

BARBARA BURROWS
PARENTING

M A G A Z I N E

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**Saying "No" • A Mother' Love • Managing a child's behaviour without criticism
Bully B'ware • Through the Night - Helping Parents and Sleepless Infants
Ghosts from the past • Lying; stealing; trust • The Magical Neighbourhood of Mr. Rogers**

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When Poo-Poo and Pee-Pee Meet Cosmo

My youngest teen, aged 15 and two of her friends decided to take some books along for the car ride to the cottage where we were headed for the weekend. They scurried downstairs to the bookshelf and amidst the giggles and laughs I could hear them collecting about 10 of the preschool books they all loved as toddlers. When asked why those books, they replied in unison, "we just wanted to read them to each other." And so they did.

In the car we heard, Are You My Mother? One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish, The Going to be Bed Book and my all time favourite, Once Upon a Potty. One of the girls hadn't heard this particular story before and she was already getting bored with basic story telling so she decided to pull out her magazine. Hello Cosmo.

My daughter is reading Once Upon a Potty out loud to her backseat partner and each time she gets to a silly part about poo-poo and pee-pee they giggle. Periodically, the Cosmo girl chimes in with some fascinating fact about love making, orgasms, or what to do or not to do on a first date that she has gleaned from the magazine. So back and forth they go. More about pee-pee and poo-poo, more about young women and turning your man on. I'm blushing in the front listening to the specifics! Finally the Cosmo reader looks up and says to the Potty girls, "that's the dirtiest book I have ever heard". And

towards the end when the poo-poo and pee-pee meet the toilet, she says, "stop it, I am getting embarrassed". The irony! Inside, I can't stop laughing.

I decide they've gone far enough. I turn to the back seat and tell the Cosmo girl that she must stop reciting out loud all that she is learning about sex in the city because I find it, "dirty and embarrassing". Somehow this "girl talk" seemed beyond them, and didn't seem like appropriate family conversation as we drove along together. I decided the conversation should be toned down. I tell the Potty girls that I am so happy they know how to use the toilet and that it's time for some peace and quiet. They apparently agree and for the next few minutes I don't hear from any of them. Bliss.

A while later, I turn around again to check on things and my teen has her treasured childhood "blankie" (will she take it with her when she gets married I wonder) wrapped around her friend's head so that it resembles a turban and Cosmo girl wants to know what coital means. The contrasts are amazing! Are these beautiful, mature looking, full grown young women 3 or 23? Now I know what they mean when they say 15 is "betwixt and between"!

What's Up?



ANGELA GREENWAY
Managing Editor

Angela

OCTOBER 2003

What's inside?

WHAT'S UP2
To come

DEAR BARBARA3
Likely connection between 7-yr-old getting roughed up on the hockey rink and fighting at home

TIP FOR BABIES7
Saying "No"
from "Winnicott on the Child"

TIPS FOR TOTS7
Doing "with"

TIPS FOR KIDS9
Managing a child's behaviour without criticism

TIP FOR SCHOOL3
Bully B'ware
Part 4 - Utilizing students to build a successful anti-bullying campaign
by Cindi Seddon, Alyson McLellan, Gesele LaJoie

GOOD BOOKS -
MORE THAN A REVIEW4
Through the Night - Helping Parents and Sleepless Infants
Dilys Daws

FEATURES
ADD: Does it really exist?
Part 4 - In search of the ADD brain and The stigma of ADD
by Thomas Armstrong, Ph.D.
.....5

Ghosts from the past
by Barbara Burrows
.....6

Lying; stealing; trust
by Lisa James
.....8

The magical neighbourhood of Mr. Rogers
by Ellen Handler Spitz
.....10

LETTER
.....12

DEAR BARBARA

Likely connection between 7-yr-old getting roughed up on the hockey rink and fighting at home**Dear Barbara**

Do you think there could be a connection between our rather small seven year old getting knocked around at the hockey rink and him pushing his younger brother and sister around at home after the game? Do you agree with my husband who wants to teach our child to push and shove back when the bigger kids get rough on the rink?

Dear Parent

When any of us get pushed around we react. If someone was verbally hostile to you and you felt over-powered, you would go over and over the experience in your mind. You would imagine yourself reacting differently so that you did not feel belittled and over-powered by the experience.

In your mind, you would practice different ways of reacting and imagine what the other person would do or say. You would think what you would do next time to avoid feeling bullied. Once you had thought about the situation over and over in different ways, it would become less important to you. The feelings of wanting to retaliate would ease and you would not feel as upset. This is how we "work through" the aggressive feelings that emerge when we feel over-powered.

Children are not capable of this intellectual "working through" process until their thinking reaches a certain level of maturity and they can grasp possible ways in which other people are thinking and feeling.

When pushed around, they feel the urge to retaliate. Without the adult capacity to explore feelings mentally to discharge angry feelings, children often actually DO what you may have only thought of doing.

I think it very likely that there is a connection between your child getting pushed by others and pushing his own siblings. Rather than encouraging him to "push back", why not try to help him deal with the feelings that lead

him to push his siblings?

Likely your impulse is to talk to him about what it feels like for your younger children when he pushes them. Talking about the feelings of his victim will not be very helpful to your son. He can hardly recognize how he feels, much less recognize the feelings of his siblings.

Help him understand his own experience. Talk about the kinds of feelings that get stirred up in him when other people push him. Ask what it was like for him when that bigger player knocked him to the ground. Did he think he did it on purpose or by accident? Did it hurt? What did it make him feel like doing? Did he feel angry? Did he wish somebody bigger would have come along and do the same thing to that child? You might even tentatively ask whether he thinks his "pushing" feelings could be connected with being pushed at hockey.

To help children control aggressive impulses, we need to help them develop the capacity to think about the experience carefully. Just as an adult may gain some control over feeling over-powered by mulling the experience over and over mentally, discussion can help you son think more clearly about his angry feelings. Deeper understanding of these feelings will help him gain more control over his urge to push the younger children.

