

**Fieldsite  
Teacher's Manual  
Exploring Childhood**

*m. Felt*

# Fieldsite Teacher's Manual

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## Preface

This manual has been prepared especially for teachers in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD fieldsites: nursery schools, kindergartens, day care centers, and other child care centers where EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students are working with young children. The manual contains a brief overview of the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD program, suggests some of the ways students can contribute to fieldsite activities, and provides background for working with adolescents.

About half of the manual consists of sample classroom materials: exercises, questions, and information EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students are dealing with in class that will influence their behavior at the fieldsite. These samples are included to give you a sense of what students are studying at the high school, and of the kinds of activities students may want to try at the fieldsite. By understanding what students are doing in the high school part of the program, you will be able to utilize their ideas and experiences at your fieldsite. We also hope you will find time to visit your students' class during the year, to talk regularly with the course teacher, and to become familiar with the classroom materials.

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# The Exploring Childhood Program

## PURPOSE

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD is a program in which adolescents work with young children while learning about child development and their own identities. It gives adolescents the chance to have responsible roles working with young children, to develop the skills to perform those roles, and to prepare for parenting and careers involving the care and welfare of young children.

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD can bring together many segments of the community around a common concern and task: supporting the growth of young children. Any agency that provides child care--nursery schools, day care centers, churches, community centers--can become a fieldsite where EXPLORING CHILDHOOD high school students spend a few hours every week working with children. Kindergartens and elementary schools are also suitable fieldsites. Parents who are interested in the program may become involved through seminars. And professionals who deal with children's care (health, safety, legal protection, and so on) can become valuable resources to the program.

## PERSPECTIVE

The perspective of EXPLORING CHILDHOOD can be simply stated: Human development is a process of continual growth and potential in which the individual, from the moment of birth, influences the people and the world around him, and is shaped by those people and that world. This view might be defined as mutuality, reciprocity, or interaction. However defined, the message declares that one is influenced by one's past, by one's peers and elders, and by one's culture; but that one is bound by none of these. More than promoting any specific body of information or any particular skill, EXPLORING CHILDHOOD suggests an *attitude* toward development

that stresses the capacity of the person--whether child, adolescent, or adult--to synthesize past experience and to continue to grow in relationship with others.

We view the young child as an active being endowed from the start with resources for coping, for growth, and for human interaction. It follows that we see the high school student's role as supporting and extending a young child's normal daily experience rather than, for example, redirecting a child's activity for narrowly defined cognitive and/or affective learning goals.

Why should students have a field experience?

- Adolescents need the experience of taking on roles that are interesting and useful in order to develop a sense of worth; they need tasks in which they can be aware of their own growth of competence and in which they are likely to have some success.
- In order for learning to occur, there must be a dynamic tension between experience, knowledge, and reflection. The experience must be the kind that adolescents find worth doing; for many students, work with children is such a worthwhile experience. From their work with children, students can generate questions and insights, thereby actively influencing their own learning.

Thus, course and field work draw upon and enrich each other throughout the year. What students explore in class gives them insights that make them better able to support children's growth. At the same time, fieldsite experiences form a basis for understanding ideas presented in class; the student can always say, "How does this fit with what I have observed and done with children?" One course teacher said:

*Because the kids have been out at the fieldsite, they have so much input in class that it has really given our whole program a boost. I have been able to stop talking as much as I usually do.*

#### IMPLEMENTATION

Because EXPLORING CHILDREN is a program whose resources and impact go beyond the classroom, the written and visual materials we provide are only one aspect of a successful program. In addition, the program needs the following elements:

- A Practicum at a Fieldsite

Regularly scheduled field work with children allows students to take responsible roles, develop a sense of competence, and gather ideas, questions, and feedback daily from the demands of real experience. At least two hours a week of work with children is recommended as a practicum.

- Full School Year Use of the Course

The classroom materials are designed to give students the opportunity to consider the biological and social factors that affect human development. Participation in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD for a year allows students to consider both children's development and children's interactions with family and society. Equally important, they work with children over a long enough period to see real growth and change in young children as well as in themselves.

