us fight."

A nine-year-old when told by his mother that he must never fight with his brothers and sisters, said, "But what are families for if you can't fight with them?"

Children who quarrel because of jealousy or because of some other disturbance at home, are in a serious state. This type of quarreling should be treated at once by getting at and doing away with the cause of it. It sometimes happens that the critical attitude of the adolescent produces numerous quarrels, because the said adolescent wishes his brother or sister to come up to the standard which he is setting up for himself. This, in turn, produces in the brother or sister resentment and teasing as an outlet for this resentment. Quarrels of this type should be handled carefully and the points of difference between adolescent and pre-adolescent child straightened out as far as possible.

If the children fight beyond the time at which the

## TEMPER TANTRUMS AND QUARRELING

adult can keep his patience, it is well simply to separate them for a brief period telling them that if they cannot play together well, they will have to play apart for a while. Such simple treatment is usually effective.

An unusual tendency to quarrelsomeness among children should be looked into, since it may mean that the children are jealous of each other or that there is some unusual emotional strain which the parent can remedy. Referring too much to one child, giving one unusual privileges, or pointing out the good behavior or outstanding scholastic ability of one at the expense of others is apt to produce such emotional tension. Too much fatigue, due to too little rest or hard outdoor play, or to insufficient or poorly chosen food, produces irritability and quarreling.

Between the ages of seven and ten, the tendency to quarrel seems to increase. If you have ever watched a baseball game between a group of nine-year-olds, you have witnessed very little game and a great deal of quarreling as to who should be pitcher, catcher, first-baseman, and so on. The real fun of such a baseball game is the fight which accompanies it. If your child is playing in a group and the group is fighting too much, separate your child from the group for the same reason that you would give, if the fighting were going on in the family.

Quarreling should diminish from approximately twelve years of age on and the quarrels which occur at adolescence should be few in number. This does not

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mean that there will not be numerous quarrels between the older children and the younger ones since the adolescent seems to feel it his duty to point out to the younger children in the family their faults. The critical tendency which one notices so clearly in the early adolescent period may, and frequently does, find its outlet in criticisms of the younger members who very naturally resent such criticism. Even the mother and father may find themselves the subject of the "too hard to suit" growing boy or girl.

Temper tantrums should be gone by three or three and a half, and quarreling to any great degree by fourteen years of age. When your children discuss their quarrels, be sure that they see things straight, that they do not put the blame for their own faults on the other children with whom they play, or on the things with which they play; because the perception of one's own faults in one's social relations, that is, thinking straight, is one of the most important of the character traits.

Don't worry when your children quarrel unless they are pretty well grown up. There is a time and a place for quarreling in the development of your child, but it should not occupy either too much time or too much space.





We're not afraid of animals.

(Facing page 102)



## CHAPTER VII

### CHILDREN'S FEARS

“**W**HY does my child have fears?” “Where do fears come from and how can these be cured?” are questions which are constantly arising in groups of parents, who are discussing their children. Your child is not born afraid of many things, in fact he is born afraid of only two—falling and loud sounds. Probably every other fear which the child develops is due to experience of some kind.

Many people develop fears in children without realizing that this is being done. The child is thrown up in the air and caught under the impression that this is an experience which he enjoys because it causes him to make a noise. As a matter of fact, this is usually far from an enjoyable experience, because the child gets the sensation of falling—one of the two things which appear to cause fear even at birth.

Dr. Lillien Martin tells of a small baby who showed fear of being placed in his crib. The fear could be traced to the father's play with the child, in which the baby was thrown into the air and caught. The loss of support which occurred immediately upon the parent's removing his hands from the child as he placed

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him in the crib caused the same fear to arise as arose when the child was being tossed in the air.

Children should have as little experience with a sense of insecurity of any kind as it is possible for them to have. Insecurity which comes from the sense that the child is not pleasing his parents; insecurity that comes when the parents expect so much of a child that he cannot possibly live up to the expectations, or, insecurity that appears when the child is constantly reminded of his faults instead of being encouraged; all of these things are as productive of fears in later childhood as is the sense of insecurity which comes from falling in infancy. All situations which make the child insecure should be avoided as much as should sensations of falling in infancy.

Descent in elevators often causes the same sort of fears in childhood as does actual falling through the air. One may often notice children who cry as soon as an elevator is entered. The parent should hold the child's hand or in some other way attempt to soften for him this rather cruel experience of rapid descent through the air.

It is the business of the parent to keep from the child those experiences which start fears.

One should keep away from the child all loud noises, since these give rise to fears when the parent least expects them. The author has had experience with an infant, age six months, who was getting his food from a bottle, who suddenly showed fear of the bottle and

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feeding situation. We were able to find out that the fear had begun that day when the mother, immediately after she put the bottle into the child's mouth, knocked the double boiler, in which the food had been prepared, off the table with a loud smash. The baby pushed his bottle away and refused to eat until an entirely different type of bottle had been secured. Fear of the noise had apparently been transferred to fear of the bottle.

It is well to keep loud noises away from young children and particularly is this true during infancy. Shouting adults, door slammers, and the like should be restrained—forcibly if necessary. On the other hand, it is entirely unnecessary, except in the case of very ill or very nervous children, to keep the entire household quiet during the children's sleep or rest hours. Children should become accustomed to disregard ordinary sounds to such an extent that these do not interfere with normally heavy sleep.

The most common way of developing fear states in children is through conversation. The young child, as soon as he begins to understand language, fears the things which he has been told will hurt him, if he has confidence in the adult who is giving him this information. The parent who talks about the dreadful catastrophes caused by lightning, about automobile accidents, about burglars entering houses, and houses burning down is helping to set up fears in regard to these objects and situations. Children should never be made

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afraid of things if this can possibly be avoided. They should be made to exercise caution where situations are dangerous. Caution the child, therefore, about such things as crossing the street and the like but avoid frightening him.

Anyone who has driven past a school has noticed some of the children so afraid, because of the school or home instructions which they have received, that they stand in the middle of the street as the car approaches instead of hastening to one side or the other. They appear to be paralyzed by the very instructions which should have been given in such a way as to make them cautious. Tell your child to look in both directions and to be sure that nothing is coming instead of telling him of the way in which children are run down and crushed under motors. Be sure that he is made cautious instead of being terrorized.

One should avoid making the child feel afraid of situations or afraid that his capacity will not be equal to the situations which all normal children have to confront. To tell the child over and over again that one is afraid that he cannot learn to read or that he has no ability to learn mathematics, or to write, is to make him so afraid of his own inadequacy that he may actually not be able to learn those things of which one has made him afraid.

One should attempt to build the child's confidence in himself in every way possible. Praise him for his successes, encourage him to overcome his disabilities

## CHILDREN'S FEARS

or begin again with a new way of attacking the situations in which he has failed. One of the greatest assets which a child can have is a feeling of confidence in himself. Conceit is far from being the same thing. One should aim to develop self-confidence, but not conceit. To praise what the child has done—not the child—is one way of making the difference between these two widely separated attitudes. Stressing incapacities increases them. Constant criticism and lack of approval produce what is commonly referred to as “inferiority feeling” or “inferiority complex.”

Every year there are instances of children who do not learn to read because their incapacities in that direction have been stressed. In learning to read by the whole method, the child's progress is not apparent for some weeks. Some parents begin to worry at this point and feel that their children will never learn. They communicate this fear to the child and his learning is slowed down, if not actually stopped, by the fact that such parental attitudes make him more afraid of his inadequacy than is apparent. Children learn best under encouragement, and this should be given even if the child is slow. Do not stress your child's failures. Praise whatever part of his efforts have been successful. Give him encouragement and make him feel that you are back of him at every point. Nothing has so great an effect in causing failure as a sense of insecurity and a consciousness of one's inadequacy. No child can feel secure while he thinks that his family are disappointed

## THE CHILD FROM ONE TO TWELVE

in him or are sure that he is incapable of accomplishing the tasks possible to a young child.

A little girl who was failing in the second grade was found to live in a family all of whom stressed her failures. They asked her questions as to what she had learned in school and when she made the errors natural to children, the whole family either laughed at her or told her how stupid she was. The child's sense of her inadequacy was so great that she feared to answer questions in school even when the questions were extremely simple. She preferred to keep silent rather than to take a chance on being made fun of as she was at home. Only a long period of education of her family in methods of praising and encouraging rather than discouraging and ridiculing sufficed to make this little girl have even a slight degree of confidence in herself. No one enjoys having his failures stressed and few children have sufficient self-confidence to withstand such stress as is placed on failures by their parents or other adults in the family.

Another way of setting up fears in a child is through the wrong kind of stories. Young children are easily made afraid of the dark, of dogs, of many other objects through the kind of stories which are told them. The author has known a number of children who developed night terrors after having been told stories of bears which chased children through dark forests, of giants who came at night and cut off children's heads, and the like.



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A four-year-old boy had given his parents much trouble because he cried out in school as well as at night at home. Investigation disclosed the fact that the boy's father had told him many stories of hunting animals at night. In these stories, at least one human being was apt to be killed. One of the stories was about a tiger who came at night to an Indian village and stole away the young children. The little boy would think of these stories as soon as he was put to bed and would dream of situations similar to those of which the stories told. He did not get to sleep until late and his sleep was disturbed by bad dreams. In consequence, when he reached school, he had had insufficient rest. Between ten and eleven o'clock in the morning he would get so sleepy that he would fall asleep for a few moments and again have these bad dreams and cry out in school. A long period of reeducation, during which only pleasant stories were told the boy, was necessary before his sleep improved and his school behavior became normal.

Stories for little children should contain no gruesome or cruel elements and no pictures of frightening situations such as burglaries, fires, and shipwrecks. Games in which the fear element is stirred up are as bad for young children as are gruesome stories. Ghost stories and games in which animals chase children and eat them up with appropriate roars, and the like, may appear to interest the child but often only end by causing terror. The child's shrieks which often seem to be

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expressions of joy are about as much akin to that emotion as the giggle which accompanies tickling is akin to hearty laughter.

A third way in which fears are started is through their use as a means of control. Someone tells the child that if he isn't quiet, something will get him; that if he doesn't obey, the policeman will come; if he takes candy, some animal will get him, and so on. Fear may keep a child from doing what you do not want him to do, but it often makes him afraid of what you want him to like, such as animals, and policemen. Moreover, as has been pointed out in the chapter on "Obedience," the child finds out that he has been deceived and then he loses faith in the person who has told him the untruth.

A little boy who had been told by his mother that, if he ate candy, the dog next door would get him, was left alone for an hour while his mother went to market. When she returned, she found an even larger amount of candy gone than she had found on the previous occasion. "Didn't I tell you," she said to the little boy, "that if you took candy, the dog next door would get you?" "Yes," said the little boy, "but I gave the dog part of the candy and he didn't." It would be difficult to find out which of the two possible effects of controlling children by fear is the worse—having them develop fears of harmless things or having them lose faith when they find out that one has threatened them with something which never happens.

## CHILDREN'S FEARS

Fears may be set up in other ways than by having them talked about. Children learn from the adults around them the emotional attitudes which are socially valuable. When adults show fear, children are apt to show it, too. An adult who shows fear of lightning or of dogs or cats or anything else will frequently find that the children with whom he or she has come in contact develop this fear, too. A large number of lightning and thunder fears develop in this way as do the supposedly inherited fears of cats, dogs, and birds. No matter how afraid the adult feels, he should show this fear to children as little as possible. The author had the experience of being in a motor with a mother and two children during a drive over exceedingly slippery clay roads. For approximately a mile of the way, the car slipped and skidded slightly every few feet. If the mother had shown fear, the children would probably have developed a fear of riding in cars. Instead of that, the mother said, "Isn't this fun! Here we go, slipping and sliding—slipping and sliding. Isn't this the nicest ride?" At the end of a mile of the most dangerous road the author has ever encountered, the children wished to go back and have the fun over again.

Fears may develop by accident—that is, one may make a violent noise near the child when he is holding some object, and a fear of the object may be developed in this way. A baby who had been particularly fond of a pasteboard duck which he carried everywhere

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with him, was holding it one day when his mother dropped the baby's bathtub on the tile floor near him. The child jumped, screamed, and threw the duck away, and from that time on, until he was retrained, would not come near anything on which the duck was placed, even if only the duck's head could be seen.

A five-year-old child who was having a birthday party, leaned near the lighted candles on the cake and the decorated napkin which he wore burst into flames. The child was afraid of birthday parties or of the mention of birthdays until carefully retrained.

It is an interesting fact that the methods which most people have been accustomed to use in the cure of fears are of no use at all and may be actually harmful. The average individual thinks that if nothing is done about the child's fear except to keep the child away from the feared object for awhile, the child will outgrow it. Such experiments as those of Dr. Jones<sup>1</sup> indicate that this is far from true. Children do not forget or outgrow fears unless something else comes in to help out the forgetting or outgrowing process.

Neither does making fun of a child and telling him that he is too big a boy to be afraid help in overcoming fear. On the contrary, the child who is made fun of and, therefore, made to repress a fear not only does not lose it but may develop all sorts of behavior prob-

<sup>1</sup> JONES, M. C., "The Elimination of Children's Fear," *Journal of Experimental Psychology*, Vol. 7, pp. 382-390, 1924.

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lems much more dangerous than is the fear at which this treatment is directed.

Children do not appear to "get used to" things which they fear. If the adult will remember how little "used" he became, as a child, to the spider or the snake with which an older child chased him, he will realize how the child feels. The more he was chased by the spider, probably, the more the fear increased. To make a child keep on touching or coming near things of which he is afraid, without helping in any way to overcome the fear, does no good. In fact, it may cause the fear to spread to other situations similar to the one in which the first occurred.

Of course, it is entirely unnecessary to remind present-day parents that fears are not "cute" or "funny." On the contrary, many profound bodily changes cause and accompany such states. Some of the most important of these may well be enumerated, since they influence children's behavior, not only during, but for some time after, a severe fright.

During fears, the mouth becomes dry, due to the fact that the glands in the mouth stop secreting; digestion stops as does the movement of the intestines. A substance is discharged into the blood which increases muscular energy and does away with effects of fatigue. These and other bodily changes are always present when fear is present. These changes make it impossible for a child to digest. When, therefore, food and fear are attached, digestion ceases. To tell a child when he

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is on a diet, that the foods he is not allowed to eat will make him sick is often sufficient to attach fears to those foods so that when the diet is stopped, the child is still made ill by the once forbidden foods. If one approaches the matter by saying to a child, "These foods on the list will make you well and strong so that you can eat everything else you want," he does not then become afraid of forbidden foods, as he most certainly does when one says, "You can't eat these things. They'll make you sick." The same end is reached, that is, the child is kept from eating food which will disagree with him, but, in the one case, fears are set up while in the other, they are not.

Talking about something a child is afraid of is no better than letting him "get used to it." According to the experiments of Dr. Jones, just cited, the child may hear stories about an object, and may even himself learn to talk about it without fear, but when this same object is actually present, the child is just as afraid of it as ever. Many people think that by telling delightful stories about dogs, or the dark, or other objects, they automatically do away with their children's fears. In fact, some people even resent it when this method is not so successful as they had hoped it would be, and blame the child for the failure of the method. It is a curious phenomenon that fears may be set up by talking about them, but may not be cured by the same procedure.

A final method which many adults try is to bring

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the child into the situation of which he is afraid and then to point out to him interesting things which are occurring. To talk to a child about the nice, cool, quiet, dark when he is in a dark room screaming with fear does not help in the least the fear situation. Nor does it help to talk about the eyes, the ears, and the fur on a dog when the child is showing fear in the presence of the animal. The method is usually useless because most children become so afraid that they do not hear the various distractions which are being presented to them.

Two methods appear to be effective in helping a child to overcome fears. He will overcome his fears if other children of the same age will play with the object of which he is afraid, in his presence. After a while, when he sees that the object feared does not hurt playmates of his own size, he may experiment with it and, finding that no harm results, overcome his distaste.

The play of older children with feared objects appears to have little effect. A twelve-year-old brother and sister playing with a feared dog seem to be far less effective than two other three-year-old playmates playing with the same animal. It must be remembered that after a child, subject to fears, is placed in a group of other young children without supervision, the fear may spread to the group instead of the child being cured of his fear so this method should be used with extreme care.

