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PARENT EDUCATION WORKBOOK

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Dear Participant,

Welcome to your self-paced **PARENT EDUCATION WORKBOOK**, provided by American Counseling and Training, Inc. **EMLOYEE ASSITANCE PROGRAMS**.

Within this workbook, you will find clear and effective parenting techniques resulting from 50 years by Dr. Rudolph Dreikurs, who assisted families throughout the world.

Selected papers from his life-long work and from his students have been included in your workbook.

His best-known book, Children: The Challenge, has been published in over 40 languages and is considered a classic.

As you begin your self-paced **PARENT EDUCATION WORKBOOK**, look for directions to assist you.

If you need additional assistance, simply call “Reese” at 1-866-774-9971.

Enjoy and **good luck!**



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Introduction

Much has been written concerning effective parenting. The majority of this information is vague and without a specific technique or blueprint to follow. Simply reading that we must love and train our children doesn't prepare us to do so.

Two doctors from Vienna, Austria, **Alfred Alder and Rudolph Dreikurs**, developed theories and effective techniques that many parents use today. Alder was a theorist, while Dreikurs was a technician. During the 1920's, their studies and observations indicated that all individuals have a strong need to identify, contribute, and belong to a group. This can be studied and observed through individual, group, or family influences, such as birth order or family constellation studies.

According to the numerous studies, observations, and interviews that Alder and Dreikurs conducted, children and their behaviors can truly be understood only when the four mistaken goals are understood by the parent.

Alder's theories and Dreikur's techniques also stress that we as parents must control ourselves, not the child. At times of crisis, replacing out-of-date reward and punishment with mutual respect, which is applied through logical and natural consequences that are pre-contracted by all and activated when necessary.

Dr. Dreikurs predicted the turbulence of our age, with democracy empowerment and quality for women, children, and minorities evolving for the first time. To help us understand and identify these historic evolving events, let's now read *Our Changing Society*.

Our Changing Society

For thousands of years, individuals have lived in a autocratic society. Today, we are in transition. This transition from an autocratic society to one based upon equal worth for all, has created confusion and chaos in every spectrum of today's society. These autocratic traditions are being challenged and replaced with democratic beliefs that are based upon mutual respect. These new democratic principles are not simply "doing your thing", but are new concepts stressing equal worth for all.

Autocratic- Order without Freedom

- ❑ The need of bosses to get tasks done and maintain order
- ❑ Accepting blindly the dictates of authorities
- ❑ Finding one's place by being superior
- ❑ Motivated by status and competition
- ❑ The use of force, pressure, and threats of punishment to motivate
- ❑ "I'm the boss around here and don't you forget it"

Anarchy- Freedom without Order

- ❑ Typical of the last thirty years has produced generations of disorder



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- ❑ Society is discarding autocratic attitudes and beliefs, with confusion and disorder over what should replace it
- ❑ “Doing your thing” with no consideration of the other person, uncaring attitudes and a lack of social awareness are the result
- ❑ Parents are confused about discipline
- ❑ Parents are unaware of children’s goals
- ❑ Parents are confused over effective motivation
- ❑ Children are allowed to act as they please with little respect for others

Democratic- Freedom with Order

- ❑ The struggles for equality began with minorities, women, and now children
- ❑ Democratic beliefs begin with treating all people of good will with equality and mutual respect
- ❑ Mutual respect and fair play help children develop win-win attitudes when participating with others
- ❑ Knowledgeable parents understand that children are eager to participate in family and peer activities that include, emphasize, and encourage democratic principles and mutual participation.
- ❑ A democratic home stimulates interest and interaction
- ❑ When included in family decision-making, children develop good judgment and feel empowered and bonded to their family.
- ❑ Family empowerment and bonding stimulates communication, team building, development of good judgment, effective decision making and self control, all of which encourages positive life experiences, while guiding children away from potential harm.
- ❑ This training is most effective within the **Family Council**, where future and past experiences are discussed and group participation is taught.
- ❑ When confident of themselves, children will question the motives of, and harbor suspicious feelings towards autocratic personalities.
- ❑ Trained and aware parents are sensitive to children’s needs by recognizing the four mistaken goals behind misbehaviors.
 - ❑ Attention demands special service
 - ❑ Power wants to be the boss
 - ❑ Display of Inadequacy no demands, left alone
 - ❑ Revenge wants to hurt

Hostilities at home will cease only when we share in the decision making process as equals. By empowering children with participatory and decision making skills, we prepare children who can think, reason and exercise good judgment in difficult unpredictable situations. We also prepare future employees who will fit into a business climate, which embraces empowerment, team play, and participation at all levels.



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Dr. Dreikurs

Dr. Rudolph Dreikurs began his studies in Vienna, Austria with Dr. Alfred Alder in 1910. Dr. Dreikurs and Dr. Alder created Parent-Teacher Education Centers in Austria and throughout Europe before coming to the United States in the mid 1930's. Dr. Dreikurs taught at Columbia, Northwestern, University of Chicago and then University of Oregon, where he taught with Dr. Ray Lowe. Dr. Dreikurs instructed parents in cafeterias and auditoriums, so everyone could learn from observing others. Dr. Dreikurs work is being carried on throughout the United States and the world. Dr. Dreikurs published numerous books and papers, but is best known for two books, Children: The Challenge and Psychology in the Classroom – A Manual for Teachers.

Now that we have gained a historical perspective on Our Changing Society and a brief background on Dreikurs, lets take a look at the first of Dreikurs techniques found in the papers, “Meaningful Quotations Gleaned Primarily From the Writings of Rudolph Dreikurs,” “The ABC’s of Guiding the Children,” and “Some Principles for Living with Children.” Notice how Dreikurs places an emphasis on winning the child through discussion and pre-contracting and not on the power and might of the adult.

Meaningful Quotations Gleaned Primarily from the Writings of Rudolph Dreikurs

- ❑ Children do require guidance. Are you a parent who proves their authorities by imposing brutal force, or through understanding and good-will.
- ❑ Your success in rearing your child can be measured by the degree of social interest developed and exhibited by them.
- ❑ Would you believe? The behavior of the child is their answer to your behavior to them?
- ❑ We have to be free of fear before we can stop using fear to intimidate our children into conformity.
- ❑ Courage is better than anxiety as a preventive against danger. “Whoever sows fear reaps worry.”
- ❑ Only if the child feels accepted, will they use constructive methods, while antagonism is always expressed in destructive acts.
- ❑ Instruction and guidance are ineffectual without friendliness and good will.
- ❑ Genuine superiority does not need expression through prestige and power.
- ❑ Use “may” instead of “must”. “May” is the voice of natural order. Refrain from negative commands.
- ❑ Enemies become allies who work together toward attainable goals.
- ❑ Do you promote war on the home front, while opposing it on the world front?
- ❑ Encouragement is the medium for all constructive influence in education
- ❑ Encouragement is commending the effort, whether successful or unsuccessful
- ❑ Encouragement is needed to diminish discouragement, which is an indication that the child has lost faith in their own prowess and is the basis for much of their misbehavior.
- ❑ To say, “Come, let’s do it together,” in a spirit of cooperation, takes the sharp edge off unpleasant necessities.