Barbara Burrows welcomes your questions or comments at barbaraburrows@cogeco.ca



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Photo by Murray Pellowe

Tip for School – Bully B'ware**PART 5****Utilizing students to build a successful anti-bullying campaign**

By Cindi Seddon, Alyson McLellan,
Gesele LaJoie

For more information, see <http://www.bullybeware.com/>
See www.barbaraburrows.com Feb.; April; June; August 2003 issues for Part 1, 2, 3 and 4 of "Take Action Against Bullying" as outlined by Seddon, McLellan and LaJoie.

Students are key to a successful Anti-Bullying campaign primarily because they know who the bullies are long before the adults do. When it comes to discipline or punishment issues, most students strongly believe in fairness and therefore welcome Anti-Bullying policies that encourage treating others with care and respect. However, students are more likely to support an Anti-Bullying campaign when they have been directly involved in determining the need for such a program, and deciding on its implementation. This includes having student representation as part of the group who are developing Anti-Bullying policies and subsequent school-wide or classroom activities. It is necessary for students to

promote the concept that caring for others is a valued quality, one that they accept and encourage.

Teachers need to be sensitive to the fact that the level of student participation in the Anti Bully campaign will vary. Once students are mobilized to take action against bullies, they must feel secure that teachers understand their need to stay safe. For some students, this means ensuring that the information they share will not cause them to lose status in their peer group. Confidentiality must be maintained in order for the program to be viewed by the students as credible. As well, to help students actively participate and take on the challenge of reducing bullying, it is very important that they learn the difference between "ratting" and "reporting". "Ratting" occurs when a student tells about an inappropriate act with the idea getting another student into trouble with the administration. "Reporting" happens when a student tells to protect the safety of him/herself or another student. Once students have an understanding of the difference between the two, reporting bullying incidents becomes much less of a social taboo.



GOOD BOOKS - MORE THAN A REVIEW

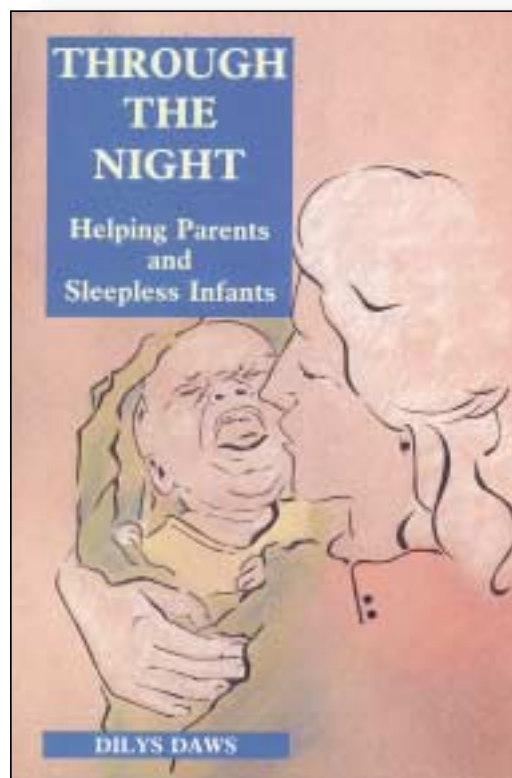
THROUGH THE NIGHT

Helping Parents and Sleepless Infants

Through the Night Helping Parents and Sleepless Infants by Dilys Daws

<http://www.fabooks.com/author.php?id=137>

Whurr Publishers Inc.
ISBN 1-85343-068-4
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As this book was published in 1989, it is not readily available in book stores. This book can be ordered from Bryan Prince Bookseller (add \$3 for shipping within Ontario) Call 1- (800) 867-0090 to order.

Of the numerous books on the market about helping babies (and their parents) sleep through the night, this is the first I've come across that talks about the individual needs of specific babies and parents to help parents understand why their babies may be restless, poor sleepers or fussy. One of the main themes of this book is that parents' own experiences colour their interpretations of what their child is going through. This book refers often to reputable studies and scientific papers on infants and sleeping, drawing not only on clinical material but also scientific research, making it of interest to both parents and professionals. It is truly a gem.

Dilys Daws writes about her more than 10 years in a baby clinic of a family medical practice and the Tavistock Clinic, London where she looks beyond the symptom of sleep disturbance in babies to underlying family dynamics. Her form of brief psychoanalytic therapy combines attention to the individual baby's daily patterns and the parents' memories of the pregnancy, birth and their thoughts about their relationship with each other. Daws is often able to show a link between the child's not sleeping and the task of separation and individuation between mother, father and baby. She illustrates her work with rich clinical vignettes.

The concept of exploring the links between the parents' past and the baby's behaviour is rare in parent education literature. The case study of "The Armitage Family" (chapter 3) illustrates the intricate connection between the parents and the baby's

she looks beyond the symptom of sleep disturbance in babies to underlying family dynamics

need and how this effected their son's sleeping.

At 9 months, Gareth was still waking constantly during the night. He was sleeping in his parents' room in his crib or their bed, and needed constant reassurance - waking every couple of hours, needing to be soothed by breast-feeding or by being cuddled.

In their first session, the parents described what they had been experiencing in a rushed and confused way. This reflected how dreadful the ongoing nights of interrupted sleep had been for them - and the tense confusion Gareth was experiencing as the family coped with this sleeping problem.

Initially, Mr. Armitage described Gareth as a happy, average boy who could not go to sleep normally. He needed to be walked or driven in the car to go to sleep. Mrs. Armitage described Gareth's normal routines, and indicated she and her husband disagreed about whether a baby should be left to cry.

In discussing the issue of crying, Mrs. Armitage said, "He can't leave him" referring to her husband who was holding the baby. It

turned out Mr. Armitage's reluctance to leave the baby was related to his own early experiences as a baby and young child. His working-class parents often had to leave him in care of his grandmother, who was too old to climb the stairs of their large house to see him when he cried out. His earliest memories were of being left, abandoned and crying. Wind blowing through the TV aerial on top of the house made a whistling sound that terrified him. Gareth made one small cry while his dad was telling this story, and Mr. Armitage immediately responded, giving him lots of toys.