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A second method which is invariably successful, if properly handled, is attaching pleasant associations to the object which the child fears. A baby who feared the dark overcame this fear because every evening through the winter as soon as it became dark the mother took the baby's hand and played a "hide and hunt" game through a dark room. Each time the child found some small object which pleased him. Sometimes it was a rubber animal or a little paper boat, sometimes just a piece of after-dinner barley sugar. After a while—a fairly long while—the baby would go in the room himself to hunt for the object if his mother stood in the door and finally he would go alone.

A child who, through wrong treatment, had developed a fear of doctors, was given a small barley-sugar animal each time he was taken to the doctor's office. This animal was given by the doctor at the office when the child first came in.

A four-year-old told his friends that he had been to a party the day before. Inquiry revealed the fact that he had been to the doctor to have his antrum washed out, but, at the office, he was given not one piece of candy but two. The candy should not be given to the child at any other time during this period. It should only be given in connection with the feared object or situation and then at such time as not to spoil the child's appetite.

Parents should never attempt to overcome fears in their children in connection with the table or the toilet



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situation. Fears may be overcome in children in connection with eating if this is done by a trained psychologist or by a laboratory specialist. It is exceedingly difficult for the untrained worker not to condition the child against food instead of having the food condition the child against the fear. It must be remembered that fears are as apt to spread to other situations unless they are carefully handled as are the situations to cure the fears.

The main job of the parent should be to prevent fears, since some fears are extremely difficult to cure. If the situation in regard to the child's fears seems very complicated, the wise parent will consult a psychologist or a psychiatrist. Such a complicated situation as the following illustrates the point:

The<sup>1</sup> most notable event in Irene's family life had been the recent arrival of a baby sister. Irene, however, her mother said, had shown no strong feeling of any kind about the baby, had indeed almost never talked about her. This in itself was surprising enough to be suspicious, particularly in conjunction with the fact that she had talked at school about the baby's arrival, and had repeated several times in a puzzled, strained way: "When she went to the hospital, she didn't have the baby, and when she came back from the hospital, she did have the baby." She had not been prepared in any way for the baby's coming, nor had she asked any questions as to where it came from. . . . Further

<sup>1</sup> CLEVELAND, ELIZABETH, "Training the Toddler," pp. 98-100, J. B. Lippincott Company.

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questioning revealed that she had several times been taken to see her mother at the hospital; that she had always gone up in the elevator but had usually walked down the one flight, as there was a small stairway near her mother's room, and that this stairway was almost exactly like the one at the school. At this point, it seemed fairly clear that she had experienced some shock; that whatever had occurred or had been said was beyond her comprehension, and that she had brooded on it in secret so that when she found herself in a similar situation to that in which it arose, the repressed trouble appeared as a phobia.

This fear was found to disappear when the mother followed the advice of the psychologist on the case and gave the child ample opportunities to ask questions about the baby and equal opportunity to find outlets for the emotions which she was repressing.

One should avoid establishing fear states. If these occur, remember that what seems a light thing to the adult is no light matter for the child. No effort is too great, if the end result is that one's children meet each new situation with courage and resourcefulness instead of with a sense of inadequacy, a fear of failure, or with one of those more profound fear states so common in children who are poorly trained.

## CHAPTER VIII

### TRAINING IN EMOTIONAL CONTROL

**M**OST parents would be delighted if they could be sure that their children would have throughout life an even-tempered disposition. By even-tempered is, of course, meant such emotional balance that the child shows anger only when anger is necessary and wise, that he has no foolish fears, but on the contrary has a sense of security and courage to meet new obstacles. Such a child has substituted a sense of security and resourcefulness for irritability, fears, unwillingness to meet obstacles, and other unfortunate social adjustments. A child so equipped has learned emotional control, and this means that he has set up a number of habits each of which his parents have helped him to develop.

In setting up such habits, there are many things which will have to be kept in mind by the parent, since the world with which children have to deal is often very little under their control. Such things as the following are particularly important to keep in mind:

The young baby should not be constantly stimulated and excited. If there are nervous members of the family who insist on jiggling the child, poking him, pinching

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him, and otherwise causing him annoyance, these members of the family should not be allowed to play with the child until their own nervous activities are better under control. Neither should those individuals who enjoy making loud noises, laughing loudly, slamming doors, and the like have much contact with young babies. The business of the young child is to rest and grow while at the same time his mental capacities are maturing without undue stimulation.

Many people think that tickling children actually amuses them, when, as a matter of fact, the only person really amused is the adult. The nervous giggle which follows upon the tickling is in no way similar to the happy laughter which comes from real amusement.

Young babies should be kept quiet. They should not be taken into the crowded department stores or on dusty noisy streets. Exercise in the baby carriage may be exercise for the adult but it can hardly be considered exercise for the baby. The real purpose of such trips is either to take the baby out where it can be admired or to break the monotonous indoor activities of the parent. If the walk is taken on quiet streets and if every passing stranger does not stop to talk to and poke the baby, the child may be taken out for an afternoon or morning walk with safety, but the same amount of fresh air may be secured on a porch or in a quiet back yard.

Children beyond the period of babyhood should

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never be encouraged to show off, and this applies equally to infants. Showing off on the part of the child serves merely to increase the self-satisfaction of his parents and the other adults to whom he belongs. One does not wish to develop this desire in individuals. On the contrary, one wishes them to be so concerned with doing well their own jobs that they have little time for playing to the gallery, which is all that one can interpret showing off to be. The usual period for such showing off is in the preschool age though one gets a certain amount of it again in adolescence. Every effort should be made to stress achievement—not personal attracting of attention. We have already said that to be the center of attention and the cause of excitement are great drives in the early period of children's lives. To stress this by making the child show off is to cause an infantile state to continue, sometimes throughout life.

Show the baby to your friends if you like, but avoid showing him off. The constant interruption of play which comes when the child is shown off to every one who visits the house means nervous strain, and this strain is increased by the fact that the child is often forced to say his little piece or to sing in his own fashion the latest song or to go through some other performance which will indicate his superiority to all other children of his age. If the child offers spontaneously to talk or to say his piece to his relatives, this will of course not be too much of a strain, but the author has rarely seen

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children who insisted on showing off to each person who came to the house, except where it was the practice of the family to encourage this type of behavior. Showing off is much more likely to take the form of making too much noise, talking too much, or the like, than of saying a piece or of singing.

A nine-year-old had been called in from play twice in one afternoon to perform on the piano for his mother's friends. On being called a third time that same afternoon, he said, "I'll come this once more but that's enough. I'm not coming ever again," and he was right.

Now, as to those parties. A young mother brought her child to the office for a consultation because the child had been growing more irritable every day. Her own statement of the case was as follows: "I am the best mother that any child could have. I take this child to every party that I go to. Last week, I took her to five afternoon parties, and she just gets crosser all the time." What would have happened if those had been evening parties instead?

We are surrounded by so many exciting things in our modern civilization that it is very easy for the young child to tire. Particularly is this true in cities. He needs sufficient rest and sleep to do away with the bad effects of this overstimulation, and occasions for excitement should be avoided, not multiplied.

Young children should have regular hours. Absolute regularity in schedule is as essential in developing emo-

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tional control as it is in training for obedience. There should be a regular hour for meals, a regular hour for the nap and rest, and a regular hour for sleep at night. No child learns good physical control unless this regularity is observed. The little girl who has her luncheon sometimes at 11:00, sometimes at 11:30, and sometimes at 12:00, and who goes to bed sometimes at 6:00, sometimes at 7:00, and sometimes even as late as 8:00 or 9:00 is not only learning irregular habits of eating and sleeping, but she is also laying the basis for poor physical condition which, in turn, will reflect itself in her lack of control of emotional upsets. A regular schedule, then, is essential and this means for toilet habits as well as for others.

Physical condition is equally as important as regularity in schedule. A child who is ill will usually have less emotional control than will the same child when he is physically fit. For this reason, every child should have a regular physical examination. Many times what passes as an inherited tendency to temper tantrums is really nothing more than a badly disturbed digestive system plus someone's example of temper tantrums which a child may easily follow.

Physical defects are, of course, a part of what one wishes to discover by the physical examination. Even a slight physical defect may produce irritability or a tendency to other types of emotional disturbances.

The child who cannot see clearly when he reaches school age is under constant nervous strain during

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periods of reading and writing. A little boy, age six, astonished the family by having temper tantrums during the latter half of the school day and on reaching home. He had always been a somewhat nervous child, but the number of temper tantrums and the amount of nervous irritability had more than doubled since entering school. The physical examination of this boy revealed the fact that instead of seeing as do normal people, he saw double unless he exerted great effort to overcome a muscular difficulty in focusing his eyes. After a few hours of school work, the strain became so intense that he sought relief in temper tantrums and extreme irritability. On one occasion, when the strain had been particularly great, he threw a coffee pot which he was wiping across the room. This was the final evidence to his parents that something was wrong and the physical examination revealed the condition described above. Any trouble with ears, throat, or nose may be almost equally disturbing. Even a very simple physical defect may account for much of your child's irritability.

What else may the parent do to aid in the development of emotional control? The parent should see that the child is never tormented. A three-year-old had, as a frequent experience, the torment of being at the table where the food she particularly liked had been placed just out of her reach. As soon as, by squirming and reaching, she got near the food, an uncle would remove it a few inches farther to see the temper tan-



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trums which inevitably followed. When the temper tantrum was well under way, the uncle would say, "Just look at her. Isn't she cute?"

Occasionally teasing may be justified but it should never be carried into tormenting, and the child should have equal opportunity with the adult to enjoy the fun. If one must tease the child, the teasing should be such that the child himself may tease back in the same tone and in more or less the same way. It is hardly fair to tease young children and then by the force of authority to prevent their responding in kind. A father who had bothered the little girl of the family for half an hour by taking away from her and pretending to hide her cherished possessions, spanked this same child when she grabbed his pipe and hid it from him as a part of the same game. It was all right for him, so he thought, but not for her.

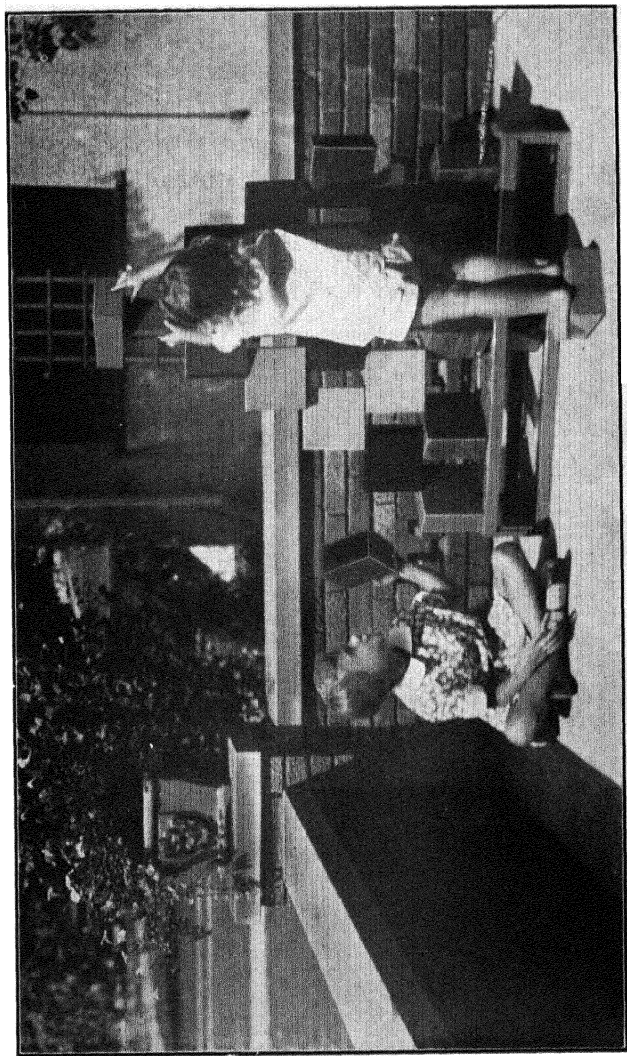
Do not discuss the child's faults in the child's hearing. No one should be punished more than once for the same offense. If this fault is talked about constantly, it either means that the child will take this as punishment and resent it or that he will think the fault so interesting that it deserves repetition and it, therefore, becomes a habit. Such discussion may also produce a definite feeling of inferiority in the child. He may feel that his faults are so many and his ability so small that it is useless for him to put forth any effort, or he may, because of the sense of insecurity which such criticism in his hearing gives him, boast, bully, or show off,

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in order to make himself feel more secure. He may even feel that the world is so harsh that he can find happiness only in his day dreams, and thus becomes a dreamer who substitutes day dreams for accomplishments.

Now, as to the type of discipline that helps in emotional control: a few rules, but those rules to have the force of laws. A few rules a child can keep in his mind. After a while, these will set up habits and, therefore, the responses to them will become more or less automatic. A number of rules so great that no one could keep all of them in mind means that the child is always in conflict with authority, and this, in turn, means constant punishment with its accompanying emotional upset. If the punishment did not have any emotional effect on the child, the parent would think the child abnormal and so it would be. As few conflicts with authority as possible means cutting down the number of these always unpleasant punishments.

The child must have absolute confidence in the people who guide him. If he has such confidence, it means that he does not have to worry constantly about whether he will or will not be punished, about whether he is or is not pleasing the older people in the family, or about whether he will be treated crossly or not. If he has confidence in the authority of his home, he will know that no one will be cross with him or irritated at what he does unless what he does is in itself wrong; that when he receives a promise, that promise



Busy children are happy children.

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will always be kept and he need not worry about whether he will get it or not. He will know that if he is told he will be punished for bad behavior, that the punishment will arrive automatically, and that if he is told "no," he will never have to fuss and fume and persuade to have that changed into "yes," for "no" will always be "no."

Though it may not seem to the adult of any importance that his child feels compelled to fuss and persuade or to cry or to use other means to change "no" into "yes," nothing constitutes a greater strain. If "no" means "no," the child at the sound of the word will think of something else to do. If "no" means something that can be changed by fussing or even by temper tantrums, then each "no" means a struggle for the child which often leaves him exhausted. There is nothing that means so much in the emotional development of the child as absolute confidence and trust in those adults who have him under their guidance.

Avoidance of conflicts is just as important in training your child to develop emotional control as it is in training him to be obedient.

Obstinacy is a habit, and the best way to develop this habit, as any other, is to give it constant practice. The more often your child has to stage a conflict with you, the more tendency he has to stage these conflicts and to say that "no" to your requests which is always the signal for the beginning of one. Children actually

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feel a sense of relief when these conflicts are no longer necessary. The suggestions given in the chapter on "Obedience" for avoiding conflicts are the same suggestions that we give in this connection.

When you see a conflict approaching—and you can tell—think of some way to make what you are going to tell the child interesting. A seven-year-old who was just about to fight against being told to wash his hands for dinner was told instead, "Let's race and see which of us can get cleaned up quicker," and the fight did not occur. A seven-year-old and his six-year-old brother who were just about to fight the command to go upstairs to bed were told instead, "Let's see which of these ponies can get in his stall and get bedded down first." The two ponies galloped upstairs and undressed as rapidly as possible. One must have conflicts sometimes, of course, and if one starts one it should be seen through, unless a compromise promises more for the child's development as it does in a few instances, but conflicts in the home can get to be a habit, and one that has a serious effect on the child's disposition.

If the child has not sufficient tenacity, he may not fight back but, on the contrary, will become what is commonly termed "wishy-washy" or "weak-kneed," because he has never had the experience of overcoming obstacles and of being strong enough to oppose his will to the will of others. He will be only too willing to abide by the standards of whatever group he enters. Such behavior is even worse than a habit of fighting

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back. In giving in to the child, remember that one should be as good a sport as one expects him to be. Grudging acknowledgment that one has made an error is worse than no acknowledgment at all. Unfair playing of the game with the child will produce unfairness in return.

Give responsibility to the child as soon as he is old enough to take it. The more one puts responsibility on the child, in proportion to his age, the less is the necessity for that constant string of commands which irritates both the child and his parent. The more things the child does for himself, the less it is necessary to remind him. I know any number of thirteen- and fourteen-year-old children who resent every command given to them because they are spoken to so many times. They need to be spoken to, because if no one reminds them they forget important things. This would not be necessary if the child had been trained to take the responsibility for all that dressing and undressing, studying, getting himself to school, and the like which are a part of the job of every child in civilized communities.