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- ❑ By teaching your child to respect order and accept social rules, you are preparing them to follow the rules of the social game and be a happy and harmonious individual.
- ❑ Differences of interest and opinion are inevitable, but they never necessitate unfriendly or hostile attitudes. Good human relationships must be based on mutual respect.

The ABC's of Guiding the Child

Golden Rule: “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.” This is the basis of democracy, since it implies equality of individuals.

Mutual Respect: Based upon the assumption of equality, mutual respect is the inalienable right of all human beings. No one should take advantage of another; neither adult nor child should be a slave or a tyrant. Distinguish between firmness and domination. Firmness refers to your behavior in a conflict situation, while domination means forcing your decision on a child. Assume children are fighting in the kitchen while you are preparing a meal. Tell your children they may continue fighting in another room where this will not disturb you. By speaking firmly but kindly you maintain respect for yourself while showing respect for your children while offering them a choice between behaving in the kitchen or fighting in another room. You have refused to act as a tyrant yourself, but have also refused to be tyrannized by the children.

Encouragement: implies faith in and respect for the child as they are. Don't discourage a child by having too high of standards and being too ambitious for them. A child misbehaves only when they are discouraged and believe they cannot succeed by useful means. A child needs encouragement as a plant needs sunshine and water. When told they could do better, we are really saying they are not good enough as they are.

Reward and Punishment: are outdated. A child soon considers a reward their right and will demand a reward for everything. Children consider that punishment gives them the right to punish in turn and will be more effective than the punishment inflicted by their parents. Children often retaliate by not eating, fighting, neglecting schoolwork, or otherwise misbehaving in ways that are the most disturbing to parents.

Natural Consequences: is a technique that can be used effectively only when a good relationship exists between parent and child. In using this technique the parent allows a child to experience the logical consequences of their behavior. For example, if a child dawdles in the morning the local consequence is them being late for school. Instead of using a personal authority to remind the child, the parent allows the experience and unpleasantness of being tardy as the consequence. When natural consequences are used, the child is motivated toward proper behavior through their own experience of the social order in which they live. Only in moments of real danger is it necessary to protect a child from the natural consequences of their behavior.

Acting Instead of Talking: is more effective in conflict situations. Talking provides an opportunity for arguments in which the child can defeat the parent. Children tend to become “parent-deaf” and will act only when punishment is threatened. Usually a child knows very well what is expected of



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them. Never explain to a child what they already know and have heard before. Talking should be restricted to friendly conversations and should not be used as discipline. For example, if you are driving your car and your children start to quarrel and fight, instead of telling them to be quiet, the parent can pull the car to the curb and simply wait for them to stop. If the parent keeps a patient attitude, the parent can accomplish positive results.

Withdrawal as an Effective Counteraction: withdrawal (leaving the child and walking into another room) is most effective when a child demands undue attention or tries to involve you in a power contest. Children get no satisfaction in annoying if nobody pays attention, nor will tantrums work without an audience. Withdrawal is not surrender or indifference. Beware of the concern or feeling you must “do something” about every situation. Often, doing nothing creates wonderful results.

Withdrawing from the Provocation, but not from the Child: Don’t talk in moments of conflict. Give attention and recognition when children behave well but not when they demand it with disturbing behavior. At times, attention becomes a premium for bad behavior. The less attention children get when they disturb the more they will cooperate.

Don’t interfere in Children’s Fights: By allowing children to resolve their own conflicts, they learn to get along better together. Many fights are provoked to get the parent involved and by separating the children or acting as a judge we fall for their provocation thereby stimulating them to fight more.

Take Time for Training: and teaching the child essential skills. Don’t attempt to train a child in a moment of conflict or in company. Allow for training at calm times until the lesson is learned. If many areas need improvement, give attention to one at a time. Limit yourself to what you can do. The mother who “does not have time” for such training will have to spend more time correcting an untrained child.

Avoid Letting Your Own Need for Prestige: influence the training of your child. For example: if your child knows how to dress but it is sloppy, avoid the impulse to straighten their clothes because of your fear of what others will think of you as a mother. Your own prestige is less important than letting your child learn themselves.

Never Do for a Child What They Can do for Themselves: A dependent child is a demanding child. Maintain order and establish your own independence. Most adults underestimate the abilities of children. Give children opportunities and encouragement to become contributing members of the family and society. Children become irresponsible only when we fail to give them opportunities to take on responsibility. In assuming the child’s responsibility, we deprive them of the opportunity to learn. Don’t indulge yourself by giving service.

Parents’ Dependence on their Child: is a difficult concept to recognize. In many instances, a mother who constantly reminds and does things for their child not only takes the child’s responsibility away from them, but also becomes dependent on them for her feelings of importance as a mother. Often mothers will feel useless in the home unless they keep themselves constantly busy with their child.



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Understand the Child's Goal. Every action of a child has a purpose such as their place in the group. An adjusted child has found their way toward social acceptance by conforming to the requirements of the group and by making their own useful contribution to it. The misbehaving child is still trying in a mistaken way to feel important in its own world. Young children who have never been allowed to dress themselves (because, "mother is in a hurry") or who have not been allowed to help in the chores ("you're not big enough to set the table"), will lack the feeling that they are a useful contributing member of the family and will feel important only when mother is annoyed.

The Four Goals of the Child's Misbehavior: A child is usually unaware of their goals. This behavior, though illogical to others, is consistent with their own interpretation of their place in the family group.

1. Attention getting- he or she wants attention and service.
2. Power- he or she wants to be the boss.
3. Revenge- he or she wants to hurt me.
4. Display of Inadequacy- he or she wants to be left alone, with no demands made upon him or her.

Our Reactions to a Child's Misbehavior Patterns: Very often we can discover a child's goals by observing our own reactions to their behavior. For example: when the goal is attention getting, we respond by feeling annoyed and that we need to remind and coax them. When the goal is power, we respond by feeling provoked and get into a power contest with them- "you can't get away with this!" When the goal is revenge, we respond by feeling deeply hurt, "I'll get even." When the goal is display of inadequacy, we respond by feeling despair "I don't know what to do." If your first impulse is to react in one of these four ways, you can be fairly sure you have discovered the goal of the child's misbehaviors.

Don't Act on Your First Impulse: by acting on your first impulse you tend to intensify the child's misbehavior patterns rather than correct them. You act in accordance with their expectations thereby fortify mistaken goals. What can you do if you don't know what to do? First, think of what you know would be wrong to do and refrain from doing it; the rest is usually right. Second, imagine what the child expects you to do and then do the opposite. That throws the child off guard and then you can arrange with them what to do about the situation.

Minimize Mistakes: Making mistakes are human. Regard your mistakes as inevitable instead of feeling guilty and you'll learn better. We must have the courage to be imperfect. The child is also imperfect. Don't make too much fuss and don't worry about the child's mistakes. Build on the positive, not on the negative. For example, instead of pointing out how poorly they tied their shoes, point out how well they can button their shirt.

Play down comparisons: and rivalry with other children in the family and with their friends. Let each know that both have a secure place within the family, even if other outstrips him or her.



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Don't be Concerned with What Others Can Do: but accept responsibility for what you can do. By utilizing the full potential of your own constructive influence, you do not have to think about what others should do to your child. Compensation for the mistakes of others is unwise and over-protection may rob the child of their own courage and resourcefulness. For example, if father is too harsh with the child and mother runs to protect him or her, three negative results are accomplished. First, mother deprives father and child from learning to get along with each other. Second, mother teaches the child to run to her for protection instead of using his or her own resources. Third, mother antagonizes father so that he is less willing cooperate with her in dealing with the child.