During this first session, Gareth began to moan and cry. His father picked him up and Gareth struggled in his arms. Mrs. Daws noticed Gareth did not look at either parent when distressed, as if he was not willing to look to them for help. This insight seemed to help the parents understand something about an unhappiness Gareth was experiencing. Something "twigged" and got them thinking about him in a new way.

There were more insights. Through their work with Mrs. Daws, in four sessions, Mr. and Mrs. Armitage had Gareth sleeping in his own room, in his own bed and waking up very briefly once during the night. Each of these changes came, not in response to Mrs. Daws' suggestions, but things the parents decided to do as they were able to pick up new cues from their son. They gained new insight into their own thoughts and feelings and Gareth's ways of communicating with them. They did not leave him to "cry it out". It turned out Gareth needed help with separations. They worked on saying "goodbye" for even the smallest separations. They worked at creating a bedtime routine where Gareth understood "good night" meant a separation that would end in a reunion in the morning. Gareth became much more relaxed, and came to the point he could fall asleep without being held. Of course, the parents were also much more relaxed as they began to understand their son better and had a happier baby. Good sleeps helped them all!

The many more details of this absorbing case are too numerous to include here, and my synopsis doesn't begin to show adequately, as Daws does, the fascinating ways in which the parents came to recognize the needs and then adjusted to one another's specific needs. This resulted in an infant who became more settled and happier, not only at night, but also during the day.

This book offers helpful information on normal psychological development that

Continued on page 12

F E A T U R E

ADD: Does it really exist?

PART 4

by Thomas Armstrong, Ph.D.

Thomas Armstrong, Ph.D. is a psychologist with a special interest in multiple intelligences, the myth of ADD/ADHD, and the natural genius of kids. He is also an award-winning author and speaker with thirty years of teaching experience from the primary through the doctoral level, and over one million copies of his books in print on issues related to learning and human development. For more information, see <http://thomasarmstrong.com/>

See www.barbaraburrows.com - magazine link for parts 1, 2 and 3.

In search of the ADD brain

Naturally, in order to make the claim that ADD is a disease, there must be a medical or biological cause for it. Yet, as with everything else about ADD, no one is exactly sure what causes it. Possible biological causes that have been proposed include genetic factors, biochemical abnormalities (imbalances of such brain chemicals as serotonin, dopamine, and norepinephrine), neurological damage, lead poisoning, thyroid problems, prenatal exposure to various chemical agents, and delayed myelination of the 'nerve pathways in the brain.'

In its search for a physical cause, the ADD movement reached a milestone with the 1990 publication in the *New England Journal of Medicine* of a study by Alan Zametkin and his colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health. This study appeared to link hyperactivity in adults with reduced metabolism of glucose (a prime energy source) in the premotor cortex and the superior prefrontal cortex - areas of the brain that are involved in the control of attention, planning, and motor activity. In other words, these areas of the brain were not working as hard as they should have been, according to Zametkin.

The media picked up on Zametkin's research and reported it nationally. ADD proponents latched on to this study as 'proof' of the medical basis for ADD. Pictures depicting the spread of glucose through a 'normal' brain compared to a 'hyperactive' brain began showing up in CH.A.D.D. (Children and Adults with Attention Deficit

Disorder) literature and at the organization's conventions and meetings. One ADD advocate seemed to speak for many in the ADD movement when she wrote: "In November 1990, parents of children with ADD heaved a collective sigh of relief when Dr. Alan Zametkin released a report that hyperactivity (which is closely linked to ADD) results from an insufficient rate of glucose metabolism in the brain. Finally, commented a supporter, we have an answer to skeptics who pass this off as bratty behavior caused by poor parenting."

What was not reported by the media or cheered by the ADD community was the study by Zametkin and others that came out three years later in the *Archives of General Psychiatry*. In an attempt to repeat the 1990 study with adolescents, the researchers found no significant differences between the brains of so-called hyperactive subjects and those of so-called normal subjects. And in retrospect, the results of the first study didn't look so good either. When the original 1990 study was controlled for sex (there were more men in the hyperactive group than in the control group), there was no significant difference between groups.



A recent critique of Zametkin's research by faculty members at the University of Nebraska also pointed out that the study did not make clear whether the lower glucose rates found in "hyperactive brains" were a cause or a result of attention problems. The critics pointed out that, if subjects were startled and then had their levels of adrenalin monitored, adrenalin levels would probably be quite high. We would not say, however, that these individuals had an adrenalin disorder. Rather, we'd look at the underlying conditions that led to abnormal adrenalin levels. Similarly, even if biochemical differences did exist in the so-called hyperactive brain, we ought to be looking at the nonbiological factors that could account for some of these differences, including stress, learning style, and temperament.

The stigma of ADD

Unfortunately, there seems to be little desire in the professional community to engage in dialogue about the reality of attention deficit disorder; its presence on the American educational scene seems to be a fait accompli. This is regrettable, since ADD is a psychiatric disorder, and millions of children and adults run the risk of stigmatization from the application of this label.

In 1991, when such major educational organizations as the National Education Association (NEA), the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) successfully opposed the authorization by Congress of ADD as a legally handicapping condition, NEA spokesperson Debra DeLee wrote, "Establishing a new category [ADD] based on behavioral characteristics alone, such as overactivity, impulsiveness, and inattentiveness, increases the likelihood of inappropriate labeling for racial, ethnic, and linguistic minority students." And Peg Dawson, former NASP president, pointed out, "We don't think that a proliferation of labels is the best way to address the ADD issue. It's in the best interest of all children that we stop creating categories of exclusion and start responding to the needs of individual children." ADD nevertheless continues to gain ground as the label du jour in American education. It's time to stop and take stock of this "disorder" and decide whether it really exists or is instead more a manifestation of society's need to have such a disorder.