Provide outlets for activities at all times. Be sure that your child has enough to keep him busy. The child with nothing to do or the child who has to be entertained constantly is always cross until something is found to amuse him. Train your child to find his own amusements by giving him the constructive materials to be active with. A five-year-old follows her mother

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around from room to room all day long saying, "Mother, what shall I do next?" "Mother, you talk to me." "Mother, you come and help me build a block house." She is a constant bother to her mother and she is not developing independence and initiative. In addition to this, she is always more or less cross and irritable because she has not learned to be happy through independent accomplishment.

Avoid the use of fears to control your child. One of the ways to help him to have a good disposition is also one way to help him to avoid fears; that is, never use fear as a means of control. Children who are controlled by fear set up two kinds of bad habits. In the first place, no matter what you threaten them with, in time, they learn that this catastrophe does not happen and this makes them lose confidence in you. In the second place, the child who is controlled by fear will, as soon as the fear is removed, do exactly what you least wish him to do. Finally, in controlling the child by fear, you may set up a fear of perfectly harmless things which it may take months and even years to cure. To say to the child, "If you do not go to sleep, there is a dog next door that will bite you," may put the child to sleep for that one time, although it usually does not, but it will set up a fear of the dog which will make the child run to you whenever the neighbor's dog is in sight.

In looking for a good disposition, that is, an even-tempered disposition on the part of the child, four



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things are necessary: obtain for your child excellent physical condition; secure for him a home in which he has every confidence in authority because that authority knows its own mind, because it is respected by other people, and because it, too, has emotional control; train the child to take responsibility for his own acts; and, finally, give him a habit of using initiative and energy in being busy and creating things instead of in getting his own way.

## CHAPTER IX

### YOUR CHILD'S IMAGINATION

**J**OH<sup>N</sup>, aged six, has been in difficulties lately because he has come home with stories that nobody could believe. Yesterday he came home and said that he had played with a great big bear at his grandmother's and his mother has not only punished him, but she has told him that he may grow up to be that most awful of all things—a liar.

Because this is an experience which children often have, let us see if we can't find some reasons why the child's mind works this way. As a matter of fact, though the vividness of his imagination often gets a child into trouble, the use of imagination is important to all of us, no matter how prosaic we think we are. In imagination, we live over all of those experiences which we have never had but expect to have some time in the near future. When a person sits down to plan for a summer trip to a place to which he has never been, his imagination, as well as his ability to reason clearly, is immediately called into play. He goes over in his mind the hour at which he would like to leave on the train and checks this up from the time table. If he is wise, he plans for the proper care of his bag-

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gage, for making train connections, and for many other details of the trip. He enjoys in imagination the scenery along the way, the games which he will play when he reaches the spot, the trips which he will take, and the people whom he will meet. He is using his imagination not only to enjoy things which have not yet occurred but for a much more practical purpose—to plan out in advance the details of the trip and thus to make the trip a pleasant one by guarding against difficulties which might arise.

Imagination comes into play in the development of any new invention or any new set of social customs or even in the style of clothing which all of us so steadily conform to or in planning dinner for the family or a new way to cook beef. The inventor who has seen the relation between the flight of the bird and the gliders on the airplane, the man who has made a new kind of hook and eye or invented a new carburetor, have all made use of their capacity to imagine experiences and objects with which they have so far not come in contact. To possess a vivid but controlled imagination is, therefore, an asset. From the day dreams of the child and the adolescent may come the practical accomplishments of the adult. From the day-by-day use of imagination comes the practical day-by-day adjustments to living. Our aim, therefore, is not to hamper the development of a child's imagination but to help him to use it to his advantage.

Imagination in childhood is very different from

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imagination in the adult. The young child has had so few experiences and those have carried for him so very little meaning that he has very few of those checks on the imagination which are present in all adults of normal intelligence. He can see a pink horse easily, because he has seen so few brown ones. He can think of a little man, because men at a distance look to him little just as we see them little when we look at them from the top of a high building.

Judd tells the story of a child of his acquaintance who wished to get off a moving train in order to play with a little horsie. The little horsie was nothing more than an ordinary sized horse at a distance from the train. One can conduct an experiment one's self to show the difference between adult imagination and imagination in children: Think of a red tulip. Now think of a black tulip. Think of an ordinary bear. Now think of a bear with bright blue fur. Compare the two. You will soon find that there are marked differences between them. In the first place, it is very easy to call up the picture of the objects with which you have had experience and easy to hold them—to keep on thinking of them. In the second place, one's whole emotional set, that is, the way one feels about the two images, is entirely different. A blue bear made you laugh because you had never seen one, whereas a brown one which you had seen often in picture books seemed not at all funny. You could not keep thinking of a blue bear long enough to think of him in the zoo or in the woods or at any of the other places in which

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you knew, as an adult, bears might be found. Because of the child's limited experience with real bears and real tulips and real people, it is quite as easy for him to see a blue bear, a pink horse, a fairy, a dragon or a bird who suddenly turns into a person, as it is for him to see ordinary horses, large people, and so on.<sup>1</sup>

The adult who thinks of these queer objects, even if he does not realize it, is thinking of previous commonplace experiences combined in a new way. The two-headed dog is, of course, no more than an ordinary dog with another ordinary dog's head; the dragon no more than an alligator with wings. The commonplace pictures which the adult has had of these objects in their right relation, the wings on birds and the alligator without wings, come in between and make it difficult for him to imagine wings and the alligator in the same place.

This critical ability which the adult possesses and the child's lack of it account for most of the so-called children's lies. Between the ages of two to six, children can imagine freely and tell you about any of the things which they like to think will happen. After that time, with proper training, the number of so-called lies should diminish rapidly. A small friend of the author's imagined that he had an entire zoo in his cellar and would talk about the bears, the snakes, the giraffe, the camel and the rhinoceros which he kept there. The fact that any one of these animals would have gone far

<sup>1</sup> See "Psychology of Infancy and Early Childhood," Arlitt, A. H., Chapter X, for further discussion.

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toward filling the cellar and that any three of them would have filled it completely did not affect him at all since he had too little experience to realize that this was the case. He was shown how large each of those animals was by being taken to the zoo. The camel was too high, and the giraffe way too long as to neck to fit in the cellar, while the rhinoceros was too large in every way.

The child who came home and told his family that the school house had burned down during the night and who was faced with the same school house without a single mark of fire on it the next morning merely said, "The giants have built it up." The idea of fire was suggested to him from the fact that he had seen fire and smoke come out of one of the smoke stacks of a furnace in the general direction of the school house.

Because of the vividness of imagination in children and their lack of critical judgment, it is extremely easy for the adult to ask questions which result in what this same adult labels as lies. The author, every year, in order to demonstrate this suggestibility on the part of children, has the students who are taking care of the children say to them, "What did you see on your way to school?" When the children say that they have seen nothing, the students say, "Oh, but you must have seen something." To this, one little boy replied, "I saw a prairie dog and he fell over just like this," and he demonstrated the way in which a prairie dog dives into his hole. Nothing could have been farther from the

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objects seen on the streets of a large city than a prairie dog toppling over into his hole, but the child was only too willing to oblige with an account of an experience since the adult insisted that he had had one.

Your child's stories may also depend on another fact which is true of all children, that is, that they are impressed with similarities in things which adults do not think of as being similar and, on the other hand, they do not see that some things which are similar are alike in any way. A small friend of the author's was restrained with difficulty from kissing a fuzzy caterpillar which he insisted was a little bear. The fuzziness of the caterpillar resembled the fuzziness of his teddy bear, and as far as he was concerned, the one was therefore enough like the other to be treated in a similar way.

A tiny hole in a piece of soap may remind them of a mouse hole which they have seen in a barn and they may declare that a mouse will shortly come out of the hole in the soap. On the other hand your child may not see similarities which exist. He may assure you that he did not go to bed at the same time at grandmother's as he went to bed at home, even though the time was the same on both occasions, because seven o'clock bedtime was observed only at home. The same bedtime in two places were not the same to him.

Your child may have another characteristic which makes you feel that he is not telling the truth. He

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imagines that all things that move are alive. He gives life often to objects as inanimate as stones along the border of the path. It is, of course, a commonplace that your child will think that his doll can feel things and so can be spanked if it is bad or petted if it is good, that his doll is hungry and should be fed even with real food, that his wooly dog walks and talks in his absence and the like.

Miss Tanner cites the case of a child who, whenever the child went for a walk, picked up a little basket of stones to take with her because she was afraid that they might get tired of staying in the same place for a long time.

Many of your child's stories reflect what he wishes to have but cannot, by any means, obtain for himself. He tells you the story of the lovely party to which he has been because he wishes to have such a party. He may tell you of his big brother who is wonderful because he wishes he had a big brother, or of the airplane he keeps hidden because he would really like to have one but cannot. Many of children's so-called lies come from this desire for things which, because of size, because of lack of money, or for some other reason, the child cannot have. Such dreams should be realized as far as possible if there is in them nothing which will hurt the child. For example, the child who dreams that he has a brother may get his satisfactions from having other children come in to play with him, and this should be done whenever possible.



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Your child may have an imaginary playmate. Some children have as many as four or five such imaginary companions to whom they refer by name and in some instances will clearly describe for you. When a child is shy about describing his imaginary playmates, one can get some idea of their characteristics when he is pretending to play with them. One five-year-old announced that she had for her playmates a mother and one hundred children. The first of the children was named Enid, and the second was named Bible, and the other ninety-eight she referred to solely as "the children." To her, of course, one hundred meant just a "whole lot" since she was too young to count that far.

These imaginary playmates may be played with for years or for a few months. Usually, they fade away when the child begins to play with groups of other children, or they become identified with some real playmates which an only child may need. It is only rarely that the child states that the playmate has died, cries for it, and never afterward refers to it again.

There are two methods which you may use to help your child to check on his too vivid imagination. In the first place, you may say to the child when he has told a story which you know has not happened, "That's just a play story, isn't it? Now, I'll tell you a play story," or "Of course, those things didn't really happen, did they? It is just a story like the ones I read to you from your books." This helps the child to know that both you and he are aware that these things which

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he is telling you cannot have happened, without putting him in the position of feeling that he has told a lie. One should never say to the young child, "You are a liar," or even, "That is a lie," in connection with stories of this type.

Occasionally, when a child has told stories to get out of punishment, and it is to be hoped that he will do this only occasionally, one may say to him, "It didn't really happen that way, did it?" and then impress upon him in the simplest possible terms that it is only fair play to tell on himself if he has made a mistake or done something which he has been forbidden to do. Your child in time will be brave enough and will like fair play well enough to tell the truth about his mistakes if you do not punish him for telling you the facts, but cooperate with him in helping him to remember the next time. One thing which the story of George Washington and the cherry tree helps children to understand is just this willingness to take responsibility for one's own actions without excuses and without any placing of blame on other people.

A second way in which one may help the child to appreciate reality is by showing him that what he has imagined cannot possibly have happened. For example, in the case of the little boy who had a whole menagerie in his cellar—it was relatively simple to show him that not more than two of the cages for animals could possibly have been placed in such a small place, and

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equally that the animals could not have lived in a dark, closed room such as his coal cellar was.

A little boy who assured his mother that a baby bear lived in a drain pipe six inches in diameter was allowed to cut, with assistance, a paper picture of a bear about the size of a real baby cub. He placed the paper outline of the bear over the opening in the drain pipe and found out how much of the paper bear was left over when the hole in the pipe was covered. This proved an interesting game to him and convinced him completely that no real bear could live in a place of that size.

It does not pay to discourage a child in the use of his imagination to a too great degree, since, as has been said before, a vivid imagination will be helpful to him, but it does pay to help him to check on truth and untruth as just described. Some individuals grow to adulthood with too little ability to discriminate between what they wish to have true and what is actually a fact.

There is much discussion as to the place of stories in the development of imagination in children. Certain it is that very few children appreciate or really like fairy stories before the kindergarten age. A small friend of the author's who had been told the story of Cinderella and who had listened to it throughout, when asked to repeat the story, said, "There was a pumpkin and two mice and the clock went bong and they runned away." That was the entire impression which the story had created. Mice, pumpkins, and clocks, she knew.

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The rest was too far outside of her experience to make much impression.

Stories for the young child should be about things with which he has had actual experience. Children will listen with absorption to a story about how they got up in the morning, dressed themselves, put on first one stocking and then the other, put on one shoe and then the other shoe, and came down one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten steps to breakfast, drank orange juice, ate oatmeal, and so on. No detail is too simple to be of interest to them, provided it concerns their own living, and no amount of repetition is too great.

A refrain or a repeated phrase is especially delightful to children. The chief charm of the story of the "Old Woman Who Went to Market to Buy a Pig," and the "House That Jack Built" lies in its use of repetition. The "Little Engine That Could" with its repeated phrase holds the attention of children all the way from three to five years of age.

Stories for children need not have any plot provided they contain the elements just referred to. Stories should, of course, contain no gruesome or cruel elements and should avoid any of the details which may arouse fear.

At about kindergarten age, there appears some interest in fairy stories. As soon as this interest appears, it is well to begin with a simple old folk tale and to allow the child to have as much contact with these stories as he likes, provided he is also having contact

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with real life in the form of simple knowledge of plants and growing things, construction in wood, clay, and other mediums and tales of actual happenings such as simple stories of the boyhood of national heroes.

The real and the fairy-tale world have almost equal interest, but for a time the fairy-tale world seems to hold a slightly more important place. After a child approaches nine or ten years of age, interest in facts develops, and, by twelve, interest in facts, in real things, tends to surpass all interest in fairy tales.

Because your child needs to know about real things and because he does not know about these unless he has actually played with them, seen them, and handled them in every way, you should be sure that your child has all sorts of sensations during the preschool period. This is the time for getting sensations of hot, cold, soft, hard, smooth, rough, round, square, pointed, blue, yellow, red, green, because this is the time in which he is interested in them. He wishes to touch, push, pull, kick, and even lick everything with which he comes in contact, and he should have this opportunity for he will never know things truly unless he has had all possible sensory experiences with them. A child who only sees a rough, green, square box gets very little knowledge of it, but if he is allowed to play with it, he knows it by touch, by the feel of the corners, by lifting it to see whether it is heavy or light, and so on. Even adults feel cheated at exhibits if the things shown are under glass or are labeled, "Please do not touch."

Your child's eyes, ears, nose, and all the rest of his

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sense organs should be in perfect condition for he cannot learn to think straight about things unless he has seen them straight, heard them straight, smelled them straight, and touched them straight. A child whose eyes are in bad condition may see double and therefore may not see what things look like. A child whose ears are not good may hear so poorly that he not only cannot understand music but that he cannot even understand the pronunciation of ordinary words well enough to spell them.

A physical examination with particular emphasis upon the condition of the eyes, ears, nose, and other sense organs should be given to every child at least twice a year. It is unfair to leave a child under the handicap of defective channels between him and the outer world. All that a child learns comes through those contact points, the sense organs. Particularly during preschool period, as has been said, these should receive every type of stimulation which a young child may receive.

The school education of children is founded very little on actual sensory experiences and a great deal on words. As soon as a child enters school, therefore, he lessens his contact with real objects while at the same time he learns the words which tell about objects. These words have very little meaning or at best a very limited meaning if a child has not had the actual experience with objects about which the words tell. It is perfectly possible to become "word minded," that is,

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to do most of one's thinking in terms of words instead of in terms of real experiences. To do this, cuts one off in a great measure from the appreciation of poetry and of literature of all sorts. A citation of any of the best-loved poems would show how far the appreciation of these depends upon early sensations. The author has cited in an earlier book <sup>1</sup> the following extract to prove this point:

While he from forth the closet brought a heap  
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;  
With jellies smoother than the creamy curd.  
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;  
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred  
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one  
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

Touch, taste, temperature, odor, all of these must be called to mind when this poem is read if the poem itself is to receive full appreciation.

When your child is experimenting with all sorts of things out of doors, and all sorts of objects indoors, he is gaining that sensory experience which only such actual contact with concrete objects can give.