A Family Council: gives every member of the family a chance to express themselves freely in all matters of both difficulty and pleasure pertaining to the family as a whole and to participate in the responsibilities each member of the family has for the welfare of all. It is truly education for democracy and should not become a place for parents to “preach” or impose their will on children, nor should it deteriorate into a “gripe” session. The emphasis should be on “What we can do about the situation.” Meet regularly at the same time each week. Rotate chairman. Keep minutes. Have an equal vote for each member. Let any wrong decisions stand until the next week.

Have Fun Together: and thereby help to develop a relationship based on mutual respect, love and affection, mutual confidence and trust, and a feeling of belonging. Playing together, working together, sharing interesting and exciting experiences lead to the kind of closeness, which is essential for cooperation. Instead of talking to nag, scold, preach, and correct, utilize talking to maintain a friendly relationship. Speak to your child as you would speak to your friend.

Teach your child to learn from their mistakes, then forget them. Perfectionists are inclined to expend needless energy brooding over their errors and shortcomings. Assure your child in as many ways as you can that you accept them, mistakes and all. Let them know that you love and value them for who they are not what they have accomplished. Finally, curb any tendencies toward perfectionism in yourself or in the demands you make on your child. You will slip occasionally in this effort. Don't fret- none of us are perfect.

Some Principles for Living with Children

Following are a number of principles suggested as a basis for living with children.

1. Golden Rule- “Do unto others as you have others do unto you.” This is the basis of democracy, since it implies equality of individuals.
2. Mutual Respect- Based upon the assumption of equality and is the inalienable right of all human beings. No one should take advantage of another- neither adult nor child should be slave or tyrant.
3. Encouragement- Implies faith in the child as they are, not in their potential. A child misbehaves only when they are discouraged and believe they cannot succeed by useful means. A child needs encouragement as a plant needs water.
4. Reward and Punishment- Are outdated and a child soon considers a reward their right and demand a reward for everything. Children consider that punishment gives them the right to punish others and the retaliation of children is more effective than the punishment of adults.



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5. Natural Consequences- Requires utilizing the reality of the situation rather than personal power, which exerts the necessary pressure to stimulate proper motivation. Only in moments of real danger is it necessary to protect the child from the natural consequences of their disturbing behavior.
6. Action Instead of Words- is used at times of conflict. Children tend to become “mother-deaf” and act only when raised voices imply some impending action, and then respond only momentarily. Usually children know what is expected. Talking should be restricted to friendly conversations and not used as disciplinary means.
7. Withdrawal - Effective Counteraction- Withdrawal is not surrender and is most effective when a child demands attention or tries to involve you in a power contest. Children get no satisfaction in annoying others if nobody pays attention.
8. Withdrawal from the Provocation, Not from the Child- Don’t talk in moments of conflict, but friendly conversation and pleasant contacts are essential. Have fun and play together. The less attention the child gets when they disturb, the more they need when being cooperative.
9. Don’t Interfere in Children’s Fights- By allowing children to resolve their own conflicts they learn to get along better together. Many fights are provoked to get the adult involved and by separating the children or acting as judge we fall for their provocation, thereby stimulating them to fight more.
10. Take Time for Training- Teaching the child essential skills and habits is a requirement for parenthood. If a mother does not have time for such training, she will spend more time correcting an untrained child.
11. Never Do for a Child What He or She Can Do for Themselves- A “dependent” child is a demanding child. Most adults underestimate the abilities of children. Children become irresponsible only when we fail to give responsibility.
12. Underestimating the Child’s Goal- Every action of a child has a purpose. Their basic aim is to have their place in the group. A well-behaved and well-adjusted child has found their way toward social acceptance by conforming with the requirements of the group and by making their own useful contributions to it. The misbehaving child is still trying in a mistaken way to gain social status.
13. The Four Goals of a Child’s Misbehavior. The child is unaware of their goals. Their behavior, though illogical to others, is consistent with their own orientation.
 - a. Attention Getting- wants attention and service.
 - b. Power- wants to be the boss.
 - c. Revenge- wants to hurt us.
 - d. Display of inadequacy- wants to be left alone.
14. Reactions to a Child’s Misbehavior Patterns-
 - a. Feel Annoyed- want to remind and coax.
 - b. Feel Provoked- “you can’t get away with this.”
 - c. Feel Deeply Hurt- “I’ll get even!”
 - d. Feel Despair- “I don’t know what to do.”
15. Fallacy of First Impulse- By acting on our first impulse, we tend to satisfy the child’s misbehavior patterns rather than to correct them.
16. Minimize Mistakes- Making mistakes is human. We must have the courage to be imperfect. Build on strength, not on weakness.



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17. Danger of Pity- Feeling sorry for the child, while human, often adds harm to an already tragic situation and the child may be more harmed by the pity than by the actual tragedy. Life's satisfactions depend on one's ability to take things in stride. Feeling sorry for someone leads to self-pity and to the belief that life owes them something.
18. Don't be Concerned with What Others Do- Learn to accept responsibility for what we can do. By utilizing the full potential of our own constructive influence, we do not have to worry about what others may do to the child. Compensation for the mistakes of others is unwise and over-protection may rob the child of courage and resourcefulness.
19. Family Council- Gives every member of the family a chance to express themselves freely in all matters pertaining to the family as a whole and to participate in the responsibilities each member of the family has for the welfare of the family. It is truly education for democracy and should not become a place for parents to "preach" or impose their will on children, nor should it deteriorate into a "gripe" session. The emphasis should be on "What can we do about the situation?"
20. Have Fun Together- Help to develop a relationship based on mutual respect, affection, confidence, trust, and a feeling belonging and sharing interests and experiences lead to the kind of closeness which is essential for cooperation.

Characteristics of Logical Consequences and Punishment

<u>Logical Consequences:</u>	<u>Punishment:</u>
a. Based on mutual respect	a. Based on fear and might of adult.
b. Adult is firm but kind and calm	b. Adult is firm but angry/retaliatory.
c. Adult recognizes child's goal and doesn't play into it.	c. Adult usually not aware of child's goals.
d. Logically related to misbehavior.	d. Usually arbitrary and capricious.
e. Child sees the relevance of consequence.	e. Child seethes at authority figures imposition and loses sight of own contribution to the hassle.
f. Adult plays down the misbehavior – is concerned with relationship.	f. Adult amplifies the misbehavior – concerned with controlling.
g. Adult wants the child to learn internal control.	g. Adult wants to control and teach the child a "good lesson."
h. Stress is on disruptive behavior.	h. Stress is on person- involves labeling and making moral judgments.
i. Adult usually keeps quiet, withdraws from provocation- acts calm.	i. Adult often talks, nags, bullies, preaches, explains, advises.
j. Always a choice is allowed – where possible, the child is involved in determining the consequences.	j. The child is not consulted or given a choice.
k. The child is given an opportunity to try again with a clean slate.	k. There is often an arbitrary and unrealistic time imposed; past deeds are held against the child.
l. Adults want to control themselves- only influence the child.	l. Adults haven't much thought of



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<p><u>Logical Consequences:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> m. The child learns more effectively. n. Adult may feel down, but bounces back. o. Child suffers consequence and adult stands by caring and available. p. Based on reality of the situation and the social order. 	<p><u>Punishment:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> m. controlling themselves- only the child. n. The child requires external authority. o. Adult constantly feels guilty. p. Child suffers consequence and adult stands accusingly. q. Based on power of authority figure.
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Examples of Characteristics of Family Constellation

Three children in fairly close sequence. (Any child in the constellation may be the “good” child; any child may arouse prolonged conflict with one or both parents- or other child.)