- Participation of Male Students

Half of the people who affect the growth and future of children are male. Having a male perspective in the classroom, and having male students involved in the care of young children, creates a realistic learning environment for all and provides for male students an opportunity to learn about children and themselves.

- Teacher Services

During the year there will be five full-day workshops for EXPLORING CHILDHOOD course and fieldsite teachers. The workshops are designed to help teachers learn about the program, explore new teaching techniques, and develop ways of creating a supportive atmosphere in the classroom. They give teachers an opportunity to share experiences, reexamine perspectives, see alternative models and techniques, and practice using new materials. These skills are directly related to creating a classroom environment in which students feel comfortable discussing attitudes, values, their own childhoods, and fieldsite experiences. Five Regional Field Coordinators (RFCs), located in New York City, Atlanta, Chicago, Denver and San Francisco, will conduct workshops. It is important that schools allow teachers adequate time to attend the workshops. When possible, fieldsite teachers are encouraged to participate in the workshops.



### Parent and Community Participation

Because family and community are central forces in the lives of the young, their participation in EXPLORING CHILDHOOD enriches the program. Parents of young children who visit the high school classroom and discuss a particular aspect of childrearing that they have experienced can add an element of reality into the program that will make it more meaningful to students. A series of seminars has been developed for the parents of high school students and young children so that they can become familiar with EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials and continue discussions at home of values and child-rearing ideas.

# Materials for the Program

Teaching techniques include journal writing, working in small groups, reading, observing, data collecting, analyzing, film viewing, role playing, brainstorming, discussing.

MODULE	GOALS	MATERIALS
<p>WORKING WITH CHILDREN</p> <p>Time: Six weeks at the start and then throughout the year</p>	<p>To build a sense of competence in working with children.</p> <p>To build the class into a mutual support group in which problems as well as successes can be discussed.</p> <p>To integrate students' experience and knowledge of children and recollections of their own childhood with their field work.</p>	<p>(S) Getting Involved, Doing Things (T) Working with Children (F) Helping Is, Storytime, Water Tricks, Michael's First Day, Teacher Lester Bit Me Being There (Fs) Being There (P) What Is a Child?, What Would You Do? (R) Helping Skills (S,T) What About Discipline?</p> <p>(S,T) No Two Alike: Helping Children with Special Needs (F) Sara Has Down's Syndrome (Fs) Children with Special Needs Go to School</p> <p>(W) Introduction to Exploring Childhood, The Role of the Adolescent</p> <p>(T,R) Brainstorming and Role Playing</p>
<p>SEEING DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>Time: Fifteen weeks (November-March)</p>	<p>To look at what children are like: How are they different from older people? How do they experience the world?</p> <p>To look at individual beliefs, abilities, interests, fears, and areas of growth, and to understand how they relate to levels of development.</p> <p>To integrate students' fieldwork with children, their sense of their own development, and course materials about development.</p>	<p>(S,T) Looking at Development (P) Directions in Development (F) Gabriel Is Two Days Old</p> <p>(S,T,W) Children's Art (P) Drawing Sort (F) Painting Time, Racing Cars, Clay Play</p> <p>(S,T,W) Child's Play (F) Half a Year Apart</p> <p>(S,T) Child's Eye View (F) From My Point of View, Little Blocks</p> <p>(S,T) How the World Works (S,T) Fears, Aggression, and Dependence</p> <p>(S) Making Connections (T,W) What Did You See? (F) All in the Game</p>