The kind of stories which your child tells in his early childhood shows the way in which his mind tends to work. The stories are disconnected, have no plot, and show very little reasoning. Ask your child

<sup>1</sup> ARLITT, A. H., "The Psychology of Infancy and Early Childhood," McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1928.

## THE CHILD FROM ONE TO TWELVE

to tell you a story and you will see in some measure at least the way in which he imagines. As children mature, their thinking becomes more and more connected, shows more check from actual experience and a more careful use of words, and, finally, a greater ability to take account of the relations between experiences which have similar elements.



## CHAPTER X

### HOW YOUR CHILD THINKS

**I**N spite of the fact that the basis for all thought is certainly laid during the first two years of the child's life, his thinking differs from that of adults for long beyond that time. Most adult thinking is done in terms of speech. We think of what we have said to so and so, of what we shall buy downtown, of how we will play bridge this afternoon—not so much in terms of the actual picture of the necessary talking or buying silk or pulling cards out of a hand which we are holding, but in terms of such terms as “Two yards of blue silk 36 inches wide”; “Play the heart lead first and follow with a small spade”; and so on.

A young child has at his command very few words with which to do his thinking. He progresses very slowly through three stages in speech. The first lasting from nine months to a year is primarily a babble stage in which there are very few sounds that really approximate word forms. While he is in this stage, the interested parent watches him closely and when he says a sound which is in any way like a real word, the parent delightedly seizes upon this sound and says it back, for example: If the child opens his mouth as he says the

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word "ah," which is a common vocal sound, and then closes it at intervals during the sound, he will have an excellent approximation to "mamma." The number of times which he closes his mouth will determine the number of such syllables produced. This vocal sound delights the parent to such an extent that she repeats it again and again to the child with every expression of pleasure. Shortly, we find the child saying "mamma" and letting this word stand sometimes not only for his mother but for all women of his acquaintance.

From about one year and one month to about eighteen months, children gain more and more of these one-word sounds. The one word will stand for many objects, for example, "duck" may mean anything that moves or any animal. "Dada" may mean any man. When the child wants a box, he does not say, "Bring me the box." Instead, he says in a commanding tone "box" and waits until the adult hands it to him if it is out of reach.

At about eighteen months of age, children begin to combine words. They say "Baby runs"; "Drink water"; and so on. During this period they seem to be fascinated by the fact that everything has a name. A long period of practice with the name of every object is characteristic of this period. The author has often seen children going about from object to object in the room demanding the name and then repeating it after the adult who was playing the game with him. Certainly,

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during these first three periods of speech, the child has at his command too few words to do the sort of thinking which is characteristic even of kindergarten children.

From two years to two years and six months, questions which refer to "where," "what," "who," and so on are characteristic. The child is getting the relations between objects. When he asks, "Where are you going?" or "Where do you eat lunch?" or "Where does rain come from?" or "Where are clouds?" he is getting the relation between himself and the outside world. "What's a child?" "What's a doll?" are also types of questions which he will ask continually.

Finally, he reaches the nearly mature stage in the use of speech—the "why" speech of language in which he is constantly questioning the "why" of everything that goes on. "Why" questions like "where" and "what" questions, are planned to give him an idea of what is happening in the world around him. Your child will do his thinking correctly in proportion to the amount of information which he gets in response to those "where," "what," and "why" questions which to you may for a time seem extremely annoying because of the number and of the amount of information which is called for, if they are to be answered correctly.

No parent views with a calm mind a string of questions such as the following: "Who makes the rain come?" "Why don't dolls die?" "Who makes the gasoline turn to gas," "Why do automobiles stop at street

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corners?" "What makes roses pink?" "Why is a puppy?" "When I die, will I be an angel?" "Do boy angels have better times than girl angels?" and so on. One is unfortunately faced with the type of question which no information at hand can solve, such as angels, heaven, and various other life questions; but, wherever the child's demand for information can be answered, it should be answered in the fewest possible words and in the simplest terms. The author was somewhat surprised recently to have children who had just been shown a nest of young robins demand, "Did you bring those little fuzzy birds for us to play with?" When that question was answered in the negative, a complete history of bird life was demanded.

Since your child has very few words with which to do his thinking and very little experience with actual things, he is very apt to substitute movements for the thinking processes as we know them. He does not stop to think how to open a door. On the contrary, he tries everything from pushing and kicking to biting if the door refuses to open. He does not sit down and think how to put his leg into his underwear. On the contrary, he makes countless, aimless, and to you rather stupid movements in the process of which he may get the left leg in the opening for the right one or both legs in the single opening. It is more than common for children when the coat is held for them by the adult to place the wrong arm in the nearest arm hole repeatedly. Thinking then for the most part takes the form

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of movement of a trial-and-error type, that is to say, the child will try all sorts of movements in order to find the right one.

As he gets older, one main thing occurs. He substitutes words and ideas for the enormous amount of movement which has been present during the first two or three years of his life. If he has not received adequate experience with things for which the words stand, his thinking is not adequate. Most of the so-called bright sayings of the children which one may read in any newspaper are not so much bright sayings as they are poor reasoning. The child has said something which the adult thinks is funny because it does not fit with adult thinking. A little boy, who has been told a story about a night watchman who said every hour, "Nine o'clock and all's well." "Ten o'clock and all's well," and so on, said to his mother seriously, "But what does he say when someone is sick in the house?" and this was repeated again and again as a funny story. To him "well" meant absence of physical illness and nothing else.

A second illustration of the same sort is the case of the little boy who returned from Sunday school and said that they had been talking about Packard cars. On being quizzed, he said somebody had gone up on high and only Packard cars could climb hills in that gear. To the family, this seemed a funny story, whereas it was actually nothing more than a misunderstanding based on a wholly inadequate experience.

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Parents should give their children every possible experience whenever they realize that the poor quality of the child's thinking is due to the fact that he has not had sufficient number of contacts with the things about which he is reasoning. A walk in the afternoon in which the parent calls the child's attention to interesting things which are going on, trips to the zoo, talks about the milk man who brings the milk, in simple story form, and similar contacts with occurrences which make up the everyday life of children help greatly to increase their capacity to think clearly.

Children often fail to see similarities unless these are pointed out to them. They do not see that rules in force at home apply at other homes. They do not know that the careful treatment afforded a china dish must also be afforded a vase. They do not know the difference between getting their feet wet on cold, rainy days and getting their feet wet playing in the grass in the warm summer, and so on. The parent should be constantly on the alert to help his child in the perception of similarities. He should show him that obedience means obedience to wise authority in general and not only obedience to father in his own home. He should show him such similarities as the direction in which door handles, bottle caps, and screws turn in opening; between the care of plants and animals; and the like simple, everyday experiences.

On the other hand, children see similarities where none exist. The child who thinks that the automobile

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which has stopped running has done so because it is tired, that the man who is running for exercise is afraid, that the father who appears to be sleepy does so because he hasn't had his afternoon nap, is seeing similarities where no similar elements are present. It is well to say to a child, who wishes to pick up or pet strange cats or dogs, "We play with our dogs and our cats, but we keep our hands off strange dogs and strange cats." This will both help the child to think more clearly and give him a basis on which to act. This is, of course, a far better plan than the unfortunate one so often followed of saying to a child, "Don't touch that dog. He'll bite you," "Don't touch that cat. Cats have germs." This latter method does not help children in any way. It simply sets up fear states.

There are other things besides the lack of sufficient words and lack of everyday experiences which make children's thinking not so good as our own. The young child does not know the names of colors, nor can he count objects adequately. He does not get shapes like square, round, diamond, star, correctly and he cannot think clearly in musical terms. These inadequacies are largely the result of immaturity and will be overcome as your child reaches kindergarten age. While they are present, however, defects in thinking in these fields will be clearly seen. A little boy who accepted a nickel in place of a dime was made fun of by his entire family, but actually to him larger meant more valuable. In fact, this same child even after this experience

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took a Canadian copper, which is somewhat larger than our copper, in place of a quarter. He liked the color better and the size was apparently greater. These two reasons were quite sufficient to him if not to the family.

A two-year-old child who was sitting on the floor with a number of cards scattered around him was unmercifully teased by his family because his older brother could take one of the cards when his back was turned and he would not know the difference. Since any number over two was to him simply more, the absence of a single card exactly like all of the other cards was not noticed.

A third child was tormented by his family because he chased birds with a salt shaker for one whole morning, attempting to put salt on their tails in order to catch them. He, of course, did not realize that any one who was near enough to put salt on the birds' tails was also near enough to catch them. To him, distances were as little known as number, size, and form—none of which are clear to young children.

There are other reasons why your child may not think clearly. He may not be able to keep an idea long enough in mind to reason about it. This is a natural childish tendency. He may jump to conclusions so quickly that your mature judgment is not even expressed before he has done the thing which you wish to have him stop. This is to be expected. Children learn to hold back and to think slowly only after some years



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have passed. To the little child, to think of doing a thing is to do it, if the thing is attractive enough. In fact, Bridges<sup>1</sup> in his experiments with children in McGill University found that the average length of time in which children attended even to objects of interest was not more than from seven to ten minutes. To attend to ideas as they pass through the child's mind is a much more difficult matter than to attend to concrete objects. If your child jumps to conclusions or refuses to think things clearly, he is simply behaving like a normal preschool child.

How can the parent train the child so that he will think well? We have already stated that to give a child experience is to help him to think. In addition to this, the parent may do other things which will be helpful. The parent may help the child to check on his conclusions. For example, if the child says, "I can carry this cup full of water and not spill it," it is well for the parent to say, "When water is about this high in the cup, it will probably spill when you carry it," and then let the child have the experience—pointing out without any of the "I told you so" attitude the fact that the water spilled. If your child tells you that he can turn on the faucet in the bathtub without having it splash, it is well to let him turn the water on when he has on a suit which will not be spoiled and then to point out that when the water rushes in too fast, splashing

<sup>1</sup> BRIDGES, K. M. BANHAM, "Occupational Interests of Three-year-old Children," *Ped. Sem. and Jour. Gen. Psych.*, 1927.

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results. Parents should never take the attitude which says as plainly as would words, "I knew best, didn't I?"

One should always give the child an example of clear thinking. No child will think well unless he comes in contact with adults who are not muddled in their thinking processes. An adult who jumps to conclusions, who evades issues, talks all around points without coming to them, and makes the fact support his conclusions no matter how difficult it is to make them do so, will give children a very poor model to follow.

Thinking straight and telling the truth in dealing with one's children is the best possible example to the child to do these things himself. He cannot be expected to think well if all of his models are poor any more than he can be expected to speak correct English when those with whom he comes in contact speak incorrectly. Find out as soon as you can the intelligence level of your children, and then help them patiently to overcome their immaturities in the use of speech and in thinking.

Much patience and knowledge of the child's viewpoint is necessary to understand how little your child's thinking approaches your own adult and mature thought. Less ridicule and more helpfulness, less poor thinking and more adequate models combined with the patience already mentioned will help your child to think clearly and reason correctly when he reaches maturity.

## CHAPTER XI

### TOYS, GAMES, AND OCCUPATIONS FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD<sup>1</sup>

ONE reason why toys are so important to the child under school age is because toys are to them what textbooks and school materials are to the child in school. Play is his education.

Even the simplest game that the child plays often has a great educative value. A mother said the other day that she had been wasting 20 minutes because she had been playing tiddledewinks with her little girl. That may have appeared to her to be a waste of time but when we sat down to find out what the child had learned, we found out that first of all, she had learned how to take turns; second, she had learned how to play by the rules of the game; third, she had learned a lot about playing fair. In addition to these things, which are certainly character education, the little girl had gained control over the muscles of her fingers and hands in shooting the pieces into the cup in which they were supposed to fall.

Another mother said that she thought her baby just wasted time. She pretended to clean house and dusted

<sup>1</sup>For permission to reprint a portion of this chapter, the author is indebted to the Parent Teachers Magazine of Cincinnati.

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and swept and used the carpet sweeper on places that were already clean. This little girl was not only learning to get fun out of cleaning up, but in doing the things that she saw other people do, she was learning to know more about the things that were going on around her. It is a true saying that children do not know things until they have acted them out. So the child who is pretending to be the baker, or the cook, or the mother keeping house, or the iceman delivering ice, or the grocery man selling things in his store, is learning about these people. The more he knows about them, the better he understands them. When children are just drawing and nothing appears on the paper but strokes of crayons which, of course, they will call by any name they like, they are nevertheless learning how to control their hands and fingers. That scribbling will sooner or later come to be drawing and real letters. The child cannot learn to write until he has scribbled first.

When your child plays, then, he is learning control over his muscles, he is learning about all of those activities which are going on about him, he is learning to use language, and he is learning in his imaginative play how to take part in all of those activities which he sees going on in and about his home, and how to do those things which he will later be called upon to do. The very simplest play helps him in some way even though the parent looking on is unable to tell exactly in what way that play is helping with her child's development.

## TOYS, GAMES, AND OCCUPATIONS

Toys for children differ somewhat at different ages. The toys which one should choose for the baby are largely such as to encourage experimentation. They should be planned so that the baby can push, roll, throw, and even bite or lick them. Baby's toys should be very durable and should clean easily. The following list will show some types and toys which may be purchased for the child a year old or younger: <sup>1</sup>

Rattles, little color, minimum noise.

Wooden beads strung on heavy cord (one-inch beads are safest).

Rubber or ivory rings.

Small animals of rubber without whistles or projecting points.

Stuffed animals (washable).

Celluloid water toys.

Soft dolls.

A nest of blocks.

Aluminum dishes with smooth edges.

Spools on strings.

Sheets of clean white paper.

Wooden spoons and bowls.

For the child beyond infancy, a list of toys should include some materials under each of these four headings:

1. Toys for active play such as kiddie-kars, wagons, wheelbarrows, climbing frames, and balls.

<sup>1</sup> For assistance in compiling the lists of toys the author is indebted to Miss Afton Smith and Miss Marie Acomb.

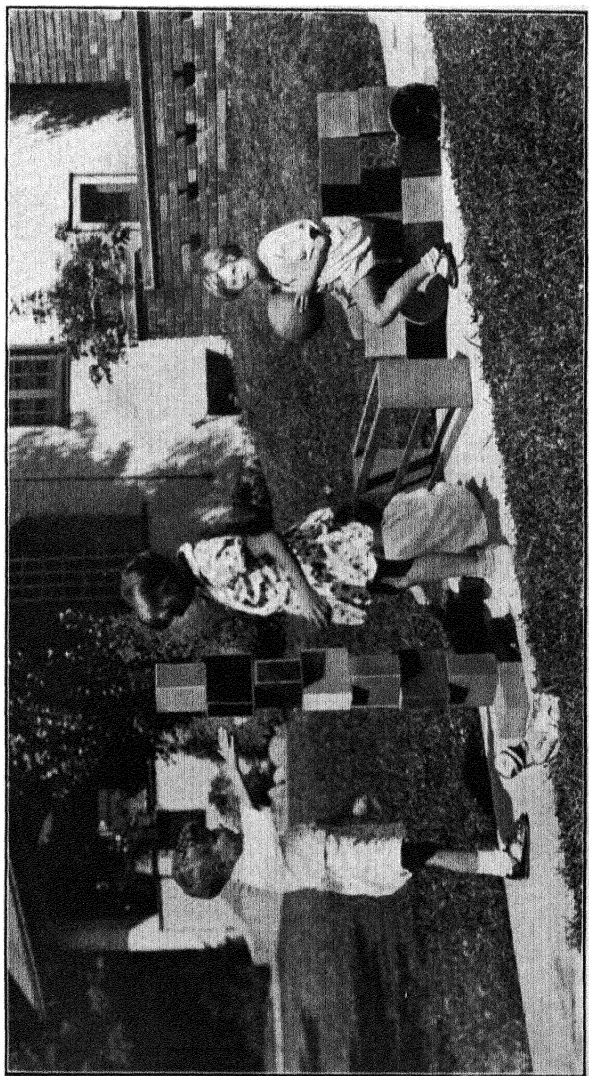
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2. Miniature reproduction of objects such as dolls, furniture, animals, kitchen utensils and the like.
3. Creative materials such as blocks, clay, sand, beads, crayons, and paper.
4. Books of pictures, songs and stories.

As soon as the baby can walk, he should have toys for active play; a kiddie-kar, toys on strings or to drag about, particularly wooden trains, a frame on which to climb, and a ball. Slides are good, but play on these should be carefully supervised.