Characteristics of the First Child:

Is the only child; get undivided attention. May feel self-reliant to the point of being spoiled or very dependent from over protection. He or she feels insecure when the second one invades their kingdom. They may misinterpret this as a rejection. This is spoken of as a “dethroned” child. The first child may get more attention as a baby because of the inexperience of the parents leading to unnecessary care and attention. The first child tends to be steady, dependable and even exploits their worthiness at the expense of brothers and sisters.

Characteristics of the Second Child:

Can’t compare with older; finds place in the family in ways different from older child. May adopt ways of a “youngest” until third comes. Then, the baby takes this approach away. Unacceptable behavior usually based on discouragement, but may be over-compensation on the positive side to rise to great heights. What the child does with the situation depends upon how it is perceived. This may be compared unfavorably to the other child. Often this child has interests and achievements different from older brother or sister. This may include being less steady and poised.

Characteristics of the Third Child:

First two have established approaches, but the third can be the “baby” to secure special attention and services. This works so well that it may be continue into adulthood in some cases. Occasionally resents the inferior position and dominates (“chip on shoulder”). First and third may join forces against the middle child. (From an alliance). Everyone doing things for the baby may deprive the child of the opportunity to develop self-confidence and self-reliance. Often struggles to be noticed; seeks approval for accomplishments.

The Characteristics of the Family Constellation

In this study, we shall be concerned with the child’s experiences in the family. Those opportunities and barriers, challenges, expectations, ambitions, and frustrations are strongly influenced by the position in the birth order of the family. An insight into these dynamic forces can aid the parents or adults in taking a course of action.



Of greatest concern in this relationship is the impact of the family upon the personality of the child. These experiences in the family are the most important determinants of the child's frame of reference for perceiving, interpreting, and evaluating the child's world outside the family. The knowledge, habits, and skills that are acquired in the home largely determine their capacity for dealing with outside situations.

A basic assumption is made that personality and character traits are expressions of movement within the family group. This is in contrast to other assumptions, which attribute the main development to heredity, psych-sexual development, general individual development principles, or strictly environmental stimulations. The concept of the family constellation as a dynamic explanation sees the development not so much the result of factors, which converge on the child, but that of the child's own interpretation and related interaction. The child's influences the group and other members of the family as much as they are influenced by them and in many cases even more so. Their own concepts force them to treat him or her the way he or she expects to be treated. Each child in their early relationships to other members of the family establishes the child's approaches to others in their effort to gain a place in the group. All of these strivings are directed towards a feeling of security – a feeling of belonging- that the difficulties of life will be overcome and that the child will emerge safely and victoriously. Dreikurs states that the child trains those qualities by which they hope to achieve significance or even a degree of power and superiority in the family constellation.

Human beings react differently to the same situation. No two children born into the same family grow up in the same situation. The family environments of the children within the same family may be different for several reasons.

1. With the birth of each child, the situation changes.
2. Parents are older and more experienced.
3. Parents may be more prosperous and own the home.
4. Parents may have moved to another neighborhood.
5. Possibility of a step-parent-due to divorce or death.

Other possibilities or factors which may affect the child's place within the family group are: a sickly or crippled child, a child born just before or after the death of another, an only boy among all girls, an only girl among all boys, some obvious physical characteristics, an older person living in the home, or the favoritism of parents towards a child. Alder states, "the dangers of favoritism can hardly be too dramatically put. Almost every discouragement in childhood springs from the feeling that someone else is preferred. Where boys are preferred to girls, inferiority feelings among girls are inevitable. Children are very sensitive and even a good child can take an entirely wrong direction in life through the suspicion that others are preferred." Alder taught that in the life-pattern of each child there is the imprint of a position in the family with its definite characteristics. He pointed out that it is just upon this one fact- the child's place in the family that much of a future attitude towards life depends.

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The Only Child

The only child has a decidedly difficult start in life and he or she spends an entire childhood among persons who are more proficient. The child may try to develop skills and areas that will gain approval of the adult world or may solicit their sympathy by being shy, timid, or helpless. The only child:

1. Usually is a pampered child, and if a boy has a mother complex
2. If a boy, sometimes feels that his father is his rival
3. Enjoys his or her position as the center of interest
4. Usually is interested only in himself or herself
5. Sometimes has a feeling of insecurity due to the anxiety of the parents
6. Usually are not taught to gain things by own effect; merely to want something is to have it
7. If requests are not granted, he or she may feel unfairly treated and refuse to cooperate

The First Child

The first child has a threatened position in life; being the oldest should entitle him or her to the favored spot and frequently does. However, he or she may become discouraged upon the birth of the second child and refuses to accept responsibility. The first child:

1. Is an only child for a period of time and has therefore been the center of interest
2. Has to be first, in the sense of gaining and holding superiority over the next children
3. Becomes a “dethroned” child with the birth of the second child. (Sometimes feels unloved and neglected. The child usually strives to keep or to regain their mother’s attention by positive deeds; when this fails, often switches to the useless side and may become obnoxious. If their mother fights back, the child becomes a problem child.)
4. Could develop a good competent behavior pattern or become extremely discouraged
5. Sometimes the child will strive to protect and help others in their struggle to keep the upper hand
6. Sometimes death wishes or expressions of hate are directed toward the second child
7. If the first child is a boy followed by a sister within a short time:
 - a. Personal conflict may become a pattern of sexual discord
 - b. Girls develop faster than boys during one to seventeen and press closely on the heels of the first child
 - c. The boy usually tries to assert himself because of social preference for boys and may take advantage of his masculine role
 - d. The girl may develop a feeling of inferiority and pushes on

The Second Child

The second child has somewhat of an uncomfortable position in life and usually takes a steam-engine attitude, trying to catch up with the child in front and feels as though he or she is under constant pressure. The second child:

1. Never has their parents undivided attention
2. Always has in front another child who is more advanced
3. Feels that the first child cannot be beaten which disputes a claim of equality



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4. Often acts as though they were in a race. Hyperactive and pushy
5. If the first child is successful, the second is more likely to feel uncertain of self and abilities
6. Usually is the opposite of the first child. (If the first child is dependable and “good”, the second may become undependable and “bad”.)
7. Becomes a “squeezed” child whenever a third child is born

The Youngest Child

The youngest child has quite a peculiar place in the family constellation and may become a “speeder” because the child is outdistanced and may become the most successful; or he may become discouraged and have inferior feelings. The youngest child:

1. Is often like an only child
2. Usually has things done for them, decisions made, and responsibility taken
3. Usually is spoiled by the family
4. Finds him or herself in an embarrassing position, is usually the smallest and weakest, and above all is not taken seriously
5. May become the “boss” in the family
6. Either attempts to excel his or her brothers and sisters or evades the direct struggle for superiority
7. May retain the baby role and place other in his or her service
8. Often allies with the first child as being different from the rest

The Middle Child of Three

The middle child of three has an uncertain place in the family group and they may feel neglected. They discover that they do not have the privileges of the youngest nor the rights of an older child. The middle child:

1. May feel unloved and abused
2. Becomes a “squeezed child” whenever a third child is born
3. May hold the conviction that people are unfair to him or her
4. May be unable to find his or her place in the group
5. May become extremely discouraged and more prone to become a “problem child”

Middle Children in Large Families

Children who come in the middle of a family usually develop a more stable character and the conflict between the children tends to be less fierce. In other words, the larger the family, usually the less conflict and strife among the children.