F E A T U R E

Ghosts from the past

by Barbara Burrows

Parenting, more than any other of our relationships, effects us inwardly by stirring our emotions to a new depth. It evokes our unconscious* in new ways. The unconscious is the part of our mind that although unavailable to us, creates powerful impulses that we try to keep under control. Almost all of us, at times, have strange and unintelligible experiences. It can be involuntary movements (tics), an over-whelming or unjustified emotion or mood (anxiety spells or depression), queer impulses or thoughts (obsessions or compulsions), or physical symptoms not related to diagnosed illness (headaches, stomachaches). These symptoms break into our everyday life from an unknown source and disturb our "sanity", and are outside the realm of conscious will. When these pressures "take over", we feel off balance. For almost everyone, these unintelligible experiences increase when we become parents. It is much harder to remain "sane" we might say, with the new emotional demands that parenting creates.

One very common example of this is that most of us have reacted to everyday events with our children with too much anger. Often, what stirs these angry impulses is past experiences in us that have been "repressed". The late Selma Fraiberg, internationally recognized psychoanalyst, discussed these impulses in her famous paper "Ghosts from the Nursery". She spoke of the "ghosts" we carry within, from early experiences, that are re-enacted in certain (often stressful) situations with our children. When past memories remain unconscious, they can create impulses that cause us to act in ways that are beyond conscious control. Most parents know exactly what I mean when I explain this phenomenon.

The following examples show how one mother was able to use her sad experiences from the past to enhance her relationship with her son, and another mother's sad experiences from the past caused her to be impatient and harsh with her children. The second example shows how the unconscious "ghosts" can influence parenting in an unhappy way.

First Example:

A mother with vivid and sad memories of her bleak and deprived childhood wished to create a happier time for her child. She enjoyed giving her young son toys and playing with him. In watching him play, and playing with him, she felt somewhat healed as she felt she was improving things for the next generation. Because she felt close to her child and was still connected with her own sad memories, watching him play and playing with him was a little bit like getting a second chance to experience childhood and enjoy, through her son's experience, the things she had longed for but had not experienced. In a way, giving attention and toys to her

son was almost like giving them to herself. Both mother and son gained from her ability to give in this way. Because this mother was able to remember and tolerate her own sad memories from the past, she was not threatened by her son's wants and desires.



Second Example

Another mother with a sad and deprived background, learned to cope with denial** and repression***. She tried not to think too much about the things that made her unhappy and the angry feelings associated with many disappointments. As the years passed, she maintained an illusion that her childhood was fine.

When she became a mother, although she could remember that she did not have many toys or attention, she could not clearly remember what it was like not having the things (and the love) she so badly wanted. As a result, it was difficult for her when her children wanted things or demanded that she play with them. When her children asked of her what she wanted from her own parents, but was denied, she became very angry and impatient with them.

If she identified with her children, and was able to remember what it is like to be a child wishing for love and attention, it would shatter her illusions about her childhood, and her painful memories would come back. To protect herself from becoming aware of these hurtful past memories, she would become irritable with her children, punishing them often and for little reason. Her children became angry with her in return. They reacted to her and did things to make her angry. The anger in her home made her miserable. But it also helped her defend against her painful childhood. Her "ghosts" were interfering with what she most wanted - to raise happy children.

Few "truths" in our lives are as difficult to consider as the possibility that we may be contributing to our children's poor behaviour. And yet, if we are able to consider this possibility, our chances of resolving difficulties with our children are greatly increased.

Every aspect of our children's misbehaviour cannot be contributed to us. When the problem is related to us - our daily tensions, our past - it can be immensely helpful when we figure it out.

There are two things we can do to help us understand a little more about our own "unconscious".

#1 Accessing Memories

Pausing to reflect and trying to pinpoint the moment that the emotion became strongest can sometimes help tremendously in understanding how our past can effect the present. Very often, memories can be accessed with reflection. Accessing sad, angry, resentful, revengeful or hurt feelings is the very thing that allows the healing process to begin. When we "know", we can often take control of our ghosts.

#2 Using Reflection

Although some memories can never be accessed, pausing to reflect can sometimes help parents get a sense of whether the emotions they are experiencing are "out of proportion" to the child's behaviour. If the parents' response and feelings do not really match the child's "crime" very well, it may be the emotions are connected not only with the child in the present, but also with circumstances stored in the unconscious from the parent's past.

In this case, even attempting to reflect may allow us to recognize that something is going on with us, more than our children's misbehaviour. Separating our intense emotions from our children long enough to guess "the ghosts" are here may help us recuperate from our intense emotional state without seeking revenge on our children, even when we do not know what is wrong. This can help us calm down, and in turn will calm our children.

• • •

It sounds simple, but it isn't. It takes tremendous maturity to struggle to "get hold" of this common part of functioning as a parent. "Ghosts from the past" are part of parenting. Fathers are as susceptible as mothers. Thinking about our own mental state, as well as our children's behaviour can be a very helpful technique in keeping things running smoothly in a family.

• • •

These definitions are from "A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis" by Charles Rycroft

*UNCONSCIOUS:

Mental processes of which one is unaware.

**DENIAL:

A defense mechanism by which either
a) some painful experience is denied or
b) some impulse or aspect of the SELF is denied.

***REPRESSION:

The process (defense mechanism) by which an unacceptable idea is rendered unconscious.

Tip for Babies – Saying “No”

from “Winnicott on the Child”

The late Donald W. Winnicott, a world renowned pediatrician and child psychoanalyst from England, has written a great deal about mothers, babies and children. One of his well-known papers on “saying no” and can be found in “Winnicott on the Child” published by Perseus. This tip summarizes some of his thoughts.

Winnicott divides this stage of development between mothers and babies into three phases. In the early months of life, mothers (or caregivers) generally make an effort to meet the needs of infants. There is no clear “No” in this first stage of life.