<p>FAMILY AND SOCIETY</p> <p>Time: Eleven weeks (March-June)</p> <p>To consider what is transmitted in the commonplace social interactions in a child's world.</p> <p>To ask, "What are my values and beliefs about a child? How do my actions relate to my values and beliefs?"</p> <p>To look at how a society affects the conditions in which a family rears a child.</p> <p>To integrate the students' own values for children with a realization and respect for the values, traditions, and practices of others.</p>	<p>(S) The Inquirer</p> <p>(S) Childhood Memories (eight autobiographies)</p> <p>(P) We Are a Family</p> <p>(F) Howie at Home, Rachel at Home, Craig at Home, Jeffrey at Home, Oscar at Home, Michelle at Home, Seiko at Home (R) Commentaries on Film (T,W) Family and Society, Part One</p> <p>(S) Beyond the Front Door (F) Rachel at School, Howie at School, Oscar at School, Seiko at School, Around the Way with Kareema, At the Doctor's (T,W) Family and Society, Part Two</p> <p>(S) Children in Society (Packet) Children's Tracks (F) Young Children on the Kibbutz, Girl of My Parents (R) Memories of Adolescence (T,W) Family and Society, Part Three</p> <p>(S,T) Under Stress: Keeping Children Safe (R) A Case Study of Family Stress (F) Broken Eggs</p>
<p>Note: F = Film Fs = Filmstrip P = Poster R = Record S = Student booklet T = Teacher's Guide W = Workshop Guide</p>	<p>OTHER MATERIALS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS</p> <p>Organizing the Program Fieldsite Teacher's Manual Seminars for Parents Evaluation Strategies</p>

# Working with Adolescents

## WHAT ADOLESCENTS CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIELDSITE

Having students in the fieldsite a few hours a week can be rewarding for both fieldsite teachers and young children. Teachers have a chance to learn more about how the children in their care develop. As one fieldsite teacher related:

*One of the things we shared at the teacher workshop is the way we look at young children, our nursery children, differently now. I watch their changes in a much more careful way, since I may want to point them out to the teenagers. I see how the children have changed more carefully than I did before the students were with them.*

Teachers also have a chance to learn more about adolescent development, to discover a range of ways in which adolescents can engage with and support young children, and to contribute to the learning experience of both age groups. Conferences with the course teacher and participation in teacher workshops provide opportunities for professional growth. With adolescents at the fieldsite, it may be possible for the young children to receive more individual attention. The children also get to know a group who are older and more experienced than they, but who are not quite adults. To the children, adolescents can be role models, helpers, friends, confidants, and playmates.

## GETTING STARTED

The first times students come to your fieldsite can set a precedent for all the others. To get your relationship with the students off to a good start, set aside some time in the beginning to orient students to your program and to get acquainted. Here are some important steps:

Make introductions:

- Find out the first and last names of your students.
- Decide what you will call them (aides, students, helpers, assistants, interns, etc.).
- Introduce them to the children.
- Introduce them to other teachers and staff at your fieldsite who will come in contact with them.

Give a tour:

- Show the students around your room--point out where supplies are located, explain what they can and can't use, tell them any rules you've set up with the children about supplies.
- Show the students where to hang their coats, where to put personal belongings (pocketbooks, wallets, etc.), which bathrooms to use, where they can eat, where to find entrances and exits.

Explain the daily routine:

- Explain the children's schedule of activities, and tell students how they might be of help at different times of the day (e.g., helping with coats upon arrival and departure, setting up juice and crackers, etc.).
- Explain what to do in the event of fire drills, inclement weather, if a child becomes ill, and in the event of other unusual circumstances.
- If any children at your fieldsite have special needs, explain to students what those needs are, and provide some general advice about working with those children. Be sure students know who the children are.

Take time to get acquainted:

- Spend some time talking with the students about your interests and about the kind of working relationship you would like to have.
- Encourage students to share their daily fieldsite experiences with you, and to keep you abreast of course work. Set up a time--perhaps fifteen to thirty minutes

a week--when you sit as a group and discuss experiences.

Encourage students to ask questions and share their interests. Getting to know the students will help you see ways to make their time at the fieldsite most rewarding for them and for the children. For example, some students may be musicians or photographers, or have a special interest in plants or animals. How can those interests be put to use with young children?

THROUGHOUT  
THE YEAR

Even after students become used to the fieldsite routine and comfortable with the children, it is important to keep meeting regularly as a group to share experiences, questions, and problems. Time spent talking with students individually --discussing what you do and why, finding out how they are feeling about their work and how you can help them--can also add a great deal to the students' fieldsite experience.