A box of large blocks and a sand box or a sand tray with a spoon and sand toys will supply enough creative materials until the third year.

Outdoor play should be encouraged for children of all ages. John and Jane were having a glorious time over in the corner of the yard with a pile of wooden boxes with the projecting nails removed and some nice smooth planks. With these they had built first a train, then a boat, and now they were busily building a zoo. Two tricycles which had been used earlier stood quietly waiting until they should be needed again. A sand pile, sand toys, and some wooden animals were there to use when the children had had enough active play. They were happy because they were busy. They were busy because they had interesting things to play with which suited their ages. They would rest better and be less "mischievous" because, to paraphrase the expression of a little boy, "they were so busy playing with their toys



Active play, then quiet play is a good combination.

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that they didn't have a minute to themselves." Their play was all the better because it was out-of-doors.

All children need outdoor play, not only because it is a fine outlet for that activity which children need to have, but because sun and outdoor air promote normal growth. Sunshine appears to have some of the same effect that one gets when one takes codliver oil. Sun rays are good for children except when the days are very warm. Everyone knows how tired and cross and noisy children get when there has been a long rainy spell and they have had to be indoors, and what a relief it is to both children and parents when active outdoor play begins again. This type of play—climbing, running, playing with large light boxes and planks, large blocks, and the like—is necessary not only to develop the large muscles but to insure the proper use of the small muscles that are used by the older child in reading, speaking, sewing, pasting, and cutting out. These latter are "sitting-still" occupations and are not to be used at all with two- and three-year-olds and very little with four-year-olds. Sewing and reading are, of course, not considered good occupations even for four-year-olds.

Mary, aged six, who likes to sit and paste, also likes to wash doll clothes out-of-doors and to build large outdoor doll houses with boxes and wooden blocks to play house in. Housekeeping is as much fun out-of-doors as in.

Active play until one is a little tired, then quiet play

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is a good combination. Parents sometimes notice that the young children are very cross when they come in after an afternoon of very active play. This often means that there has not been enough play material of the quiet kind to suggest less active plays. It is possible for the young child to exercise too much just as it is possible for an older child to become overtired from too much activity. Sand play or doll-house building or building with large blocks can be used in the sunshine in winter, and in the shade in summer, and these latter are relatively quiet activities. The following is a list of toys which promote active play:

Pulling toys: carts, wheelbarrows, toy animals on wheels, wagons.

Riding toys: velocipedes, kiddie-kars, wagons, trains, trucks, autos, etc.

Horse reins.

Balls: several sizes.

Slide.

Climbing ladder.

Boxes.

Smooth planks: 6 feet long by 8 inches wide and 1 inch thick.

In choosing from this list one should have in mind that the fewer the things and the less one has space for, the more one should choose for the number of ways in which these things can be played with. A slide can only be used for sliding. A kiddie-kar or a wagon can be everything from a "delivery wagon" to a "train,"

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and out of boxes and planks one can make almost anything.

Gardening is always fun if one has space for it. Outdoor pets, if the children take care of them, help to develop many good character traits. Running, hide-and-seek, find the handkerchief, and other very simple active games can be played when one needs a change from play that requires toys or apparatus.

Though the two-year-old tends to play alone even when there are other children about him, it is a good thing for him to have companions of his own age. Children of three or over should have playmates. Children have more fun when there are two or three of them playing together. Part of your child's time can and probably should be spent playing alone.

From the following list, one can choose materials for quiet play, and, again, these should be chosen with a view to the number of uses to which the child can put them.

### TOYS FOR QUIET PLAY:

#### *Yard blocks:*

Large maple blocks—cut to order:

2 by 4 by 24 inches

2 by 4 by 8 inches

$\frac{3}{4}$  by 9 by 24 inches.

#### *Toys for block play:*

Toy animals.

A set of trees.

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Noah's ark.

Doll-house families.

### *Dolls:*

Unbreakable.

Rag dolls.

### *Toys for outdoor house play:*

Doll beds, carriages, stoves.

Wash tubs, wash board, clothes pins.

Kitchen utensils: egg beaters, potato masher, flour sifter.

Tea-party chairs and tables.

[The list of the toys which the child can use for indoor play is as long as the list of toys for outdoor play. Small objects for dramatic play, such as house-keeping toys, dolls, doll furniture, wooden trains, blocks, and small animals for which the child may build barns and stalls, should head the list. One may include as many or as few presents along this line as one has means for.

A tea set of unbreakable dishes is a very good thing, both to start the child playing and to teach table manners. There is no better way of interesting the child in good manners than to have a tea party play with two children in which one is the guest. Children learn in play what can hardly be taught when the play spirit is absent.

Dolls should be included in the list. A good stiff wooden doll, dressed in clothes which can be taken

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on and off and washed, is a plaything that will occupy the child for many hours. The doll's clothes should be fastened with large buttons and buttonholes or large clasps or large hooks and eyes. Children learn a good deal about dressing and undressing themselves from dressing and undressing their dolls. It is far easier for children to learn the dressing and undressing processes on themselves and on their dolls than on such apparatus as frames, though these may be good for occasional play.

Creative materials such as sand, clay, crayons and paper, and the always useful blocks should be on one's list if one expects children to get the fun that comes from playing with materials that can be taken apart and put together again. All children like this activity, and much of what we call destructiveness can be avoided if materials which may be played with in this way are provided. If they have blocks, clay, and sand, which can be built up or put together and then taken apart, they are much less apt to destroy toys which are only good if left all in one piece.) If one supplies crayons, one should always supply paper on which to draw. Tragedies often occur at Christmas trees, due solely to the fact that the child had crayons or paints and nothing on which to use them. At one Christmas tree, one little boy marked a new rug. Another drew pictures on the new wall paper, and a third decorated his best white linen suit.

If one gives paint or clay, one should be sure that

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the child has an oilcloth apron that goes with them and an oilcloth cover to put on his table. He can then work in peace without any fear of damage to his clothes, or to the furniture. Even if crayons and sand and clay do tend to make a mess, children need them to express their ideas as well as to give exercise to the muscles which they may not get as well with any other types of material.

Blocks, if there are enough of them, and if they are large, provide a never-ending source of interest. Blocks can be goods in the dry-goods stores, cakes of ice, lumps of coal, pieces of houses, parts of furniture, tracks for trains, and an endless number of other things.

At first, the baby merely piles them up and knocks them down, loads them on wagons and unloads them. Later he builds small houses for his wooden animals and trains, or trains and doll furniture of his own. Finally, at the end of the preschool period, he builds with interest in the building itself. He builds a barn for his cow, a garage for his car, a runway for his automobile, doll beds, furniture, and the like. This change in interest is characteristic of all his play. The young child is interested in activity as an end in itself. He puts sand in his bucket and empties it only to refill and empty the bucket again. He runs for the joy of running and not to win a race. As he matures, he is interested in the activity not as an end in itself, but because it produces something. From loading and unloading blocks and piling them up and knocking them down,

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he passes into the stage when his activity results in a house or some real object. His sand play changes from mere joy in the activity to making pies or sand houses or some other objects of interest.

(The first play experiences are very simple. Gradually they become more and more complex. From a simple experience like merely piling up blocks and knocking them down, they change to a whole play which involves a series of imaginative activities as well as actual activities with the hands and feet, for example, our two-year-olds start with piling block upon block without any naming of the building produced. A name will be given if it is demanded by the adult, but it is not given spontaneously. Later they call the building a house or a table and finally they build a series of buildings along a line of blocks, the line of blocks representing the railroad tracks and the buildings, the loading sheds, the stations, and so on, along the tracks. Where one child has engaged in the play alone, now three or four become interested. They play station master, engineer, workmen loading trains, and the various other activities involved in railroading. The same tower, only slightly more complex in its structure than the one made by two-year-olds, may be used by the four-year-olds as a stop and go signal and a whole play about a traffic policeman may be built about this simple structure. One may expect this increase in complexity with increasing age. One may also expect more and more imaginative elements to enter into the play until

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the imaginative play reaches its height in the kindergarten and the primary grades.)

The fourth class of things from which to choose the toy list are books of pictures, songs, and stories. These books should be about things with which the child is more or less familiar. The young child is not interested in fairy stories. These belong to the child of school age. Such books as the "Here and Now Story Book" which tells about how the child gets up and dresses himself and goes down and eats his breakfast are much more interesting to him than the books that tell about fairies and fairy godmothers. Books should contain no gruesome pictures and no stories which will make the child afraid.

A four-year-old who had had explained to him a picture of a bear eating a smaller animal soon after began to wake and cry. When asked why he cried, he said because when he was asleep he could hear the bear crunching bones just outside the door. Another four-year-old after having been told the story of a picture of a fire worried for weeks for fear his own house would burn down. One must realize that when one talks about gruesome material or gives tales of cruelty to the child, one may be setting up fear states which will be difficult to cure. Books for the preschool period should be for the most part of the picture variety. Pictures of animals, boats, trains, and automobiles are particularly interesting.

What may the child learn from his play? At first



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your baby will want to play by itself. Until he is three years old, you will find that though he likes to play with other children around, he does not play with other children. After three, he begins to play with other children instead of just near them. This play with other children may teach him many things. In the first place, it teaches him to share and to take turns. Children who have wanted everything for themselves play the game of taking turns, and thus learn to share as they would not do without this as a game. They learn cooperation. They learn to give in sometimes in order that they may get their own way at other times. They learn self-discipline. Other children are not much influenced by the temper tantrums or the play for attention which young children make. Finally, playing with other children gives a child models that he can imitate. Children cannot imitate very well what grownups do, but they can and do imitate each other. They learn to talk earlier when they play together, and they learn many acts—not all of them good, but mostly good, which they would not learn if they did not see other children do them.

In choosing toys, certain considerations should be kept in mind. The test of a toy is not "what does the toy do?" but "what can the child do with the toy?" With a mechanical toy, one can do three things, one can wind it, watch it, and break it. Young children are not content merely to wind and watch, therefore the mechanical toy is not for this period.

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(Choose toys rather for their durability than for their cuteness or perfection in detail. Young children are not interested in these latter qualities and toys must be durable, for a child in the period of experimental play tries out his toys under every possible condition. A flimsily constructed toy is soon in pieces. Anything that is large enough for a child to sit on, ride on, or stand on should be strong enough to bear his weight, for the preschool age child will ride on his train, sleep in the doll bed, sit on the chair, and climb into the doll carriage. If two children are playing together, these toys will have to be strong enough to bear the weight of both. Tea sets and kitchen utensils should be unbreakable. <sup>1</sup>

Toys should fit.<sup>1</sup> The doll furniture should be large enough for at least one of the dolls with which the child plays. Tea sets and kitchen utensils give more pleasure if they are large enough for the child himself to use.

If possible, give toys that can be added to. A farm with animals can have added to it a milk wagon, new wooden animals, additional buildings. A circus can have new animals, new tents, new apparatus, with each anniversary. A doll house can be kept a source of interest by the addition of new furniture from time to time.

There are several considerations which should be kept in mind in the use of toys.

<sup>1</sup> For some of the following suggestions the author is indebted to Gruenberg's "Your Child To-day and To-morrow."

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(Too many toys out at one time tend to be overstimulating. Each toy suggests a different type of play activity. So many things come into the mind of the child as possible plays that no one is chosen at the expense of the others. The child goes rapidly from one object to another without settling down to any steady playing, and soon tires. Such a multiplicity of toys is bad for the normal child, but for the nervous child or the child who is just recovering from an illness, a multiplicity of toys is inexcusable.

A five-year-old boy in the hospital, during a period of recovery after a severe illness, was found to get worse and worse. He became more irritable, more excitable, and moved around more than before hospitalization. On every conceivable place in the hospital room, toys were piled. Whereas in his own home he had had too many, in the hospital, everybody added to his already overabundant toy supply, until wherever he looked, he saw toys. Cowboy suits, kiddie-kars, balls, blocks, toy animals, and even mechanical toys vied with each other for the interest of the child. Only the complete removal of all toys which suggested activity, the substitution for these of picture books, drawing materials, small blocks that could be used on the bed, and a few such simple toys, caused a rapid change in the amount of activity and irritability in this child.

If a child is expected to put away his toys, as he should, the task of putting away all his toys at once will be too heavy for him. A special shelf or drawer

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or closet should be set apart for toys, and one set should be returned to this place before another is taken out. If a great number of toys are given at Christmas, some of these should be put away and brought out later when the possibilities of the other toys have been explored and, in a measure, exhausted.

Some toys should be kept especially for rainy days. Children who can play with paste and water-color paints or "dress up" only on rainy days hail rain with delight because it brings a coveted privilege.

Set aside broken toys to be repaired. Have a special time when you and your children can repair as many of these as need that "stitch in time" which will save the toy for long hours of play. Chair legs can be glued on with strong glue. Paint can be applied to paintless spots and if the floors are protected by paper and the children by large oilcloth aprons, no damage will be done. A pile of broken toys does not help in acquiring neatness.

Rainy days are a very good time to "clean up and paint" the toy shelf, or in fact to do any of those "odd jobs" in which children take such pleasure. They are equally good days to help cook or mother make biscuits or cake. These latter activities are perhaps the most interesting treats that can be offered to any child.

Toys should always be taken when the children go on long trips or when they go with their parents to make calls. A box of blocks and some toy animals or small trains, or for children over four years, an old

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magazine and a pair of scissors with rounded ends will keep a child occupied when otherwise he would inevitably be "into mischief" or unhappy and restless. Young children must be active. They cannot sit still for longer than a few minutes. Toys to give outlets for this activity will be found to be an excellent substitute for "don'ts."

To summarize, the toy list should include toys for active play, miniature reproduction of objects, creative materials, and books. These should be chosen for durability and to meet the interest of the preschool age child.

To paraphrase the statements of two authorities, "Play is the child's work, toys and play materials are his tools." It rests with parents to select the best tools and to provide the best working conditions.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE USE OF MONEY<sup>1</sup>

ONE of the most important things for children to learn under modern conditions is the use of money. The more complex our civilization, the more stress there appears to be on this medium of exchange. There is nothing which an individual can have today without some sort of payment.

Many years ago, when the medium of trade was largely some product either grown or produced by some artificer, the need for the knowledge of how to use money was slight. Now there is hardly a section in the United States in which the medium of exchange is not wholly or largely in terms of money. Even if goods are offered, the farmer who takes his goods to the local store makes his trade for them in terms of money cost. The pastry cook who disposes of the products of his work sells them first for money and then with that money buys sufficient goods to satisfy his needs, where in an older civilization the cook would have offered his wares for those of the trader or the apothecary, the weaver, or the jeweler.

<sup>1</sup> For an excellent treatment of this subject, see "Your Child Today and Tomorrow," by Sidonie M. Gruenberg.

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Young children are no more trained in the use of money than were those older peoples to whom money was practically unknown. At six, children should be able to recognize a nickel, a penny, a dime, and a quarter, but no questions are asked as to the use of these coins even at that age. Any number of stories may be cited to prove how little children know of the relation between money and labor, between money and goods produced.

A little girl who desired a very expensive doll asked her mother to give it to her. Her mother told her that she did not have enough money to purchase such an expensive toy. "That's all right," she said. "Tell daddy to tell the bank to send it to you. Banks is full of money and Daddy has money in the bank." To her, money was something which Daddy sent home in unlimited quantities.

A six-year-old who had received two new quarters for his birthday took them out, dug a hole in his garden and with great ceremony planted the two quarters. He was greatly annoyed when neither of them sprouted. To him, money was something which could be cultivated as were flowers. To him it literally "grew on trees." The lack of knowledge shown by both of these stories is universal rather than unusual.

Too much emphasis must not be laid on the place of money in society, but lessons can be given in connection with the child's own allowance at first, and later with the things which are bought for the family.

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The child should begin to have an allowance when he is between five and six years of age. This money should be budgeted, that is, it should have a specific use.

A friend of the author's, as soon as she gave her child an allowance, gave her also a box cut into compartments. The pennies of the allowance were divided among the compartments, each of which was labeled as to its use. One was church money, one was school money for pencils and tablets, one was money to be saved, and the last was spending money. When the little girl on one occasion spent both the savings money and the spending money, and desired a new pencil for school, she wished to use her church money in this emergency. Her mother explained that this money could not be drawn from. This constituted an overhead expense, and the needed things would have to wait until next week unless she could not get on without them. This was the child's first lesson in overhead expense which must be taken care of even if some things are gone without.