In the second stage, gradually, mothers may frown when an infant makes demands – perhaps for attention. They may or may not say the word “no”, but they do manage to communicate that they aren’t willing to respond to every grunt, or coo – and request to be picked up. This is the beginning of the mother showing that she now feels the baby can tolerate a little bit of frustration, and she wants a little bit of her own life back.

This third stage is a difficult one for the caregiver, as it requires constant vigilance. The baby can move around, is very curious and into “everything”. As the mother determines what the “no’s” are as far as she is concerned, the baby becomes angry with her that she is not willing to give into all his wishes, that she helps him discover something important about the world and getting along in it.

Mothers also say “no” out of irritability at times, “which just can’t be helped” adds Winnicott. That’s life. In this early stage, mothers tend to say “no” to the outside world in order to create as pleasant an environment as possible for the baby. He also points out that it is humanly impossible to meet all needs, and luckily it isn’t necessary. Meeting the needs “well enough” will insure the infant does not feel “let down”.

Of course, there is no clear delineation between these stages – they overlap and move back and forth, but eventually the baby is ready for some clear messages of “no”. In this is the stage the baby comes to understand something of the reality of the world – everyone will not bend over backwards forever to accommodate his or her needs.

One way of making the “no” a little easier is by focusing on the “yes” – what the baby is allowed to do and play with, rather than restricting him constantly, which no child can bear.

The “no” therefore (or the setting of certain limits), helps the child adjust to the real world, where others will definitely not be willing, as his mother was in the early months, to meet his needs as well as possible. This kind “no” helps the baby with all other levels of development.



Tip for Tots – Doing “with”

This example is outlined in “Toddlers and their Mothers” by Erna Furman P 122. Watch next issue for another example of how a mother came to understand when the “doing with” stage has passed in toddlerhood.

When a baby is born, one reason the mother is able to give so much to the baby is because the baby feels almost like part of her. Usually a baby has come from the mother’s body, she holds it close to her body to feed, and often the milk flows from the mother into the baby, linking them in a close way. Adopted babies “become one” with the mother by being held close during feeding, through the many ways mothers and infants interact. Hopefully mothers “fall in love” with their infants. This is called “narcissistic” love, and this kind of love enables mothers to give to their infants in profound ways. The mother and infant are so close, the mother feels almost like she is looking after a part of herself.

As the infant matures and becomes separate from his mother, narcissistic love must slowly change into “object” love for the child to develop well. This is when a mother can begin to love her child for who the child is, rather than because the child and the mother are so close that they feel almost like one person.

There are many pitfalls for mothers as they move towards this new stage of loving. There can be a wish on the mother’s part to enjoy this blissful stage beyond what works well for the child. Some of these pitfalls can be seen in the area of bodily self-care. How children undertake the task of dressing themselves and how mothers encourage them to do so can be fraught with difficulties. For example, Jeremy, just under two, simply let himself be dressed, cuddling into his mother. He showed no initiative to dress himself, although a smart boy. He sensed correctly that his mother enjoyed dressing him, and that she was reluctant to give up this pleasure. Adapting to his mother’s need, Jeremy appeared to have surrendered his independence – but at a cost. He would cast sideways glances at his more accomplished peers in his mom and toddler program and then look downward, as if ashamed. He often refused to try new activities, insisting on his mother’s help, never trusting himself to manage alone.

When Jeremy’s mother became sensitive to Jeremy’s wish to do more for himself and to do well, they started working on Jeremy’s dressing and took the first steps towards Jeremy participating in the task. Jeremy’s mother was “doing with” Jeremy, and they both experienced a great deal of gratification in this new stage. It was clear that Jeremy felt very proud of each small achievement.

F E A T U R E

Lying; stealing; trust



by Lisa James

When I began to write this story about how tough it is to discover that your 16 year-old adolescent is stealing and worse lying to cover the fact, I found that words on a page were too neat and structured to express this hard edge of reality that left me reeling. It is not a neat and organized situation. The perfect placement of words doesn't clear the path when circumstances happen that rock the trust you have worked so hard to establish with your child. In real life there are consequences for lying and stealing, just as there are for acts of violence. On some level our teens know what is right and what is wrong. But I'm not sure they have a really good understanding of this or in fact believe it.

I have tried to be straightforward with my son about our values and expectations. Sharing my beliefs and morals, in hopes that he too will adopt an attitude of courtesy and respect for other people, their possessions and the world around him. I have to admit that at times talking with him is like playing a game of Scrabble, where he puts down a word and I attach mine to his. We play this game where our words connect in hidden patterns. He is an excellent player, quick with his letters, placing his tiles on our ever-changing board. And I am a mother duped by teenage wit and conviction.

It's not that I ever thought for a moment that my son, whom I love with all my heart, is perfect. He appears to be an average kid, who does most of his homework and hangs out with friends I like enough. Who don't offend me and remember to say thanks. What more does a mom need? Apart from the long, unwashed hair and seemingly little overall concern for the importance of vitamin pills and brushing your teeth every night, I really thought that maybe we could catch a short breath during these teenage angst years.

Ok, this is a very simplified version of the pressures we feel as parents and the con-

cerns we deal with as we watch our children make their own decisions and choices. We need to step back and give them the space to place their own words in the game.

And so I took my turn, placed my words and stepped back, not expecting to be blindsided by one of those 18-wheeler trucks. Fortunately it hit me slowly. Without fanfare, simply an energized call from my son, who was in his bedroom working on his computer. I could hear him talking with a friend. He was very excited.

"Mom, mom," he called. "Look at this!"

I joined him in his room. It took me a few minutes to notice that he had acquired some new, technical piece of equipment that was now attached to his computer. He showed me what it could do and I went to the kitchen to start dinner. I was left with a slightly uneasy feeling and mentioned the new toy to my husband, whom I discovered hadn't bought the thing for him. Knowing that my son wasn't the kind of kid to just go out and make an expensive purchase, I went back to his room. But first I slipped into my mother guard - preparing myself for a con-



frontation that I thought could be potentially difficult. The back of my neck prickled a bit at the collar.