Try to reward students for good work. Often, fieldsite teachers don't realize how important it is to students to hear that they are relating well to the children or that they have made a real contribution to the fieldsite program, and so on. Teachers sometimes worry about how the students view them, and overlook the students' need for feedback.

ADDRESSING  
PARENTS'  
CONCERNS

Parents of young children at the fieldsite are very much interested in the impact EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students will have on their children. They want to know what preparation students will have for working with children, and what assistance they will get from the fieldsite teacher. Secondly, they wonder if high school students will have access to personal information about them and their children. If the fieldsite is a parent cooperative, parents are also concerned about their own working relationship with the students.

In deciding how to handle the sharing of confidential personal information with students, you may want to consult with the fieldsite parents. Early in the fall, you might set up a meeting with fieldsite parents, to discuss the role, training, and supervision of students at your fieldsite, and to find out if they have any concerns about the program. You might invite the course teacher to attend this meeting, to explain the EXPLORING CHILDHOOD program to the parents.

TEACHER AND  
STUDENT ROLES

Following are suggestions of the kinds of roles teachers and students might take at the fieldsite.

Role of the Fieldsite Teacher

- Discuss students' role with fieldsite parents
- Supervise students at the fieldsite (suggest activities, explain routine and daily program)
- Discuss day's work (problems, activities, goals) regularly with students
- Confer with students periodically about changes in the children and the relationship of the field experience to ideas studied in class
- Communicate with course teacher about students and program
- Attend initial high school classes to explain goals and philosophy of fieldsite
- Become familiar with EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials and build on them at the fieldsite
- Begin to learn strengths of high school students
- Attend teacher workshops, parent seminars, when possible

*Mrs. S. gave me a set of materials on Children's Art--it was fantastic--so for the first amount of time I had the girls with me, that's where I spent most of my time, showing them notes--"Look at this painting, what do you see? Watch that four-year-old paint, and watch that five-year-old paint, and see if you can tell how they react differently. This one is interested in making the brush push out, but that one's interested in painting a house."*

--Fieldsite Teacher

Role of the Student

- Learn to work with children in ways that feel comfortable and support their learning and growth; suggested ways of working are:

--*observation and evaluation*, which are tools for learning to understand individual children and for discovering ways to support their development

--*participation in activities*, which can be a way of discovering, through experience, how and when to enter into children's play, to provide materials, to talk or listen

--*planning and leading activities*, another kind of experience that can help to develop confidence and skill in initiating and carrying out ideas

- Work closely with the fieldsite teacher, exchanging information, questions, values, and ideas
- Attend teacher workshops, parent conferences, and parents' night at the fieldsite, when appropriate

HELPING  
STUDENTS  
AT THE  
FIELDSITE

You can help students to think about their work and to feel it is significant by talking with them informally and asking such questions as, How did it go today? Did the activity you organized work out? Was Bobby feeling better today? You can also help them become valued members of the fieldsite staff by providing opportunities to play a variety of roles.

Students will come to the fieldsite with varying degrees of confidence and ability for working with children. While some students may be bored if they are not allowed to lead activities, others may be intimidated if they feel forced into a leadership role before they are ready for it. Your task will be to assess students' interests and capabilities and help them grow toward assuming more responsibility.

In the following paper, Catherine Cobb discusses some of the reactions EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students have expressed about their fieldsite experiences. The paper is based on conversations and interviews Ms. Cobb conducted with EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students and fieldsite teachers. She describes how the teachers and students she spoke with viewed themselves and each other, and suggests that teacher-student interpretations of the same people or events may be surprisingly different. Finally, she stresses the importance of a two-way exchange of ideas, feelings, and values at the fieldsite.