The child should be allowed to spend its own allowance, particularly the allowance allotted for pleasure. One does not know the meaning of money until one has found out that five cents buys a particularly fine pencil, but fairly good ones may be bought for two and a half cents, and that if one has used one's five cents for the pencil, a pad cannot be bought for the same money, but will require an additional nickel.



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If the child saves all of its money, it does not get this experience.

Saving should be regular, that is to say, the child should put aside a portion of his money weekly. It does not train the child if he saves two cents this week, five cents next week, and nothing the week after. It would be far wiser to save three cents each of these weeks, for then the habit of regularity in saving would begin to be set up. (Savings should be only a part of the total,) since a child gets no pleasure out of money which must all be saved. He gets experience in spending only by spending, and he will not enjoy his allowance which you give him unless he has this experience. It is of no value to him to save unless he also knows how to spend. The money which is saved should be put in the bank by the child himself. If it is to be put in a savings bank, the child should go with his mother and father to deposit the money and should see the book in which the deposit is recorded. Parents should never use the money which the child has saved, except in an emergency and then for the child himself.

Help the child to be specific about spending his money, except that part of it which is allowed for free spending money. A mother who had given her child an allowance of 35 cents on her ninth birthday without any instruction as to the use of this, found the 35 cents on the window sill some time later. She returned it to the child only to find it on a chair the next day. This child had never been trained in the use of money

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and had never spent money herself. To her, the quarter and two nickels were just so many counters, and of no importance.

What the child saves should be saved for some immediate purpose—a doll, a piece of furniture for the doll, a present for mother or father, or, with the older child, a strong truck or a bicycle are perfectly legitimate things to save for. The child gains much pleasure from the object which his pennies have bought. Such saving teaches him far more than the mere collection of pennies and dimes in a small bank, the contents of which in time are transferred to a larger bank. Money so collected means nothing.

A little girl who had always to save her Christmas and birthday money on being asked on her tenth birthday what she wanted, said, "I want just enough money so that I won't have to put it in the bank." To her, money put in the bank was just money lost sight of.

One thing which must always be kept in mind in teaching the value of money is that the child should understand the relation between cost and the object itself. All children begin to trade long before they begin to realize actual cost in dollars and cents. To trade a kiddy-kar worth \$4 for a pen knife worth 25 cents is bad business. The child should have the exchange explained to him if necessary in the different sizes of the piles of money necessary to buy the tool.

A child who had traded a doll theater worth \$6 for a bag of marbles worth 50 cents learned her lesson

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very well when her father showed her the difference in the number of fifty-cent pieces needed to purchase the two.

Three children playing store in a school were shown this relation very clearly. The oldest of the three sold a book worth \$2 for 15 cents and then promptly sold a bottle of ink worth 10 cents for \$1. The teacher stepped in and showed the relation between the two articles. If this lesson had kept on at the rate at which it was going it would have been poor even as a lesson in arithmetic. All the arithmetic that the children learned would not have outweighed the poor sense of relative values which was being developed at the same time.

One of the most outstanding illustrations of an inadequate sense of values was brought out in a recent thrift campaign. A nine-year-old boy sold his watch worth \$10, even second-hand, for \$1, in order to increase the amount of money which he was putting in his thrift savings bank. As a lesson in thrift, nothing could have been more absurd. Lessons in thrift sometimes deteriorate into this same type of thing, or they may result in the child's general tendency to collect which may find its outlet in collecting everything from stamps to paper packages of matches being turned to the direction of collecting money without any more idea of its worth or any better sense of value than he has when he collects paper matches.

In giving the child an allowance, one should be sure

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never to use it as a club to make him behave. A ten-year-old gets an allowance of 35 cents a week. If she is late to breakfast, she is fined 5 cents. For every good paper that she brings home, she gets 10 cents in addition to her allowance. If she does poorly in school, she loses 10 cents, and so on. On one occasion, her allowance was computed as follows:

- Ten cents off for one bad paper;
- Twenty cents added for two good papers;
- Fifteen cents off for being late three times;
- Ten cents off for losing her overshoes;
- Twenty cents off for losing her hat, but finding it again two days later;
- Twelve cents added for unusually good behavior at her mother's Saturday afternoon tea.

Only a professor of mathematics could have computed what she finally got. Mrs. Gruenberg cites a similar instance almost as serious as the one cited here. A child under such a system has not the remotest idea how much money he can count on. Moreover, such a system leads a child to estimate whether being late is worth the nickel or not, or whether it is less effort to have a bad paper and lose 10 cents than to have an especially good one and get 10 cents extra. Such a system has in addition the disadvantage that one or both parents may forget how much the child should be docked and any value the fines may have had will be lost.

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There is always the danger that the child who finds himself without a cent of allowance when he has counted on some may be put in a ridiculous position. A little boy had bought parts for his radio from his cousin, counting on his weekly allowance to cover the debt. At the end of two weeks, he had received no allowance and, instead, found himself in debt. Only his prompt action in finding a job as a delivery boy for the local grocery for one afternoon prevented embarrassing explanations to his cousin. Children placed in this position are tempted to steal or to gamble in order to get the money which they should have had in the form of an allowance.

A seven-year-old boy took his mother's watch and sold it to his fifteen-year-old acquaintance in order to get the money necessary for his contribution to the Thanksgiving gift in his room. He had saved his allowance only to lose it through an unfair system of fines. Rather than face his class without any contribution, he took property which did not belong to him.

Children's allowances should be in proportion to the actual income of the family unless such an income makes the allowance far too great for the child to administer it with wisdom. Children of poorer families should not feel that they can count on a disproportionate amount of money to be spent for their own pleasure. On the other hand, the social demands of children of high economic status often mean that these children are called upon far more largely than are their

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less-well-supplied friends for contributions and other expenditures. The child's allowance should also be in proportion to his age, and his ability to spend it wisely. The more needs which he has, the greater will be the necessity for meeting those needs with an adequate supply of money, but some supervision should be exercised to see that the money is spent with wisdom.

A fourteen-year-old who had been given money for carfare and lunches at high school spent all the money given him for both purposes on the first day of the week. He was within easy walking distance of home so that one-half of the situation could be met by suggesting that he walk both ways. The other half could, of course, not be met in this way, since the child could hardly be made to go without his lunches for four days. This situation illustrates both points: the fact that the child can be held responsible in part for unwise expenditures and the fact that under some conditions, the responsibility placed upon him would entail actual harm.

By high-school age, the child should have a sufficient allowance to cover not only his needs but most of his clothes. He should have the joy of buying these clothes under just sufficient supervision to ensure that he would be adequately provided for in all his needs. The author has had innumerable experiences with growing children who declared that the thing they wished to do most was to have some say in the choice of their clothes. Where the child spends his money this way

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under supervision, it trains him as does no other experience. In learning the use of money, as in learning other things, the theory which one reads from a book or hears is quite different from actual practice with the facts covered by the theory.

At high-school age, children should also have a sufficient allowance to cover some entertainment—this in proportion to the actual income of the family except again where this would entail giving the child more money than he would spend with wisdom.

Should a child ever be paid for things which he does at home? Yes, if one keeps in mind that most of the duties which are exacted of him in the home are things which he should do without any pay whatever. He may be given one job at home by which he can earn money, and this is a wise thing to do provided one is perfectly certain that he does not get the idea that he must be paid for everything that he does. If one gives him this one special job, it must be done regularly or dropped altogether. It is a great help in character training to have the child take on a job and do it regularly and well every day. If he is not held to this job which he has undertaken, he will get the idea that jobs are things which can be done or left undone, and nothing is worse for his future adjustment than such an idea as this.

The money which the child gets for his job must be nearly equivalent to the real value of the job. A four-year-old boy who had been asked by his father to clear

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the leaves from the yard worked for three hours with his small rake and brush until the yard was perfectly clean. When his father came home to pay the child for the job, he offered him five pennies for a job that would have cost him at least 75 cents or \$1 if done by an older person. "Daddy," said the little boy, "if five cents is all this job is worth to you, I guess you'll have to do it yourself."

An eight-year-old who had collected the ashes from the furnace and put them out for the ashman at a price of 15 cents learned that for this same job, the college boy who worked for the neighbors was paid 50 cents and that even this price was considered cheap. He was very angry, but his parents felt that he had nothing to be angry about. As a matter of fact, both of these children were only being fair when they demanded a return nearly equivalent to the price which would have been paid to an older person—not quite equivalent, of course, because the job was not quite so well done.

Can your child earn money in other ways? For example, can your child have a small business? Of course. A lemonade stand in the summer; a chicken business which many older children enjoy; or selling magazines are excellent businesses for a young child to undertake. When in such businesses, he must keep an account of the money spent for supplies, subtract this from the money taken in, and enjoy only the legitimate proceeds of the business. It is exceedingly unfair



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to the child for his parents to buy all his supplies for him and let him take as profit everything that is paid in. He gets excellent business training when he checks money paid out against money paid in and keeps for himself only the legitimate proceeds from his business.

Training children in the use of money will prevent much carelessness on the part of the child, and many heartaches on the part of the parents when the child reaches high school and college age.

## CHAPTER XIII

### DISCIPLINE AND THE OLDER CHILD

THE principles which have been discussed in the chapter on obedience apply as fully to the older child as they do to the younger, but it must be remembered that the need for obedience to outside direction diminishes as the child increases in age. During the first eight years of his life, a large part of the time is given over to developing standards as to what he should and should not do in terms of their effect upon adult attitudes. If what he has done is wrong, the child knows that it will be followed by correction or even punishment. If what he has done is socially desirable, no comment will be made upon it, or if it is particularly desirable, he will receive praise or reward. He behaves solely in response to the kind of treatment which he receives from those adults who make up his home and his school group.

From five years of age on, he will gradually turn over the guidance of his conduct to the standards which he is setting up. By eight, he will do things largely because he knows them to be right or wrong. By twelve, the internal guiding standards have been set up to such degree that though he will be guided by what is done by the children who make up his group,

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he will nevertheless modify his behavior in line with those standards which have been set up by the training received during the first five to eight years of his life.

There are a number of things which he will do simply because those are the things that are socially acceptable, and not because they are either right or wrong. It is well in setting up standards through the entire early period to make this difference clear to him. As an example of this, one may take the adult's firm stand against eating with one's knife.

A four-year-old was told he must stop using his knife to eat mashed potatoes. "For why?" he said. "It goes fast this way." His mother explained that the knife might cut him. "But fork stickers is more sharp," he said.

Similar situations occur in the upbringing of children far beyond four years of age. There are many things which are common only to the particular group or town or city in which we live. There are other things which we do or do not do simply because the one is slightly more polite than the other.

Society accepts certain things as being done in one way rather than in another. This should be made clear to children of all ages, for the ten-year-old, the eleven-year-old, and the twelve-year-old, though they are somewhat obsessed by the standards of the club or gang to which they belong, are nevertheless anxious to have some amount of social approval from adults. They also need to have the feeling that they are "doing the right

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thing" in order to feel secure with children of their own age or slightly older.

While it is well to give brief reasons when one asks obedience of a child beyond four years of age, in the case of the eight-, nine-, and ten-year-olds, giving this reason is often absolutely necessary. If the child is to behave in accordance with certain standards, he must know on what those standards are based. The mother of a ten-year-old boy had told him, "But I want you to be sure not to ask for a second piece of cake at the party." To her surprise, he said, "Why? Just because you tell me not to? That's no reason." For a moment, the parent thought that this was just impertinence, but fortunately she realized in time to prevent anger that it was really a question. The explanation to the boy that the hostess counted on a certain amount of appetite in the people whom she invited and on their politeness in not asking for an undue proportion of the food was sufficient to gain his entire understanding and cooperation.

Responses of the sort just discussed are not at all unusual in nine- and ten-year-olds. They are nearing the age of independence at which time they will question all adult authority and will obey all such authority only if it can show that it has a good reason for its statements. The more they realize the rational quality of parents' directions up to this time, the less they will tend to question standards which are set up at twelve and beyond.

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Since the child is developing a sense of his independence, it is well to put one's wishes in the form of a request rather than a command. Occasions for requests rather than commands should have occurred during the child's whole development, but these should increase as the child becomes older and takes more responsibility for his own behavior. Older children tend much more readily to fall in with a request than to respond willingly to a direct command.

Where there seems to be any possibility of choice as to whether the command should be followed out or not, the child should be given this choice. With the older child as with the younger child, no choice should be suggested if no choice is present. When Mrs. Jones said to her twelve-year-old, "John, don't you want to go to the grocery for me?" and he responded, "No, I don't, but of course I will if you wish me to," he was perfectly within his rights. She had asked a question and had had the answer, and no impertinence was intended.

If the child makes a choice, he should take the consequences. It is, of course, wholly unwise to let him have a choice when what he selects may harm him in any serious way. One would not give a twelve-year-old girl the choice of whether or not she should return without a chaperone from a dance. Naturally she should be chaperoned. No choice is possible. One would not give a twelve-year-old boy the choice of whether or not he should go swimming in a river with a swift

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and dangerous current. Here again no choice is possible. Of course he cannot be allowed to go. The only possibility of his finding out that he is wrong would be in terms of a serious accident. Experience gained in this way costs too much. If, on the other hand, he prefers to have his hair cut in a ridiculous fashion to having it cut in what you know would be good taste, it might be well to let him have the experience and the teasing and criticism that will go with this peculiar hair cut. If he prefers green ties and red socks, it may be well to let him have the experience of wearing these for a while, provided one does not force him to wear them when one knows unfortunate teasing will be bound to occur.

There are many simple choices which one may allow a child, such as which way he will have his hair cut, the type of thing which he had rather do over the week end, which party he will attend, or whether he will study his lessons in the late afternoon or in the evening.

It is well to give the child a choice at all ages and under many conditions. He can be allowed to choose where the furniture is to be put in his room, if this does not interfere too much with cleaning or with opening doors and windows. He can be allowed to choose his own clothes with your guidance and advice. He can even help to decide how to spend the money set aside for his clothing. If, for example, he prefers to pay more for

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shoes and slightly less for shirts or the reverse, the decision may well be his, provided that he is willing to abide by his choice and will not ask for more expensive shirts when he has already agreed to buy less expensive ones. He cannot possibly learn to make independent decisions on sound grounds until he has had practice in thinking things out and deciding them for himself.

In speaking to a group of young women, all over twenty, the question of choice of clothes came up. There was an immediate response on the part of the group. Many of them said with a good deal of heat that that was one of the things that had spoiled their early adolescence. Said one of them, "If I had only been able to have some word about my clothes when I first became interested in them, I am certain I would have been much happier. I remember two dresses I just loathed." As a matter of fact, this interest in choosing what one will wear goes down as far as the nursery school period. When a group of three-year-olds were asked what they would like to choose, one little boy said, "The pants I wear to nursery school," though the question had no reference whatever to clothes. It is unimportant that the child sometimes chooses loud socks and ties or peculiar clothing. It is equally unimportant that he sometimes wears his clothes in a peculiar fashion.

He does not learn to respect your judgment fully until he finds out that you tend to be correct. He can-

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not possibly learn that you are right unless he finds out that he has been wrong. A few mistakes made while the child is between nine and twelve help materially in increasing his confidence in you and in insuring that he will tend to take your advice during the adolescent period. It goes without saying that your advice must be well thought out and not of the hit-or-miss or purely authoritative type. To say, "Do it because I say so," and to have yourself no better reason than that you think you should be obeyed blindly, merely produces revolt against authority, which may show in later life if it does not appear at once. On the other hand, it may produce blind obedience to authority, which is even worse.

One should avoid unnecessary conflicts at all ages, and particularly those which all too frequently arise on the basis of phases through which a child will pass more quickly if less authority is used. Between eight and nine, most children pass through a "smart aleck" phase. If by being "smart aleck," the child gets the center of attention, he may be "smart aleck" through his entire adolescent growth. In fact, this phase may continue well into adulthood to the detriment of the child and of his friends. If, on the other hand, little or no attention is paid to it, it may be expected to disappear without leaving any trace of its passing.