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Generalizations

Every brother and sister has some pleasant feelings and some unpleasant feelings about each other. They are likely to have pleasant relations when they satisfy one another's needs. Since each child feels differently toward each brother and sister, the relationship of any two of them is very special. As each member strives for his or her own place within the group, the competing opponents watch each other carefully to see the ways and means by which the opponent succeed or fails. Where one succeeds, the other gives up; where one shows weaknesses or deficiencies, the other steps in.

In this way competition between two members of the family is always expressed through differences in character, temperament, interests and abilities. Conversely, the similarity of characteristics always indicates alliances. Sometimes, the two strongest competitors show no sign of open rivalry, but rather present a close-knit pair. Nevertheless, the competitive striving is expressed in personality differences. One may be the leader, the active and powerful protector, while the other may lean and get support by weakness and frailty. These are cases where strong competition did not prevent a mutual agreement, but rather permitted each to feel secure in their personal method of compensatory striving.

If there are quite a number of years between the births of children, each child will have some of the characteristics of an only child. Perhaps there will be two families one set of children, then a space of years, and then another set. Whatever combination may first exist, with the space of years the situation changes and shifts, but basically the above characteristics remain the same.

The development of an only girl among boys or of an only boy among girls presents a problem. Both usually tend to go to extremes, either in a feminine direction or masculine role. In most cases, both would be somewhat isolated and have mixed feelings and emotions. Whichever role seems to be the most advantageous will be the one adopted.

“Every difficulty of development is caused by rivalry and lack of cooperation in the family. If we look around at our social life and ask why rivalry and competition is its most obvious aspect, indeed not only at our social life but at our whole world, then we must recognize that people everywhere are pursuing the goal of being conqueror of overcoming and surpassing others. This goal is the result of training in early childhood, of the rivalries and competitive striving of children who have not felt themselves an equal part of their whole family.”

From the moment of birth the child acts, thinks, and feels in response to their world in accordance with how they experienced or perceive it; and the way in which children experienced or perceive their world is to them, reality. What actually happens to the individual is not as important as how they interpret the situation. With this in mind, we must remember that it is not the position in the family sequences that is the decisive factor, but rather the situation as the child interprets it.



Family Council

The growing rights which society gives children and their awareness of their status as equals, makes it essential that they are accepted as equal partners in the affairs of the family. Equality in this sense does not mean identical function. Father and mother, boys and girls, the younger and the older can and have to do different things; they have different functions. But these differences can no longer imply any lowering of status, otherwise they lead inevitably to resentment and unwillingness to discharge the function which provide less social prestige.

The greater freedom, which the contemporary democratic atmosphere grants each member of the family, requires also the realization of the greater responsibility, which each one has for the welfare of the whole. As long as parents and particularly the mother take on all the responsibility and the children enjoy all the freedom to do as they please, an unbalanced equilibrium results with the children deprived of useful functioning and inclined to be demanding tyrannical. The family council gives every member of the family a chance to express themselves freely in all matters pertaining to the family as a whole. A child can object and criticize whatever they do not like and seek solutions to their liking. At the same time a child has to accept responsibility for what goes on in the family to take their share in the contributions which all have to make.

It is truly education for democracy that the family council accomplishes and such educational experiences are equally important for the parents and for the children. Since tradition has not provided us with clear-cut guidelines for living with each other as equals we have to establish them. In the institution of the family council facilitates the application of democratic principles of family life.

This difficulty to establish and maintain a democratic relationship of equals is often responsible for the breakdown of family councils. Parents may start off with good intentions and enthusiasm, but before long either they or the children violate all the basic principles of such a democratic procedure so they it become futile and meaningless. It requires considerable persistence, a willingness to see mistakes and to learn from them, the ability to change one's attitude and to respect those of the others, in order to make the family council a permanent institution. But without it, there is hardly a way for the discussion of mutual difficulties and conflicts in an atmosphere of respect and understanding.

A few basic principles as they were evolved in the practice of conducting family councils facilitate their establishment and maintenance:

1. The council should meet at a regular designated hour, once a week and not whenever one member of the family feels the need for it.
2. All members of the family are invited to participate on equal footing, each one having one vote. The required age level for each child depends on his or her ability to understand what is discussed, but even very young children can beneficially participate and express some of their ideas.
3. The chairmanship rotates by plan either weekly or monthly so that every member of the family experiences this privilege and its responsibility.



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4. Participation in the council sessions is not obligatory, but it is possible to get a reluctant member of the family, be it father or child, to attend the sessions, if a member's absence is utilized to reach decisions which they may not like, he or she will have to come to the following meetings to change any decisions.
5. If the council is used by the parents to "explain" preach, scold, or impose their will in other ways on their children, then the council is not democratic and fails its purpose. Each parent can merely submit his or her point of view to the group in the same way as each child can and should.
6. The maintenance of parliamentary order should provide each member with the opportunity to freely express themselves and with the obligation to listen to the others. This is probably the first objective when the procedure of a family council is initiated. Before satisfactory solutions can be found, the new routine of listening to each other and understanding what the other one means has to be firmly established.
7. The family council should not be allowed to degenerate into a "gripe" session. As soon as an objection has been voiced, a constructive approach would be brought into action with the question, "What can we do to improve this situation?" The emphasis should be placed on improvement rather than solution since complete solutions are often difficult to find, while the smallest improvement can serve as a means of encouraging further efforts.
8. Most "urgent" decisions are not as urgent as the parents or child may be inclined to believe. All members of the family need to learn to have patience to function even under circumstances, which are not to their liking. Most parents cannot stand by quietly when they see their child misbehaving. Actually all their efforts and interferences may not correct the situation at all, but seem to be preferable to a "wait" and "see" attitude. In the absence of a decision by the council, everyone has naturally the right to do what he or she considers best. But no decision which affects the other has validity unless the council approves it. One of the first "decisions" may be in a situation which endangers the life of the individual. In such a situation, discussion is omitted and immediate compliance guaranteed. For example: The family goes to a picnic near a river. The children anticipate going swimming. Unfortunately due to heavy rains, the river is swollen and the water is swift. Swimming would be dangerous. The parents forbid swimming. There is no discussion. All individuals comply with the order.
9. The nature of decisions to be made by the council requires careful consideration. They should serve the benefit of all and not any one particular interest. They should be the answer to the question: "What can we do about this situation or predicament?" It is important that the emphasis is always on what we can do, rather than on what one member should do. The council cannot function as an instrument of power, imposing its verdict on any one member. It rather reaffirms what each one will do in certain situations. This also includes a plan for action if and when various members of the family do not carry out what they decided at the meeting. In other words, decisions are plans accepted by the majority, plans of action, either in regard to pleasant or to objectionable possibilities.
10. Wrong decisions, particularly on the part of the children, are usually highly favorable as an educational experience. Instead of trying to prevent a wrong decision, parents should let the children experience the consequence. At the next meeting, they will be more willing to accept an alternative which the parents did consider as more adequate.
11. Once a decision has been made, any alteration has to wait for next week's session. In the interim no one has the right to decide a different course of action and impose this decision on