"Hey," I said. "So where does that thing come from?"

He glanced over his shoulder.

"Grandpa bought it for me."

"When?"

He turned in his grey, swivel computer chair to face me head-on.

"Ok, we got it at a garage sale."

I left his room, the knot in my stomach twisting. I wanted to believe him, but I felt sure I would have known if he had gone to a sale with his grandfather and they had bought some new equipment. As I thought it through, I knew I had to admit the painful truth - he was lying.

It wasn't the stealing that really got me. What took my breath away was the ease with which he lied. The lack of respect for the trust I thought we had. It's hard to express in words the sadness and confusion that cloak your rational thinking in a situation like this. I took my time getting up from under the wheels. I worried that this was the beginning of every horrible thing that a teenager had the potential to become involved with.

I decided to approach my son directly and as calmly as I could. I went back to his bedroom, took a deep breath and sat down on the edge of his bed.

"What?" he asked.

"I know it's not from grandpa or a garage sale." I told him.

Silence. Seconds, maybe minutes passed. The gulf opened between us. He didn't look at me. He kept his feet on the floor and his eyes on the computer. It appeared there was going to be no way to reach him.

"I want to talk about this."

He said nothing. I waited quietly, wondering what I was going to say. Gradually he turned his head in my direction.

"Mom," he said. "You know what - life is like standing on knives and the points are cutting through the bottoms of your feet."

Continued on page 9

Continued from page 8

"What do you mean?" I asked.

He stumbled over some words. From what I could understand, I think he was trying to express his anxiety and guilt over what he had done. The crappiness of real life hurts.

"I'm not very good at lying," he said.

"That's good," I told him, "lying is not very good and you lied to me. Do you understand why it upsets me?" I asked.

He shrugged not looking at me.

"There's nothing you can do that is so bad that I will ever stop loving you," I said. "But without the trust I thought we had, how will I know what to believe?"

I struggled to close the gap between us. I said it didn't matter how bad he considered a situation - I was willing to listen and help as much as I could. I wanted him to know that his father and I needed to feel that we were all working together.

Gradually, we were talking together. During our conversation he realized that on a larger scale, he risked losing the trust and relationships of people he had spent time a long time establishing. He said he hadn't even considered the repercussions of his actions. His friends said it would be ok. One of them steals regularly. As we talked, he began to acknowledge how high the risks really were.

For example, I told him of an article I'd read written by Susan McClelland, for MacLean's Magazine titled Institutional Correction. (June 9, 2003). She discusses the tragic fate of our young offenders and the institutions they are placed in. The article claims "roughly 23,000 young offenders were placed in

custody in 1999-2000. Of those, only 22 per cent committed offences involving violence." The article went on to explain that these violent young offenders are placed in the same centers as kids serving short sentences for first time offences such as petty theft and vandalism. The consequences these kids face living together with hardcore inmates is truly scary - they have been bullied, beaten, raped and even killed.

I consider myself really lucky that my son allowed

me the time to speak and that he appeared to listen to my words. I think in part it had to do with approaching him in a non-threatening - non-yelling way. We got over his first impulse to immediately shut me out, and were able to do some real talking. That meant on some level I'd reached him. He was able to admit he didn't feel very good about what he had done. He didn't want to have a criminal record or spend time in a juvenile detention center. He apologized to his dad and me, and came to the conclusion that the piece of equipment had to be returned the next day.

Based upon my son's attitude and sense of responsibility, I made a personal decision to let him negotiate returning the item himself. No, I didn't call ahead and explain what he had done. He put the piece of equipment back on the shelf where it came from. I didn't ground him or take away his computer. I felt he understood the significance of his actions. We have an understanding now that he will buy any new equipment that he wants and I will not be giving him the money. He is looking for a part time job. This is the first time he has succumbed to this kind of peer pressure and desire. I decided to give him a second chance. It does not mean that I condone or excuse his actions and it does not mean I will forget. It means he has acknowledged his mistake and, even though this was a very difficult experience for me as his mother, we are all moving on.

I decided to give him a second chance.

It does not mean that I condone or excuse his actions and it does not mean I will forget.

Tip for Kids – Managing a child's behaviour without criticism

by Barbara Burrows

Parents are often encouraged to say, "I like you but I don't like what you are doing". This way of talking to a child doesn't encourage the child to reflect on her own feelings the way talking about what the child might be experiencing does. If parents can understand how difficult it is for children to behave at times, it will be easier to talk about the child's behaviour in a non-judgmental way without criticism. For example, a three year old might get behind the rocking chair her mother is sitting in to nurse the baby and roughly rock it back and forth. Actually, it is likely the child does not feel very good about this impulsive behaviour, but her feelings of envy have become so strong, the child has not managed to control her wishes to upset her mother and baby.

The mother, if feeling patient, might be able to help by asking the child, "Is it hard to share mommy with the baby today?" Quite often young children act before they can even start to figure out what makes them want to do whatever they are doing.

The way to help them get control of their behaviour is to help them realize more about the inner feelings and impulses that are urging them to behave in such a way.

If the mother's comment is not enough to help the child regain control, the mother could add, "Would it help you feel better if I sat on the couch to nurse the baby so there would be room for you as well?"

There is much to be gained by talking calmly to children without criticizing

A child learns to control of impulsive actions when he is able to think about what he wishes to do. When the mother speaks patiently and kindly to the child, it encourages thinking. With the ability to think comes the capacity to gain control. The more parents can help children understand and figure out what to do about their difficult feelings, the better the child will be able to behave. By putting into words what was likely troubling the child, the mother helps the child realize it is hard to share Mommy, and knowing this helps the child manage better.

There is much to be gained by talking calmly to children without criticizing to help them gain control of unruly impulses.



The magical neighbourhood of

by Ellen Handler Spitz

Ellen Handler Spitz is a professor of visual arts at the University of Maryland-Baltimore County. She is the author of Inside Picture Books (Yale University Press, 1999) reviewed in Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine (www.barbaraburrows.com magazine link - June 2003) and is writing a book on the aesthetic and imaginative lives of children.