A principal of a private school suddenly discovered that his boys had formed a "smart aleck" club. "As if,"



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he said, "they weren't 'smart aleck' enough without having a club about it." He could have used his authority to try to force the club out of existence but instead he met the problem in a much saner way. To the rest of the children, he said, "Smart-aleck clubs are things which people form when they are growing up. Being 'smart aleck' is just a sign of being about nine or ten years old. If we pay no attention to this, the 'smart aleck' club will soon outgrow it. Suppose we just help them to outgrow it as quickly as possible by not paying attention to it any more than we pay attention to baby talk or something else of that sort." No attention whatever was paid to the club, and within two weeks it had disbanded.

About four years ago, mothers were greatly excited because their high-school boys had refused to wear garters and their socks draped around their shoe tops. They were advised to forget the whole matter since six months would probably produce a change in fashions which would take care of the difficulty without further worry. As a matter of fact, six months was all that was necessary to have the fashion pass.

These examples illustrate what is meant by the use of sane methods to avoid conflicts which may come up on the basis of growth stages through which most children pass. One cannot expect them to grow up without doing along the way some of those irritating things which adults have done in their own development.

Give the child a choice as to what he will do when

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the things are relatively unimportant and save the use of authority for those times when its use is essential to protect the child from experiences which would be much too harsh.

If there are matters of discipline in the household that require an unusual amount of cooperation on the part of the child, it is well to talk these over in family council. He will obey more readily and cooperate more fully when he feels that he is a part of the council on whose actions the rules are based.

Under no conditions should these councils degenerate into debating circles. A principal of a junior high school had gathered the boys about him to discuss a set of rules and a constitution for their club. At the end of the constitution was a paragraph in which the following statement was made: "If there is a disagreement in regard to anything of importance, there shall be no fighting. All disagreements will yield to arbitration." One twelve-year-old boy spoke up at once and said, "Please let me have that constitution to take home to read to my family." That the family councils had degenerated into family battlegrounds was obvious.

Talking things over with a child is an excellent plan to follow where the matter seems not important enough to warrant a family council. We must remember that between ten and twelve, children are approaching the age of self-government. They also are beginning to have a fully developed idea of their own importance. Things which would not have irritated the small child

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may cause many conflicts with an older one. It often happens that a disturbed child will not himself bring the matter up for discussion until the parent has tactfully opened the subject.

A twelve-year-old boy had been coming down to breakfast looking exceedingly glum for over a week. Punishment had only increased the glumness without resulting in an explanation of the boy's behavior. Finally, his father decided to talk the situation out with him. He began this way, "Son, I know there are a number of things about me that you do not like and I'm going to ask you to tell me what they are. There are a number of things about you that I do not like, and I'm going to tell you about them. This will make us understand each other better, and perhaps both of us will understand more fully how to work together. Now, the thing I like least about you is the way you've been behaving at the breakfast table. I go down to my office every morning feeling all upset because of it." "All right," the boy said, "I'll tell you what I like least about you. You leave the bath room so mussed up every morning that it takes me half an hour to clean it before I can take my bath. That's enough to make any fellow feel grumpy at breakfast."

Had that interview been conducted in the spirit of criticism and fault finding by the father, immediate resistance would have developed in the boy. On the contrary, the father made a "man-to-man" approach. He spoke to the boy in the tone that he would have

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used to a person of his own age and his attitude was wholly open-minded and cooperative. In that family, they now talk things out when something seems to be disturbing any of the four children. On the other hand, they do not talk things out just to have a scene or to give each other a little more attention, since that would be to defeat the very purpose of the interview—better family understanding.

One frequently hears brought up such questions as, "How shall I punish my older child?" "Is there ever need for punishment?" As a matter of fact, there should be little need for punishment after the age of nine or ten, provided the cooperation and confidence of the child have been kept and provided he has a fairly clear idea of what is expected of him. As with the younger child, if punishment is used, it should be as nearly as possible the direct outgrowth of what the child has done. It is well to place before him the possible consequences of different courses of action in some such terms as these, "If your work has been covered adequately, you can go to the picnic Saturday. If you do poor work in school because you do not study, then it will be necessary for you to stay away from the picnic on Saturday in order to give the additional time to the work which you have failed to cover." If, then, the child does not study but instead stays out and plays or reads stories and in consequence leaves the work undone, he should be kept away from the picnic on the purely logical grounds which have already been

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outlined to him. It would not be fair to keep him away from the picnic if he had not been told in advance that this would follow as a consequence of poor school work due to his neglect of studying. Neither would it be fair to keep him from the picnic if his poor school work was due to some handicap or disability and not to neglect on his part.

If a punishment has been promised, one should be as firm in one's stand with the older child as with the younger. A fourteen-year-old boy had been told that he could not go out at night unless he studied his lessons between five and seven. (Dinner in this household was at seven.) Every evening he stayed out until just time to get ready for dinner and each evening his family allowed him to go out immediately after dinner. It would have been only fair to have him stay in and study since that had been the statement which had been made to the child. He knew if he stayed out until late that he would have to stay in after dinner. He had stayed out and therefore should have taken the consequences. This type of discipline was characteristic of the way in which this fourteen-year-old was treated. By the age of sixteen, he was completely out of hand, where a more uniform type of fair discipline would have made both the boy and his family happier and better adjusted.

All of us have learned, no matter what our age, that we have to take the consequences of our forgetfulness and our deliberate omissions of duty. It is only fair

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that the growing child should learn that these consequences almost inevitably follow, but we must remember that no child should be allowed to take consequences which are in themselves more serious than he can bear.

Above all, the punishment must not be that he hears his faults discussed with the family and the neighbors. Such a punishment is too cruel for a young child. For an older child who is just beginning to have a strong need for social approval, it is unbearable.

A twelve-year-old girl who had been careless and thoughtless the previous day returned from school to hear her mother say to her neighbor, "Adela is the most thoughtless child I know." This statement was followed by a list of all of the thoughtless things Adela had done. "I just stood there and thought that I never could trust mother again," said Adela in telling about the incident, "and I didn't care how thoughtless I was for days afterward." This type of attitude is one that is all too apt to develop.

Ridicule, another phase of the same thing, should be avoided at all costs, but good-natured teasing, to which children can readily respond by "teasing back," is apt to be liked by them if it does not become too personal or too rough. Play of this type may increase the cooperation between children and adults.

Occasions for the use of discipline can be avoided by the same means as those used with younger children. There should be no divided authority, for if the

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parents are not agreed as to what the child can or cannot do, how can the child tell which parent is right, or if indeed either parent is. "Dad says fight. Mom says never fight. Mom says it's all right to go to movies. Dad says it isn't. I guess I'll take a chance on the one that agrees with me," said one eleven-year-old.

"Father said we'll leave Monday. Mother said no, we'll leave Tuesday, so we went Tuesday," was the all too revealing statement of another boy whose respect for his father was not as well developed as it should have been.

Such conflicts are disturbing to children at all ages, but never more so than between the ages of eight and twelve, when the child is consciously setting up standards of behavior for himself.

One could discuss in detail all the other principles in connection with securing obedience discussed in the chapter on that subject, since all apply equally to the older child, but the parent may easily make these applications for himself. It is sufficient to summarize here by saying, give children a choice of what they will do when this seems fair and let them abide by the consequences, but never place them in a situation which will be certain to have harsh consequences if a wrong choice is made.

Let your child think things out for himself and respect his opinion, but help him to think straight by giving him the benefit of your more mature experience. Remember that he will pass through a stage in

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which he will appear not to be guided by you and prepare him for this stage before it occurs. Avoid unnecessary conflicts. Talk things over. Make your ideas interesting to the child when conflicts seem imminent. Warn briefly of the consequences before the child gets into a situation in which discipline will be certain to follow.

Make a comrade and a friend of your child. Gain and keep his confidence. Help him to be cooperative. Help him to feel that he is an important and responsible member of your family. After all, one is not training a child to be a good child. One is training an individual to be a responsible adult citizen in his community.



## CHAPTER XIV

### SOME PROBLEMS OF THE OLDER CHILD

ONE of the problems which is constantly being discussed in connection with modern children is how the child's day should be planned. In planning a day for the child, the first thing to keep in mind is that a certain amount of time should be unplanned for. There is no possibility that children can develop initiative, independence, and the ability to do creative work unless they have large amounts of free time which they themselves must fill. Every year children are brought to consultation centers because of nervousness and irritability, and in nearly every case a part of this nervousness and irritability is due to a day completely filled. We all know the sense of pressure which comes from a series of appointments with too little time in between for breathing space. Children get the same sense of pressure.

A twelve-year-old girl who seemed irritable and disobedient a large part of the time had as her schedule the following: Music lessons for which she practiced from seven to seven forty-five every morning. This was followed by breakfast and a fifteen-minute interval to look over her lessons. School took the day until three o'clock. On Mondays and Thursdays, she had the music

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lesson for which she practiced every morning. On Tuesday, she had a dancing class. On Wednesday, her club met. On Friday, she went to her elocution lesson. On Saturday morning, there was a dramatic class. When it was found that she had a free Saturday afternoon, her family filled this with a nature-study class. No wonder that under such pressure as this the child became nervous and irritable.

. It must be remembered that during the early adolescent period, marked physical changes are taking place which for the time being, at least, cut down the amount of energy which the child can put into his lessons. There are such marked changes in the muscle system that the child becomes awkward and develops in connection with this awkwardness a number of habits which are distressing to both parent and child. Playing with bead chains, fooling with hair, twisting buttons, and even biting finger nails are among the habits frequently met with.

During this period, ridicule only adds to the disturbance under which the child is laboring. A twelve-year-old had suddenly gained several inches in height. One day when his mother was having company, the boy started to enter the room in which tea was being served, fell over the door sill, and skated on a rug for several feet. The guests and the parent both laughed and began to tease the boy. For some years after, the boy refused to go into any room in which his mother was entertaining. The experience had been too painful

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for him to be willing to have it repeated. The more awkward the child seems and the more lackadaisical it appears to be, the less heavy should be the schedule which is arranged. There is sufficient stress and strain in merely growing at the rate at which the child is growing.

Mothers will notice many things in addition to the child's awkwardness. The child's appetite becomes capricious. He wishes to indulge freely in sweets and pastries while at the same time he is refusing foods obviously better for him. This too means that the child will show fatigue more easily than at a slightly earlier period.

Because of the ease with which the child fatigues, there should be ample time for rest in the schedule, as well as ample free time for the child to plan for himself. It is not too much to ask for a brief rest in the afternoon as well as for the night's sleep.

The school period should be followed by periods of rest and recreation — preferably out-of-doors. Since the junior-high-school and high-school period is preeminently the period for group games, a part of the period for recreation should be given over to games of this sort. Children need social life, and the social life of the group game is far better for them than too many parties or theaters. In the group game, children learn much more than they could learn from any other thing which fills the recreation period. Team work, that thing which is so great a factor in the home, and the willing-

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ness to sacrifice one's self for the good of the whole, to carry one's share of the work, and to keep out of the center of attention in order that the whole team may win, are qualities as desirable in family life during childhood and in later life as they are in games.

A second problem which comes up particularly in connection with girls is the matter of unwise dieting and exercise.

Jane came home from school, threw down her books, and promptly "flopped" into the softest and most comfortable chair in the house. "I'm tired out," were her only words. Her mother replied with some heat, "If you would eat enough to keep a bird alive, you wouldn't be so tired. For breakfast you had one slice of toast and some orange juice, and goodness knows what you had for luncheon."

Were this an unusual situation in homes of children between the ages of fourteen to eighteen, it would hardly be worth recording, but the trouble is that the situation is usual rather than unique. Ever since the modern craze for thinness has been upon us, growing children have tried to follow the fashion by dieting. Anyone who has run a summer camp for girls has had this as a problem, as have many health workers and many high-school authorities. Girls are constantly weighing themselves and complaining if they gain a few pounds, not realizing that it is no more beautiful to be very much underweight than it is to be very much overweight.

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It is true that the adolescent girl's appetite is sometimes finicky both as to choice of foods and as to amounts eaten. Sometimes she eats enormously, while at occasional meals she may eat very little even if she is not attempting to diet. Little attention should be called to slight differences in appetite, since here, as in the period from one to six, the excitement which the child causes is often enough to make her keep on eating too little. Most children like to be the center of attention and the cause of excitement, and if dieting or having a finicky appetite gives them this result, diet or be finicky they will.

During the growing period, children may become thin in spite of eating a generous amount, but thinness produced by a starvation diet is followed by a series of undesirable results. Children become tired, they are less resistant to colds and other infections, and in addition they lose much of the charm of youth by being unhealthy in appearance. Health carries with it a certain charm which is not present when the child is on the borderline.

Every child should be well nourished in the growing periods. A balanced diet taken in correct proportions to keep the child up to weight for height is exactly as essential as the correct selection of courses in a high-school curriculum. Regular physical examinations and the advice of a physician as to adequate diets during the growing period are as essential as a consultation with a vocational advisor as to a life work—in fact

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more essential, since sound health is necessary for any career.

Overstimulation should be avoided. Studying to the accompaniment of the radio, rushing to the motion picture show again and again, and being "on the go" every minute are all overstimulating in proportion to the extent to which one does them. Every growing child should have some time to rest and reflect. It is especially important that a child with a poor appetite, or even with a good one, should rest before and after each meal.

Exercise out-of-doors is excellent if it is well regulated. The girl who came home and said that she had been playing basket ball for three hours without any rest was storing up for the future not resistance to physical troubles, but the reverse. Few children are strong enough to overexercise daily, or even frequently, without harmful results.

A regular schedule for sleep, rest, and exercise, a balanced diet with wholesome foods, and overcoming the idea that underweight is an asset are three things which every parent can secure for the growing child.

Certain other problems arise in connection with growing children. One phase of growth sometimes begins at twelve years of age and continues through the later years of college entrance. Children in this phase show much change in emotional states. They are easily excited. A good mark in school

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may send them into raptures, and a slight criticism may cause unhappiness so serious that it can hardly be equaled in later life. Children become wildly excited over plans for their pleasure, and frantically disappointed if these plans do not turn out as they wish them to.

Older children are influenced by the enthusiasms of their gang or by some older person whom they admire. One should share in these enthusiasms as far as possible, since to do so helps to keep the child's confidence. He will bring you his small troubles and his great enthusiasms throughout the rest of his life if you at this period show him that you are deeply interested. Even if the whole matter seems somewhat trivial to you, it is not trivial to him. He needs the assurance that you are still interested in him even if he is grubby, has bad table manners, and uses outrageous slang.

Children of eleven or twelve are in the gang age. They have great need for companionship with children of their own age. These companionships are not always exactly what we wish for the child, but they are a natural part of growing up.

Parents are the comrades of their children, but they must not expect to be the final authorities for them in certain fields, since the interest in gang activities is so great that the child tends to feel that the gang knows more than does any adult. An authority, in speaking the other day of the relationship between father and

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son, said that at ten father was everything, the final authority; at twelve, the son began to think that after all the fellows knew a good deal more about some things than father; at fourteen, the son knew far more than father ever did know; at eighteen, father was coming into his own again; and by the time the boy was ready to enter business, he was perfectly willing to believe that father's maturity and experience had really given him a greater knowledge than his son had had without it.

Children are singularly sensitive to praise and deeply resentful of ridicule of all sorts and of harsh treatment, or of what they feel is not "fair play." A list of the things which the child dislikes most, and this comes from children themselves, contains: "absence of laughing and smiling, excessive scolding and 'roasting,' fondness for inflicting blows, indifference, malevolence, sarcasm, severity, sternness, suspicion, threats and broken vows, and unjust punishment," while a list of the things that children like most is as follows: "arousing of ideals, encouragement to overcome circumstances, and, in general, inspiring self-confidence, giving direction, kindling of ambition to be something or do something and so giving an object in life, and the giving of purpose." Next come "a little praise, being understood, confidence, kindness, personal sympathy and interest, and special help in lessons."<sup>1</sup>

Gaining and keeping the confidence of the child is

<sup>1</sup> HALL, G. S., "Youth."



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one of the most important contributions which the parent can make to normal growth. A first factor in this has already been discussed, namely, listening to all that the child brings to you and being interested in his, to you, small affairs. A second help in keeping the child's confidence is never to have anything which he has told you confidentially repeated to anyone else. He must know that he can trust you to keep his confidence as sacred as you would keep the confidence of other adults.