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- others. On the other hand, the parents may not feel bound by the decisions either if the children refuse to follow through. When the mother accepted the responsibility to shop, cook, and the children took on the task of washing the dishes, then it is up to the mother to insist they do it, but naturally she cannot cook either if the kitchen has not been cleared.
12. The family council is the only “authority.” No individual can lay down the law or make decisions for the others. But on the other hand, no one person is burdened with the responsibility for the well functioning of the household. This is a difficult lesson to learn for the parents, particularly for mothers. They are so impressed with their sense of obligation and responsibility that they feel deficient if they do not take care of the need of all. As a consequence, the children have no chance to take on responsibility themselves. If the mother is willing to accept the family council as supreme authority, she does not have to feel guilty if things do not always go as they should. It is more important for they children to accept their responsibility then to have things going smoothly all the time.
 13. In a detached discussion of their problems, children are usually more reasonable then parents would assume. Only in the moment of conflict does a child appear unreasonable because they do not want to give in. An appeal to the child’s good sense is more effective in the council discussion than an attempt to subdue him or her intellectually.
 14. Even if they sessions of the council should not be effective for a period, they should not be discontinued. Making the council effective may impose hardships on the parents for the time being, but in the long run it produces highly beneficial effects for all concerned. The family council, properly used, can serve as a means of establishing family standards for all phases of life. A family code of ethics can become a living thing if it is established in a council.

Participants in the family council should have the same idea of the function and purpose of the council. In other words, a sort of definition of what is to be accomplished by the formation of the council might be attempted at the first meeting (and periodically re-defined perhaps.) The atmosphere needs to be one of happiness; one of pleasure in the mere fact of being together. This requires constructing “tone”. If the council becomes a place to “gripe”, it will have less chance to continue. If it is based on excitement or being “keyed up”, the council will not be as effective on a long-term basis.

Respect for another’s opinions is necessary. Each person should be given a chance to say what he or she has to say. The others should listen carefully and attentively and not jump to the conclusion that they know what the other is trying to say. This might occur when a younger child made what seemed to be an irrelevant remark. Instead of ignoring or making fun of it, the chairman might ask how this applied to the matter at hand, and suggest that if it didn’t, perhaps the idea could be used later. Parents can also set an example of cooperation and respect during the week.

If the parents use the council for instructive purposes (“Why we should look both ways before crossing the street,” or something similar) it might be better done in terms of the “best way to...” instead of “you mustn’t.” Where children have ideas of “how” or “why”, it may be difficult for a parent to accept them. But listening to the suggestions of others in the group with an open mind can be rewarding. Some ideas for council meetings are:



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1. Let the children help plan a family outing.
2. Make up a list of assignments for work around the home. Here it is important that each member clearly understands what is to be done. (Perhaps even the reasons for doing it.) Such a procedure has the benefit of promoting consistency on the parts or parents, that is being prepared to say why certain chores should be done may result in reappraisal.
3. Have each member of the group tell the others what it is they like most. Have each member guess what the others like most. Suggest that everyone try to do something for another member of the group during the week... something they think the other will like. Have each member mention examples of some “good”, and “wise” decisions made by other members of the group.

Do Teachers Understand Children?

We have no statistical evidence for the extent to which teachers are able to understand children. However, it seems that many cannot cope with simple forms of disturbing behavior in the classroom because they are unaware of the child’s motivations in behaving as he or she does. Knowing it, many teachers would respond differently.

Some teachers understand children through empathy. They sense what the child wants, needs, and react constructively. Their knowledge and understanding is usually not acquired during their professional training, since the psychology taught in most institutions does not provide sufficient information which can be applied to the classroom situation and to any individual child who does not behave well or does not learn.

This state of affairs is neither the fault of the teachers nor of the training institutions. It is the result of the present state of psychology and psychiatry which are plagued with divergent and often contradictory ideas and theories. Educators have to rely on the data which the field of psychology provides. An autocratic teacher will seek and find evidence for the assumption of an innate goodness or badness, intelligence or dullness in each child. Consequently, the teacher will attempt to “tame” with punitive restrictions all bad impulses they encounter. The more democratic the educator is, the more they will follow psychological theories which assume that deficiencies are due to detrimental experiences of the child, which have to be replaced with better training methods. The “modern” educator may be inclined to be over permissive, avoiding repressions, which may cause emotional maladjustment. Others may rely on data about learning, growth, and development provided by various unrelated research.

This kind of psychological information does not provide the teacher with the insight into the reasons for the child’s immediate behavior, nor for the proper psychological responses to it. However, there is one psychological approach, which does permit an immediate understanding of any child. It is the teleanalytic approach, developed by Alfred Alder and his co-workers, which regards behavior as purposive. Whatever the child does, is understood by the purpose and goal, which they have set for themselves.

It may be necessary to explore why the teleanalytic approach has not been recognized universally for its extreme significance and value. There is a general scientific resistance, because historically



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teleology was theological concept; a divine scheme set the goal for each man or woman. The concept concerns itself with the goals, which each individual sets for themselves.

Another reason for scientific rejection of the teleological approach is the element of self-determination, which it implies. As long as science was mechanistically and deterministically oriented, there was no room for individual self-determination. Man or woman was entirely determined, either by their heredity, environment, or by both. Goal-directed behavior assumes free choice, limitations of deterministic influences, whether from within or from without the individual. Such assumptions were totally unacceptable to the scientific world at the time when Alder and his collaborators formulated a teleological approach in psychology.

Recent developments in the basic sciences, in physics and contemporary changes point to creativity, self-determination and teleological mechanisms as natural phenomena, fortifying Alder's psychological schools move in the same direction, to the concepts of perceptions and goals influenced by the individual themselves.

Teachers who are exposed to the teleanalytic approach suddenly become aware not only of the child's motivation, but of their own often highly detrimental role in fortifying and supporting mistaken goals. Four characteristic goals are observed behind disturbing or deficient behavior. Every child, as a social being, wants to belong. They can only fulfill this within the group when trying to find their place. As long as they are not discouraged, they will seek their place through useful contribution, through conformity or initiative, as the situation may require. Children become disturbing only if they are discouraged and do not think they can succeed through their strength, ability and with useful means. Then they will adopt disturbing approaches, still under the assumption that they will provide the child with a place in the group.

Such misconception may lead a child either to attract attention, to demonstrate their power to the figures of the authority, to get even for all the hurts received, or to display real or assumed deficiency in order to be left alone and avoid any tasks where they may fail. These are the four goals, which we found in disturbing behavior. A teacher who is not aware of them not only fails to counteract them, but also often actually intensifies them by their reaction.

Teachers can be taught to become sensitive to the goals of the child. There is first, observation. In the interplay of a small group of children, teachers can learn by observation to distinguish the goals of each child, be it attention, power, and revenge, or display of deficiency. One has merely to observe what actually happens between the child and other children. By seeing what happens, one can deduct what the child intended to bring about.