## How Adolescents View Themselves

While fieldsite teachers often view teenagers as student aides or teacher assistants, adolescents tend to see themselves in the role of helper or friend. By "helper," students seem to mean a person who responds to children's needs immediately, understands their feelings, and has a lot of physical contact with them. When EXPLORING CHILDHOOD students are asked to recall their experiences with children, they often mention touching children, moving to their physical level by stooping or sitting down, and talking. One ninth-grade girl described getting to know a little girl this way:

*She was sitting down and I went over and I tickled her and she turned around and said, "Will you pick me up?" And I picked her up. And I was talking to her.... Then I put her down and she goes, "Will you help me make a castle?" I was helping her.... So then we got on the bus and she got on my lap.*

Whether students choose to work continually with "special friends" or to move equally among many children (two working styles students describe), students say they either answer children's questions or look for signals that children need help. They try to respond to children rather than direct them.

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\*Adapted from "How Adolescents See Their Role in a Field-site" by Catherine M. Cobb, which appears in *The Role of the Adolescent*, Teacher Seminar and Selected Readings.

One boy who chooses to work equally with many children describes his responsive role this way:

*I don't think I should pick out one child. I feel all the children in the class should be treated equal.... I go from one child to another.... When we walk into the class the children are working on something.... We have to find ourselves, to fit in with whatever they're doing.... Sometimes they have to work with paste and glue and tape and I'll help them with the pasting.*

Many students see the teacher as a person who keeps order, and who has less physical contact with the children than they do. Some students even view the teacher as someone who sits on the sidelines, while they are busy encouraging children's special modes of seeing and understanding by engaging in a free form of play called "fooling around." They see the teacher as having a highly structured relationship with the children.

At the same time, students may feel that the teacher is in a better position to influence the children. Their youth prevents them from having a significant effect on the children, some students say. They also maintain that the teacher's effectiveness stems from being an authority figure in the classroom.

Those students who feel that children "think they can get something over us because of our youth and inexperience" may envy the child's awe of the adult teacher.

*The big difference is that they sort of have more respect for the teachers, more fear.... They're not afraid, afraid. They listen to them a lot better than me.*

Another aspect of the teacher's role that students tend to admire is the older person's knowledge: the understanding, training, and experience that enable the teacher to effect change in children. While students are proud that children "come over and talk to us as people," they also acknowledge that "we don't have the same knowledge that an adult might have." One seventeen-year-old girl was highly skeptical about teenagers' ability to use wisely the knowledge they do have:

*I know lots of kids my age who take the little knowledge they have too seriously, and try to*

*apply it and...they do more harm than good.  
Whereas I think maybe adults might be a little  
bit more prudent with the knowledge they have.*

Students who are critical of the helper role often seem to be distinguishing between *rapport with* and *real understanding of* children. They question whether having close and warm relationships with children necessarily leads to understanding of children's abilities and needs.

Another way students express doubt about the significance of their role with children is that they seldom use the word "learning" in connection with their activities with children. They express little confidence that they can bring about growth or learning in children by being a friend or helper instead of assuming the more "impersonal" role of teacher.

SOURCE OF THE  
ADOLESCENT'S  
ROLE CONFLICT

The adolescent's tendency to feel both awe and rejection regarding the role of the teacher probably is less a response to a particular field teacher than an expression of general ambivalence toward adults. In part the adolescent's view is shaped by past experience, but it may also reflect the fact that adolescence is a time when young people are struggling to define themselves, to make clear separations in their minds between themselves and the important adults in their lives. The struggle for autonomy makes adolescents swing from a sense of omnipotence to one of powerlessness from one minute to the next. Out of the feeling of powerlessness, an adolescent may tend to identify with the child, to view the child as weaker than he or she really is, as needing "rescue" from "insensitive" adults. Criticizing the teacher as a distant wielder of power and authority may be indicative in part of the adolescent's longing to have more of that power over his or her own life.

THE TEACHER:  
WHAT ARE  
ADOLESCENTS  
LIKE?