Notice posted on PBS Website Feb. 2/03: Fred Rogers welcomed millions of children into his neighbourhood for more than 30 years and in that time became a household name. This week many of those same households are mourning the death of "Mister Rogers" who died of stomach cancer early Thursday morning at age 74.

Mister Roger's Neighbourhood is on at 12 noon on weekdays on WNED/Channel 17 - Buffalo which is carried by many cable companies in Ontario.

Driving to campus a few weeks to meet with my class "Art and the Cultures of Childhood," I heard on National Public Radio that Fred Rogers, at the age of 74, had died of stomach cancer.

Fred Rogers's contribution to the lives of the children fortunate enough to have encountered his television program Mister! Rogers' Neighbourhood over the past half-century was unique. Beyond attributes mentioned in the outpouring of tributes and profiles that have flooded the news media - his gifts as a composer and puppeteer, ordained Presbyterian minister, child psychologist, amateur photographer, lover of the outdoors, interpreter of young children's inner lives-Fred Rogers possessed a serenity and love of truth.

Those qualities, glaringly absent from most of the programs offered to young children today-programs that are overwrought, noisy, hectic, and banal-touched children deeply. With his attunement to our and his own earliest fears, wishes, hopes, and pleasures (for he never hesitated to tell children anecdotes about his own childhood), he created television programs of

Children who encountered the program never attended to it halfheartedly. They paid attention. They got inside its illusory space, and they grew there.

the utmost simplicity and yet the profoundest wisdom. His work has been of exceptional interest to me because of my own engagement, as a scholar, with the close mingling of children's emotional, cognitive, and aesthetic lives.

One of his greatest gifts was his ability to work within the ebb and flow of small children's actual lives, to respond to all the fascinating ways in which developing psyches intertwine multiple strands of experience and move seamlessly back and forth from fantasy to reality, from wishes to facts, from bodies to external objects, from selves to others' selves, from intimate scenes within the family to the larger cultural realms of art and science. Unlike so many of those who produce television shows for children, Fred Rogers never forgot that his work was being seen within his audience's actual living, playing, and sleeping spaces and that, being invited inside, so to speak, required respect for the sanctity of those spaces as private and protected realms.

Eschewing the heartless anonymity of so much television fare for children-programs that treat children as an undifferentiated, behaviorally passive mass - but without bothering to decry it as such (Fred Rogers wasted little time on negativity), he countered that facelessness by treasuring the uniqueness of each child. His method was to face the camera head-on and then directly greet his viewers as though he

were talking to each of them as individuals. He always spoke slowly and distinctly (both to be understood and also to model pronunciation for toddlers just learning to talk) but without condescension.

Often, he would explain in advance what was going to happen on that day's program, to give children a chance to prepare themselves and to experience an empowering sense of anticipation and mastery. He knew that when children know what is coming, they can begin to mull it over beforehand and thereby feel stronger and less vulnerable. Knowing both the difficulty of transitions and the comforting balm of ritual and repetition, he never failed to say (and to sing) "hello" and "good-bye" to his audience. Always using the same words and tunes, he eased the parting further by promising to return, thus giving children hope to tide them over, and a sense of a continuing presence despite apparent absence. Such gifts are sorely missing from other programs.

Forever gentle, never didactic, Fred Rogers was a model of the male human being as both nurturer and provider and protector. So much meaning came through the details. For example, knowing how hard it is for I kids to learn how to tie their shoelaces, he would tie his own at the beginning of every program, without fanfare, just letting the camera zoom in. Likewise, knowing how children tend to overlook their daily responsibilities to their pets, he would sprinkle fish food into an aquarium on the set each day and smile as the fish nibbled on their meal. And never preaching a word about equality or diversity, Fred Rogers simply lived those principles by visiting with "neighbourhood friends" and guests from varied racial, religious, national, and occupational backgrounds, and they ranged in life stage from infancy to old age.

In one memorable program, the handsome young Officer Clemmons, an African-American policeman with a beautiful tenor voice, decides to leave the neighbourhood and thus the program itself to study voice so he can become an opera singer, and the whole neighbourhood must say goodbye, wishing him success even though they are

Mr. Rogers

sad to see him go. However, the obstreperous puppet Lady Elaine Fairchild, who often gives in to her impulses, tries to prevent him from leaving by tying him up because she wants him to stay. But she must learn, along with the children watching the program, that nobody can hold a person who truly wishes to leave. Officer Clemmons helps her understand that lesson by promising to return to the neighbourhood for visits and by showing her how much he wishes to sing, thus teaching her that to care for him is to support his desire and let him go.

Each weekday, Mister Rogers' Neighbourhood offered a half-hour program that explored themes important to children, such as the birth of a sibling. Rogers would invent subtle ways to develop such themes and relate them to others—for example, in this case, the gestation period of animals, birthdays in general (children sometimes need to be reassured about sharing the same birth date as someone else), and sibling rivalry (Rogers focuses on concerns about being overshadowed by a new baby). Taking one theme and exploring it with other related themes in different ways throughout the week gave children another thread of continuity and helped counter the fragmentation they often experience in their hectic daily lives.

A talented composer, Rogers always accompanied his themes with tunes and lyrics that express a tender regard for children's vulnerability and natural egocentricity. About the birth of sibling, for example, he sings: "When a baby comes to your house/It's a girl or it's a boy./It's a sister or a brother,/But it's never just a toy.

...You were there before the baby. Now the baby's always there... It can cry and it can holler./It can wet and it can coo./But there's one thing it can never...It can never be like you." I know of no other television program for young children that even attempts to deal with such issues, much less do so with the empathy of those lyrics, which aim directly at the core of a child's experience.