Once the teacher has a tentative impression about the child's goals, they can confirm it by observing the child's reaction to the teacher's corrective efforts. A child who talks out of turn may do so either to keep the teacher busy with them or to demonstrate their power to resist the teacher's demands. The distinction will be obvious when the child is admonished to be quiet. If talking was merely a bid for attention, then the child will be satisfied with the attention received and stop- but not for long; soon they will try again to attract the teacher's attention. The child will behave quite differently when he or she is talking for the purpose of defeating the teacher. The teacher's



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demands for quiet will not move the child to stop talking, but rather to more violent forms of disturbance. After all, the child wants to show the teacher that they can do as they please and the teacher has no power to stop them. Another reliable diagnostic tool in determining the child's goals requires more skill. It consists of the child's reaction to a disclosure of their goals. When asked why they misbehave, the child cannot tell because they actually do not know the reason. The child is not aware of their goals, which may be quite obvious to the trained observer. A correct explanation of the purposes of this behavior usually evokes what may be called a "recognition reflex." The child becomes aware of what to do, although it was not known before.

The most reliable indication of the child's goals is at the same time one of the most distressing aspects of the teacher-child interaction. If the teacher wants to know for what purpose a child misbehaves they merely have to watch the spontaneous and impulsive reaction. If the teacher merely feels annoyed and is inclined to reprimand the child, then it is more probable that the child will make a bid for the teacher's attention. If the teacher feels deeply provoked, showing the child that they cannot do that to him or her, then the child probably just wanted to show the teacher that they could demonstrate their power. On the other hand, when the teacher feels deeply hurt, wondering how anyone could be so mean, the teacher really reacts as the child wanted them to react, namely to be hurt. When the teacher is inclined to throw up their hands feeling that there is nothing that she or he can do with this child, then the child wants to be left alone.

One can fully appreciate the disastrous consequences of the teacher's inability to understand the child's goals when one realizes that most are inclined to respond to the child's provocation in exactly the way described above. In this way, the teacher who tries to correct the child actually does only what the child wants and succumbs to those courses. It upsets too many accepted standards, principles, and would threaten many vested interests, both in teaching and publishing. One might be pessimistic about the prospects of such new approaches in training teachers were it not for the fast rising awareness that we may be confronted with a bankruptcy in our educational approaches.

The realization of the dangerous state in the field of education is prompted by a variety of events: such as the bankruptcy of our education procedures and the number of children who make poor social and academic progress, particularly the increasing number of those who are expelled from school because of academic or social maladjustment. At a time when parents are obliged by law to send their children to school, the school assumes the right to send the children back home because they do not know how to cope with them. The situation probably will become so bad before long that not only the community but also the teachers and the administrators will recognize the need for a reconsideration of some of the basic principles in our present educational system. The family council, when properly used, can serve as a means of establishing family standards for all phases of life. A family code of ethics can become a living thing if it is established in a council. Participants in the family council should have the same idea of the function and purpose of the council. In other words, a sort of definition of what is to be accomplished by the formation of the council might be attempted at the first meeting (and periodically re-defined perhaps.)

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If the parents use the conflict for instructive purposes (“why we should look both ways before crossing the street,” or something similar) it might be better done in terms of “the best way to ...” instead of “you mustn’t.” Where children have ideas of “how” or “why,” it may be difficult for a parent to accept them. But listening to the suggestions of others in the group with an open mind can be rewarding.

Raising Children in a Democracy

We are confronted with the fact that parents are ill prepared to raise socially and emotionally sound children. It seems that homo-sapiens of the 20th century particularly in the US, have lost a knowledge which all other creatures on this earth possess: namely, how to raise their young. The simplest routines of social living become perplexing problems. Many parents find it difficult to get the children up in the morning and to school on time, or to bed at night, without scolding and fighting. Many young children seem to have lost the natural tendency to eat; they have to be coddled and coaxed, reminded and threatened, bribed and waited on, making each mealtime torture. How to get children to keep their rooms clean, to put their toys and clothes away, is a major puzzle to which many parents still seek and answer. We take it for granted that brothers and sisters will fight for every advantage and forget that the term “brotherly love” once implied the height of considerateness and devotion. Little of that is found in today’s families. The slightest contribution to the welfare of the family, such as daily chores, is fraught with conflict and frustration. The child’s responsibility to study, to practice, or to apply themselves in any way, is often the source of endless friction.

Despite these rather general conditions, many children do behave well and develop satisfactorily. Often they do so not because of their parents, but in spite of them. This is indicated by the fact that many excellent students and outstanding youngsters have brothers and sisters who are socially and academically deficient. If the parents knew how to stimulate progress in one child, why did they fail to do so with others? The number of children who do not function well is too great to dismiss lightly; they can no longer be regarded as exceptions.

The strongest evidence of a universal parental failure is our concern with parent education. We would not need books about raising children, or study groups, lectures, and classes for parents, if parents knew what to do with their children. Unfortunately, what parents read and learn often adds to their confusion. In many cases, the “experts” hardly know more than the parents about how to bring up children. Some of them merely describe the maladjustments that are characteristic of



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various age levels without either explaining them or suggesting remedies. Others attribute the difficulties of children to a lack of love and affection, to the parent's emotional instability or immaturity. They too are unable to tell parents what to do in any concrete situation. The prevalent pessimism in regard to children is apparent when a suggestion to a parent or teacher is found to be effective. "It really worked!" indicates their utter surprise that something can have an effect on the child.

Cultural Growing Pains

What is the reason for this predicament? Are our adults really becoming more insecure, immature, and morally and socially deficient? There is no reason to assume that. Naturally, parents become upset if they are frustrated in their efforts. Those with high moral standards are likely to feel even worse when their children do not respond, as they should. What is wrong with them- or with their children?

Every culture and civilization, including our own, has developed a definite pattern for training its children. For many generations they have been raised in the same way, so that every adult and every child knew exactly what to do. But now we are rapidly moving from an autocratic past into a new era of democracy with an increasing degree of equality for all. Our children have gained status; they share in this equality. The traditional pattern for child training is obsolete and nothing has been developed to replace it. It is this breakdown of tradition which confuses parents.

In the course of this democratic evolution, adults have lost their power over children. They can no longer control them, or "make them" behave or perform. Pressure from without has lost its impact. Reward and punishment have become ineffective. They were necessary and appropriate in an autocratic society which impose its will upon its subjects. Parents used to have the right to enforce submission, even if it meant severe beatings and threats of expulsion. Today, society sides with the child and declares a brutal mother or father to be unfit. Children support each other in their defiance. They no longer think of a reward as an expression of benevolent authority; they consider it their "right." Once a reward has been used to stimulate effort, the child refuses to do anything unless they get another. Conversely, the failure of the punishment is obvious. Far from being intimidated the child takes it in stride and shrugs it off, responding – at best – only temporarily. Imbued with these "rights", the child assumes that if an adult punishes them, they have the same right to punish. Our homes and schools are filled with such acts of mutual retaliation.