A twelve-year-old boy had written a play which was, to him, a remarkable production. He had written it with his three friends in mind, and all four of them planned to act this play and to charge admission. He told his mother about it as a secret. She was very much interested in his plans, but on reading the play she found it to contain many absurd passages. This was, of course, natural for the production of any twelve-year-old boy. However, the mother thought that some of the passages were "too good to keep." She, therefore, read them aloud to two of her friends when they came to call that afternoon. All three of them shouted with laughter at the boy's ridiculous statements. Unfortunately, John came home during the reading. He heard all the comments that accompanied it and the laughter. From that day on, he has never confided in his mother. Many other such instances can be given.

Jane at twelve decided to have a case of "puppy

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love," about three years ahead of the time at which the attack might be expected to occur. Sane treatment would have made Jane pass through this phase rapidly, but her mother took it as the greatest joke in the world. She teased Jane, she told her friends all of the things that Jane had told her in confidence, and she told Jane's father and the boy's mother. Both children were supremely miserable. Jane is now fifteen and her mother wonders why she hasn't Jane's confidence. She wonders why Jane does not come to her with the things that go on.

Sam's mother was told of a boy who had cheated in school. She was told this in confidence but she went at once to the principal in the school and told him all that she knew. The principal had to act on the information which he had gained. A whole class of boys was made miserable by this parent's breach of confidence. It goes without saying that her son never again told her anything that he did not wish told to someone else.

Keep the child's confidence by keeping his confidences absolutely sacred. Share with him things that you wish him to keep sacred. Let him know that you and he share things that other people cannot because you are parent and child. Avoid criticizing his friends and, above all, criticizing him to such an extent that he loses confidence in himself and in his choice of people. Help him to see his friends in their true rela-

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tion, but do this tactfully. Remember that it may take six months before he finds out that some of his friends are desirable and others undesirable. It may even take several years. If he has been well trained and if he tells you what goes on, you need have no fear. Bad influences have little effect where the good influences are more in number, have lasted for a longer period, and are more intense. If your child has been trained well for ten to twelve years, and if he comes to you with his troubles and with the things that disturb him, he may have contact with children whom you do not like and still not be seriously affected by them.

There are many problems in connection with the older child other than the ones which we have discussed, but those discussed in this chapter together with those in the chapter on discipline in the older child and in the chapter on money constitute the problems which come up most frequently in parent discussions. Perhaps the only other serious problem in connection with the education of children is in the matter of adequate sex education. This has been so well treated by Gruenberg, Edson, and others that it is not treated here.

In every problem of parent-child relations, the parent does well to keep in mind that the most important thing in connection with child rearing is that the parent have love for and confidence in his child and that the child have similar love for and

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confidence in the parent. If these conditions exist and if the parents live in a well ordered home and the child sees wholesome family relations about him at all times, one need have little worry as to his ultimate possession of one of the things which every parent desires for his child, sound character.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE MODERN PARENT

PARENTS throughout the ages have been inspired with a splendid idealism and a devout purpose. Parental love and sacrifice have been the theme of untold literary productions and the inspiration of many masterpieces. It has rested with this generation to place upon the parent the responsibility for all personality difficulties and maladjustments, and to produce in at least a proportion of parents self-consciousness, confusion, uncertainty, and bewilderment.

For none of these states of mind is there need. Though the parent's problem has increased in complexity, and his need for understanding has increased in proportion, he has today just as many reasons for feeling secure and for meeting these problems on a sound basis as had the parent of fifty or one hundred years ago.

Life itself is more complex, but it is, on the whole, easier on the individual, both because of mechanical labor-saving devices and because of knowledge of how to carry out daily tasks. Parental problems are more complex because both children and adults have many more situations to meet than ever before. As in other fields, this complexity is compensated for by the amount of information at hand to make the task easier.

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Research has given the parent sound knowledge of child psychology. If bewilderment, confusion, insecurity, and self-consciousness follow upon the writings based on research, parent education has failed signally of its purpose. Knowledge of child development and child behavior should produce not shocks but shock absorbers. It both prepares the parent in advance for the stages through which the child will pass, and gives him techniques with which to meet the problems at each stage. If, for example, one knows that between four and six years of age, one's child will tell wild stories and that these do not show an innate tendency to lie but are merely a production of the imagination, and if, in addition, one knows the methods by means of which the imagination may be developed normally and the so-called lying cease, with what a sense of security one may deal with this stage in a child's development. How much more simple is one's task of obtaining adequate discipline while at the same time one develops in the child initiative, independence, and a sense of responsibility when one knows the general principles which apply.

Many parents are worried because they fear that any contact which they have with their children may have serious effects in one way or another. They become so worried over the consequences of what they say or do in connection with their children's behavior that they are as self-conscious as an actor on his first night. It is impossible for parents to enjoy their children and for

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children to enjoy their parents as long as this attitude persists. What children do is interesting and significant, but a single error on the part of a parent will not interfere markedly with the development of the child, nor will many such errors if they are few in proportion to well-thought-out activities. If the parent is honest in his wish to work out a cooperative plan by which the welfare of the family as a whole may be promoted, if his attitude allows the child to develop his individual capacities to the fullest extent compatible with the welfare of the family, and if the children realize that the parent is sincerely devoted to them, no harm is likely to result. It is important to make the proportion of well-thought-out contacts with the child large, for his respect and the obedience which follows it are built upon his belief in the parent's superior maturity.

Children are human beings. They respond to honesty, fairness, and wholesome affection just as do adults. They will take the responsibility for their fair share of work and will have the sense of importance that comes with it. They will respond to fair discipline as would the parent himself, and to careless discipline just as do all adults, whether parents or not.

There will always be tension at times between parents and children as there is tension between other human beings, no matter how fond they are of each other. The reasons for these tensions must be found. The child must learn to avoid tensions or he must learn means of meeting them just as the adult has learned

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these things. Life for the child as for the adult will always mean "getting on with other people." He must learn to adjust to you as you in some measure do to him. To give in to him too much will result in spoiling him so that he cannot adjust to the demands of people outside of his home. To force him to an unreasoning obedience may result in an attitude of complete defiance and hatred of authority whether in or outside of his home, or to an attitude of non-resistance which will make the child only too willing to be dominated by any stronger individual. The father who said, "I want my child to obey me like a dog" probably thought he was training his son to lead a dog's life.

One must realize that each child is an individual who will make a contribution all his own, but one should realize too that he must learn to work things out with other people and to adjust to them if this contribution is actually to be of value. Be secure in the sense that experience has probably made you as a parent better able to judge the rightness and wrongness of behavior but that your child may sometimes be right. When he is, play fair with him, and his respects will increase. Be secure in the fact that because of your experience, you can give him standards by which he can judge his conduct and that of others both now and later, but that both his standards and yours may change somewhat with changing social conditions. His confidence in you is as complete as that of the little girl who when she found a



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dead bird brought it in saying, "My daddy will fix it." This confidence should give any parent a feeling of security in his contacts with his child. Be secure in the sense that his respect and loyalty will continue throughout his life if he has been dealt with fairly and justly and if you take him into your confidence and let him take you into his, but be most secure of all in the fact that to every young child his parents are the most wonderful, the most brilliant, and the most powerful people in the world. That attitude changes only in the direction in which the parent sets it.

Parents are the greatest educators in the world. No other educators have children for so long a time, for the child is a home child before he is a school child, while he is a school child, and long after the school has given him his education. Just because theirs is so large a responsibility, parents have a right to ask the cooperation of the school and of their community in working for the child's best development.

A child who has been properly reared for the first six years enters school with a keen interest in learning and a zest for wholesome new experiences. He enters with sound attitudes toward authority and with a spirit of cooperation in all reasonable projects. His physical habits are so well set up that he can concentrate his attention on the new experiences which the school presents. It is the responsibility of the school to encourage his zest for learning by employing teachers with adequate methods of teaching and with a thorough

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knowledge of child development. It has been well said that the qualities which make a good parent make a good teacher. To give subject matter is important, but to develop the character and personality of school children is even more important.

The school should offer its opportunities in such a way that home experience and school experience are closely related. No learner gains a transfer from training in one field to material in others unless the relation between the fields is made clear. School experience should enlarge and fortify home experience, as the latter fortifies and extends school experience. Where either fails, there should be helpful cooperation on the part of the other. John was excellent at home, but he was noisy, irritable, and restless at school. His mother visited the school room to find that John had been placed off by himself and told to keep perfectly still. John had been a very active child who was really still only at long intervals. When busy, John never "got into mischief." He was an unusually bright child who learned rapidly. His teacher's complaint was, "He finishes things well but much too quickly. He will have to learn to go slowly." Incidents of this sort rarely happen with the splendidly trained teachers of today, but when they do a closer cooperation between home and school will help materially in solving the problems. Both home and school should support each other. Parents should never criticize the teacher or the principal or any of the school officials in the child's hear-

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ing any more than they should criticize each other in the child's hearing. The sense of fair play which operates at home operates equally in home and school relations.

Parents are frequently disturbed by the fact that children come home from school with habits and practices of which they, the parents, disapprove. These should not be unduly disturbing. It is natural that with the number of good habits that the child acquires in school, he should also acquire habits of which the parent cannot well approve. These are not usually the result of school-room procedure but are the result of coming in contact with a number of other children whose standards differ from those which the parent has set up for his child. Usually these activities disappear in a short time if no great amount of excitement is created by them.

Children come home using peculiar slang, swear words, poor English, and the like. They may even come home with certain bodily activities of which the parent disapproves. One seven-year-old who had seen an admired older boy make faces every time he bit into a sandwich kept up this activity for nearly a week. By that time, his admiration for the older boy had shifted somewhat and the activity dropped out. An eight-year-old girl came home speaking with an exaggerated broad "A" which she had picked up from her English teacher. This fitted in not at all with the pronunciation she usually used, but the parents wisely

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ignored this and the child went back to speaking in her usual manner. Still another child came home with several impertinent remarks which he had heard an older boy address to his mother when she came to visit the school. In this case, unlike the two incidents above, the parents felt the need of reminding the child of the standards which operated in their home, and they were, of course, right. His father said to the boy, "If you speak to me in that fashion, I shall not answer you. It is not the custom in this home to speak in that way. I do not use either that tone or those words to you. It is impossible for me to recognize them when you use them to me."

There are certain incidents which must be reacted to in this way. Slang, "smart aleck" talk, silly faces, "acting silly," and the like can well be ignored unless they become impossible because of their too frequent repetition. Impertinence and seriously bad habits cannot be ignored, and the child must be reminded of the standards under which he has been brought up in as quiet and unemotional a manner as possible. To become excited over what he does is again to reward him by making him the cause of excitement. No matter what his age, this may constitute such a reward that even punishment may have no effect.

Neighborhood influences may also cause behavior which puzzles or disturbs the average parent. It must be kept in mind that standards of behavior differ from

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family to family, from one section of the city to other sections of the city, from city to city, and from one section of the country to other sections of the country — in a word, standards of behavior are not constant but are instead extremely variable. What one expects of one's children may be entirely different from what the next-door neighbors expect of their children. If one's standards are based upon sound reasoning and are really for the welfare of the child and the family, one need not worry lest the child will discard them. If they are merely the result of whims or of individual differences between families, one may expect to have them questioned.

Standards of modesty are excellent illustrations of standards which vary from group to group. Within limits it is well to have the child avoid self-consciousness. On the other hand, society has said that a child must be thoroughly clothed when he appears in public. The difference between lack of clothing at home and abroad should be made clear to the child, not so much on the basis of what is modest and what is immodest as what people do and do not do.

The mother of a two-year-old boy looked out of the window to see him wandering down the street. She had left him undressing. He had completed the process of undressing and then decided that it was time to take a walk. His progress down the space of half a block was met by widely varying responses on the part of the neighbors. Two or three of them, who were

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modern families, merely laughed uproariously but did not let the child see them laughing. Several of the families commented on what appeared to them to be lack of modesty. At the other extreme, there were several families who were actually horrified and felt that the neighborhood had been ruined. Fortunately in this case, none of the varying standards were brought before the child. They are given here to show the differences in points of view on the same street.

When the boy reaches seven, those differences will be brought before him. He will have to be told clearly by his parents that families do different things. His parents need have no sense of failure when he questions the teachings which they have given to him. He is merely following the line that all individuals follow as they mature; that is, he is coming in contact with the different standards of different groups and is questioning his own standards in the light of the others with which he is coming in contact. If, as has been said, the standards which he has been given are based on excellent principles and not on whims or on peculiarities of thinking in his parents, he will in time accept them, even if for a brief space he questions them.

Training children is a continuous process. One cannot give them habits of thought and attitudes in the first years of life and then go away saying to one's self, "Now that job is done. I won't have to bother with it again." As the child matures, the parent will have to meet him on a different level in connection with

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practically every one of the activities which have been set up in the first six years, but the basis for good behavior has been laid. He will have to give the child new and more mature explanations of standards. He will have, perhaps, to modify the standards slightly in view of the child's maturity, for what is good at two may not be nearly so desirable at six and what applies at six will often not apply at twelve. The adult does not think of goodness in the same terms as does the child. He must expect the child's ideals to change just as the adult's have changed with increasing maturity.

Parents must realize from the beginning that no child can be poured into a mold. One can set up adequate standards. One can meet changing behavior as the child matures with somewhat more mature explanations and a slightly changed attitude. One may give him the benefit of all of one's own experience and as sound a philosophy as one possesses, but in the end the child will develop according to his own pattern. He will not fit into any mold into which he is poured if he is a normal child.

Of ten people selected at random from the same family, no two will have exactly the same sets of behavior—and, why should they, for nothing is more clear as the result of psychological research than the fact that individuals differ widely from each other. To the same environment, no two children react in the same way. John may have to have his cooperation

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secured before he is obedient at any age. Sam will take a direct command because he has such absolute confidence in his parents that he is willing to do exactly what they suggest without question. Jane may be so obstinate that much time and great effort are necessary before she learns even the average amount of obedience.

Fortunately there is no "perfect child," for what would be perfect to one family might be intolerable to another. Children are, as has been said, human beings, and so are parents. The parent's responsibility lies not in creating a perfect child, but in giving the child the soundest standards available, in giving the child as far as possible those experiences which will enable him to develop in line with his capacities and abilities, and in allowing him to develop in accordance with his own pattern in so far as this pattern makes of him a well adjusted child.

The parent must remember too that the criticisms which he hears about his child are no new thing. To each older generation, the younger generation has been the subject of criticism. Early in 1600, we have record of a gentleman who wrote to his friend somewhat in the following fashion, "I cannot understand this new generation. They wear short skirts and stay out late at night." The skirts in this case were a few inches above the ground, and late at night meant slightly after the curfew had rung at nine o'clock. Excavations of the Egyptian tombs have yielded somewhat similar remarks on the part of individuals born several thousand



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years before the birth of Christ. Aknaton has written of the younger generation of his time somewhat to this effect, "If this generation does not realize its responsibilities, civilization will perish."

Human beings tend to be critical of their environment, particularly as exemplified by the other human beings with whom they come in contact. Neither parents nor children are an exception to this rule. The parent who is self-conscious because his child is not behaving exactly as he desires him to when other parents are present can console himself with the fact that those parents have had, and will have again, exactly the same feeling about their children that he is having about his. No children behave perfectly.

If the parents' principles are sound and the example that he sets is good, if his attitude toward the child is understanding and affectionate, and if he really has as his standard the welfare of the child and the family, he need have no great concern about slight variations in behavior, about the effects of this or that child with whom his child is associated, and about the somewhat changing standards which are characteristic of every generation.

The very complexity of the parents' work today makes the bringing up of children all the more exciting and interesting. When parents realize, as they do today, that each child is different, and that each may be brought to the fullest development by wise guidance and training instead of by hit-or-miss methods, each

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contact with the child is of real significance. A young mother of a two-year-old once said to the writer, "I used to think when I had to have John pack up his toys or learn his table manners or learn willing obedience that it was just drudgery. Now I know it's a perfectly delightful job because I understand the meaning of what he does." It is this attitude of the modern parent that will mean both for him and for the children whom he is rearing many less personality difficulties and a much fuller and happier life.

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