Fred Rogers organized his programs so that in every session there is time for make-believe; his electrified red trolley, with its

They loved it because it was a place in which they were responded to, where hard tasks took time and effort, where trying really mattered, where the pace was comfortable and reliable; never frantic, and where aggression was not resorted to as the fastest, easiest solution to any problem.

tinkling bell, signals the transition to that other place where children love to go. There, small, simply wrought puppets interact with human beings, and the inner world is represented on stage. Yet there is always a return. Fred Rogers also emphasized that just making believe isn't enough. If you want to ride a bicycle, he sings at one point, you have to try to do it, because simply sitting, looking at the bike, and imagining riding it won't make it move. In this way, he gave each of the parallel but incommensurable and shifting worlds of make-believe and reality their due.

"HIS CROSS-DISCIPLINARY and cross-modal connections between developmental, emotional, and moral themes and the external world—both natural and social—reveal to children, above all, the importance of the arts and letters. In one brilliant show, Rogers begins by showing the children the first page of the score of Brahms's Symphony No.2. Explaining how a symphony is "built" out of notes that are inscribed as small black marks, he then plays the music for them on a recording.

While listening himself, he picks up some painted wooden blocks and constructs a house. Then he shows a short film of the actual construction of a real house, and we watch as the sub-roofing is nailed in place.

In this way, without an explanatory word, he deconstructs the hierarchy

between occupations—between composer and construction worker, in this case—by showing that both are engaged in the important task of building and creating.

Later on, Rogers creates another connection when he shows that, in the world of make-believe, Lady Elaine Fairchild is building a new pretend castle for the king by using the pattern of notes from the symphony as her blueprint. Thus, the program, mirroring children's actual lives, seamlessly flows among various worlds, making analogies, exploring connections, teaching, and inspiring. One little boy I know, immediately after watching this program, retreated to his playroom and emerged half an hour later having created an amazing structure out of his own building blocks.

The show, in its almost magical ability to accurately reflect the shifts in young children's own emotional tempos—shifts that are routinely disregarded by other programs, where time is only money—exemplifies a fertile inventiveness that has inspired generations of children but that has not, alas, inspired others to create equally fine television programs for the young. We must now mourn Mr. Rogers's lost "neighbourhood." Children who encountered the program never attended to it halfheartedly. They paid attention. They got inside its illusory space, and they grew there. They loved it because it was a place in which they were responded to, where hard tasks took time and effort, where trying really mattered, where the pace was comfortable and reliable; never frantic, and where aggression was not resorted to as the fastest, easiest solution to any problem. When Fred Rogers promised at the end of each program to return, he kept his promise as long as he was able to. I hope that his brilliant legacy will be studied—not only by writers and scholars like myself but also by television producers, so that it can be carried on by others, and so that the spirit and quality of what he offered can be made available to generations of children to come as we face the increasing tensions and uncertainties of tomorrow.

Originally published in The Chronicle of Higher Education March 28/2003

GOOD BOOKS - MORE THAN A REVIEW

THROUGH THE NIGHT

Helping Parents and Sleepless Infants

Continued from page 4

could interest parents even without any sleep issues. It explores the development of the self (Chapter 7); separation and attachment (Chapter 8); the connections between sleeping difficulties and feeding and weaning (Chapter 9) and some of the specific hurdles faced by single mothers. Perhaps most intriguing is the ways parents' own childhood histories came into play and influenced difficulties with their infants, and the changes that came as parents were able to see their babies' needs more clearly, once they sorted out some of their own painful memories.

One last clinical example illustrates how these painful occurrences can be re-experienced, and how separation issues can be behind sleep troubles. A mother confided a difficult teenage experience to Mrs. Daws that she had been unable to speak about with even her own mother. A week later, she expected Mrs. Daws would have forgotten. This opened the door to recognize her distrust based upon being let down by her mother led to her ignoring her son in certain ways. Her baby didn't want to let her go to go to sleep, as he felt he would be forgotten. With this insight, she was more able to think about things that mattered to her son. When her son became more secure is knowing his mother was remembering him in her mind (he was not forgotten) it was easier for the baby to let go of his mother to go to sleep.

This is yet another example of so many in this book that shows how the baby slept better once parents understood their own or their infant's needs more clearly. And even better is that with each new insight, not only did the baby sleep better, but the relationship between the parents and infants was strengthened. What wonderful information for sleep deprived parents!

LETTER

Re: The Development of Anorexia Nervosa – The Hunger Artists (Part 2) (www.barbaraburrows.com – Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine – June 2003)

Dear Barbara:

I must say that your article dealing with anorexia was very irresponsible journalism. As the parent of a child who has an eating disorder the fact that you would print an article that clearly is biased in its research, reflecting data from two subjects is very disappointing. In direct response to the article, I breastfed my daughter for six months, she was never in a playpen, I carried her with me in a snuggly whenever I went out, our children traveled with us, and experienced a very loving nurturing environment. To publish an article that clearly relates anorexia to a parent who was detached and deluded is unfair. Perhaps you should get some facts that would serve to help parents and children of anorexia. Our daughter is a beautiful, caring individual, who excelled in school and sports. She continues to be a loving person, who struggles very hard to recover from her eating disorder. I would suggest you seek professional opinion from Dr. Blake Woodside, head of the Toronto Eating Disorder Clinic. There are many reasons why people develop anorexia, to devote an entire article on such a vague study is criminal. You have done more damage than good to the many families who are struggling with this disorder!

Name Withheld, North Bay

Barbara Burrows Parenting International Advisory Board

Advisors to Barbara Burrows are professionals with extensive experience in both clinical work and research in child development. They are committed to helping families resolve the underlying difficulties that lead to psychological symptoms in children, without the use of medication wherever possible.

The members of the advisory board contribute articles to the magazine on a regular basis, and oversee the professional integrity of articles published in the magazine.

This advisory board insures that material printed in Barbara Burrows' publication reflects the body of knowledge developed by child psychoanalysts, together with developmentalists (attachment theory, developmental neurobiology and infant research).

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Barbara Burrows Parenting Magazine expresses deepest gratitude for the support of Dr. and Mrs. Furman and Dr. Otto Weininger during their illustrious careers.

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