The eternal smoldering conflict between the generations, which in the past was contained by the power of the adult, has burst into the open with the waning of adult authority. Adults and children are at war. At times the struggle may take on subtle form, at others exhibit the full brutality of warfare. Communication between adults and children has vanished; they simply cannot see eye to eye. Misunderstanding is rampant and distrust reigns. Juvenile delinquency and childhood schizophrenia are felt in every home and in every classroom – particularly in the metropolitan areas. Children feel misunderstood and abused; adults disregarded and defeated. In each conflict situation, parents attempt the traditional solution, in which the victor determines the outcome. In a democratic atmosphere, with its need for agreement based on mutual respect, nothing can be gained through either fighting or giving in; but the parents do not know what else they can do.

Understanding – A Basic Requirement

We need a new tradition in raising children, a tradition based on a social equality between parents and children. Trying to impose one's will on a child violates respect for them while making the child more rebellious. Permissiveness and indulgence also violate respect for them while making the child more rebellious. Permissiveness and indulgence also violate respect for one's self and produce tyrannical children and anarchy at home.

However, things will probably grow worse before the need for an overhaul will become reality. More is needed than a general attitude for love and tolerance. Parents need to know specifically what they should and should not do in dealing with children in conflict. They need practical information about effective methods concerning children. In the past children posed few problems with pressure from without insuring compliance with demands and regulations. Today, parents need to know how to motivate a child to cooperate, respect order and to take on their share of responsibility.

This need to understand the child's motivation is one of the basic requirements for a new approach to children. When authority alone determined behavior and function, a concern with motivation was not needed. Today, prevention of undesirable developments, and even more, all corrective efforts require a knowledge of the antagonistic and hostile attitudes, detrimental goals, and intentions. The question of psychological orientation for parents is one of the most complex aspects of contemporary psychology. Parents receive a great deal of information; but much of it is vague, inapplicable and often questionable. I suggest that training in recognizing the child's immediate goals is most helpful in enabling parents and teachers to understand children. If the adult does not understand the child's goals, the educator becomes a victim of the child's unconscious scheme, rather a guide.

The democratic atmosphere requires a specific relationship as basis of cooperation. We must treat even an antagonistic with respect and at the same time inspire their respect. This is what parents need to learn. A formula for mutual respect is an attitude of kindness and firmness: The first expressing respect for the child; the second, respect for oneself. There are too many who are kind but not firm and others who are firm but not kind. Some can be kind and firm, but rarely at the same time. Practical training in concrete situations is required to develop this skill in interpersonal relationships. Most parents can learn it if the problem are discussed.

Certain technical procedures facilitate this learning process. Parents can discover the fallacy of talking. As a rule children do not listen since a great deal of domestic talk is used not for communication but as ammunition. Once the mother stops talking she is ready to move into action. The child is impressed by action and not by words. Action does not mean hostility, only planned procedure.

It is possible to teach parents the kind of actions that impress children. The first lesson a mother has to learn is how to withdraw from the undue demands of the child. The main goal of our child guidance work is to extricate parents from the tyranny of their children. Parents today are usually



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no match for their children. The child knows how to influence their mother, while she is at a loss. It is usually not the child who is dependent on the mother, but the mother who depends on every breath and move of the child. So-called dependent children are those who use a real- or more frequently an assumed- “weakness” to dominate their mothers and keep them in their service. Many behavior problems and deficiencies disappear when children are left to their own resources, attention, and audience.

In such a situation the child is exposed to the pressure of reality and responds well to it. This is the basis of our second principle: the application of natural or logical consequences. Many parents find it difficult to distinguish between punishment and logical consequences. It requires training to become aware of the subtle but all-important distinction. For the adult one pressure is not much different from the other; but for the child the difference is fundamental. The application of natural consequences replaces the authority of a person with the authority of the group of reality. The child rebels against order only because they identify it with the demands of a personal authority which they try to defy. By removing herself as a source of pressure, the mother teaches the child the benefit of order; the child learns to respect it, while rejecting the pressure of a person in power.

A great many practical suggestions emerge from this from of reference. It has been found helpful for example if each member of the family refrains from becoming a part of a conflict between two others. They have to learn to settle their own problems. Actually, they learn rapidly if there is no one to interfere, to control, judge and pacify. Remaining aloof, a mother may discover that her apparently innocent child is the troublemaker, egging on a big brother and that they can take care of themselves if left alone.

Another lesson in democratic family relations is that each member of the family is responsible for their actions, although each may be inclined to blame someone else for conflicts and frictions. No one has the right to sit in judgment over what others are doing. If each member of the family could see what they could do and were willing to do it, both would feel no need to pass judgment. It is less important what others are doing to the child that what we can do; others- whether within or outside the family are part of the reality with which we have to deal. Anyone who is able to establish a cooperative attitude with a child can help ward off negative influences.

The Need for Encouragement

One of the most important techniques that parents and teachers need to learn is the art of encouragement. This term is widely and lightly used without much awareness of its complex nature. No corrective effort is possible without encouragement, which implies restoration of the child’s faith in themselves. Deficiency or misbehavior indicates discouragement; it is so much easier and more gratifying to do right, that every child would do it had they not lost confidence in their ability and in the possibility of success. Our methods of training children constitute a sequence of discouraging experiences, whether through impositions, humiliations, indulgences, over-permissiveness or neglect. Consequently, every child needs encouragement as a plant needs water. But few adults know how to give it.



Learning Series



*Giving you more
than expected!*



Encouragement is more than praise, which often cause more discouragement, because the child may consider it undeserved, or as an obligation to succeed beyond their capacity. Encouragement presupposes a sincere faith in the child as they are, not in a potential or what they could be. Presently, few adults have faith in children and least of all in those who need the most encouragement. Only those who do not need it get a great deal; those whose whole future may depend on encouragement encounter only confirmation of their failures.

To a large extent our education practices are mistake-centered. A great deal of our educational effort is devoted to preventing or correcting mistakes. Many of these procedures lead to further discouragement. One cannot build on weakness only on strength. Our children are usually impressed with the fact that they are not good enough as they are. The belief in their own strength is sapped; even their self-confidence is only temporary and conditional. The most successful child must remain fearful, because no success protects against future failure. Failure and mistakes threaten social status and recognition without which nobody can feel secure.

General principles like these still require further exploration and testing. They have emerged as a new approach to raising children, developed in the laboratory child guidance and classroom experimentation. They are far from being universally accepted and therefore do not constitute a "tradition." But some effective and generally acceptable methods of dealing with children will have to be established to provide a reliable frame of reference for all parents. No set of rules guarantees success or excludes new conflicts; but it can provide a yardstick by which procedures can be evaluated, and an orientation that reduces confusions and inconsistencies.

The coming revolution in our education practices presupposes a new outlook on life. Traditional concepts of man and woman will have to be discarded. The slave mentality that prompts everyone to be afraid of punishment and to be good only if he or she has to be, needs to be replaced with the realization of one's own freedom, self-determination, responsibility, and almost inconceivable power. We have to be free of fear before we can stop using fear to intimidate our children into conformity. All cultural influences that imply intimidation do not support the development of free individuals. We can no longer operate on a double standard, one for adults and one for children. We can no longer present to them a picture of life that we do not accept ourselves. There is no need for pretenses in regard to religion or sex; our children deserve to be treated as our equals, sharing our beliefs and convictions- which indeed we cannot hide from them. We do not need symbols of for them when we have discarded them for ourselves. Sincerity, courage and a sense of responsibility can evolve without fear, without threat of punishment, and without the traditional symbols of an autocratic past.