Accustomed to working with very young children or with college or graduate student interns, some fieldsite teachers find that they don't know what to expect from high school students, how to interpret their needs, and how to communicate with them. One teacher overestimated what a student could do because she looked mature, and also underestimated the student's oversensitivity and need for support:

*I find it hard to remember that she's a high  
school student because she's a very mature-looking*

*girl.... She was very sensitive to criticism, I think far more so than student teachers would be who know what their role is going to be.... So it was difficult to make suggestions at the beginning.*

The teacher was surprised to discover that the student had so little confidence in her ability to catch and hold the attention of the children:

*I thought it would be valuable for her to have a range of experience--I had asked her to do a story with a small group of children, which she was very hesitant about and, in fact, didn't do eventually. She put it off and put it off, so I just let that go. Because I think if she's not happy doing something, then it's likely to be a catastrophe.*

Along with other teachers, she was sympathetic that perhaps the "hard part at that stage is that they're questioning.... They haven't worked out things for themselves, so it's difficult sometimes to deal with the children."

One school director, delighted that a tenth-grade boy was going to teach the children a dance from his family's culture, was surprised and rueful when the student simply felt too self-conscious to go through with it. According to the teacher, the student started to be a "teacher" and suddenly lost confidence:

*He said spontaneously that from his country they do a dance.... Now he became a teacher and he wasn't even aware.... Of course the kids wanted to know it.... He was so embarrassed, totally embarrassed, that he never performed the dance. And I kept saying, "I'll get you some records." He said he couldn't find the record and I knew that wasn't true.... He never got into it.*

Many teachers discovered slowly that their students' special ability to be close to and perceptive about children was accompanied by a lack of confidence in their ability to initiate activities as a "teacher" might.

When teachers don't have an opportunity to explore a student's feelings of uncertainty, they may get a mistaken idea that the student is feeling successful with children. One teacher was grateful to a tenth-grade boy who had been able to establish a special one-to-one relationship with a handicapped child. She said:

*This child was able to express himself to P---- which gave (us) another kind of insight as to where he really was...because he would say different things and P---- would relate these things.*

But P---- himself didn't even mention this child in a fairly long interview. His general view of how really useful he had been was that:

*I'm not any more patient than I was before. I know I learned a little about myself. I learned first of all that I'm not the whiz with kids that I thought I was. I thought I could handle the kids 'cause I can handle my little brothers and sisters. But sometimes they were just too much for me.*

The teacher assumed the student felt as positive about his work as she did. Because the student and teacher voiced these comments only in interviews, and never to each other, there was no opportunity for the teacher to learn more about the student, or for the student to "correct" somewhat his sense of failure.

Course and field teachers can establish a program supportive to the adolescents if they realize the questions and problems students are likely to experience, and work to create a schedule that integrates classroom ideas with fieldsite experiences.

Opening up lines of communication between field teachers and students helps students broaden their ideas about teachers or adults, and allows students and teachers to exchange ideas and values about working with children.

Good communication between field teachers and students may not be overly demanding if both parties understand what is needed. It may be useful to look at two events in a field-site.

*Case 1:* In this instance, a teacher anticipated that a student might misinterpret her actions, and took a moment to explain them to the student. The incident involved a child who had great difficulty separating from his mother at the beginning of each day:

*His mother...had to literally drag him in and he'd put his hands on the door and...he just wouldn't go in. But it was interesting to watch how the*

teacher would talk to him.... She talked to me a while afterward about it.... She said she had tried just treating him with love but she found that for him the best tactic was to be stern.... She started this new type of work with him just before I got there. So in about two or three weeks I could see how it was gradually easier and easier and easier to get in the classroom for him. And he would really open up after a while and enjoy the children.

The student might have viewed the teacher's sternness as indifference, but a thoughtful teacher avoided this misunderstanding by helping the student to understand why she handled the child as she did. Also, the student could observe the effect of the teacher's actions, by seeing the child integrated into the group of other children. By giving the student a context for her actions, the teacher made the student a colleague, or at least a sympathetic and informed observer.

Case 2: In this example, a student shared her values with the teacher. The student had felt the teacher was violating a child's need for autonomy, so she told the teacher how she felt. The teacher agreed and changed her way of working. The conflict arose over a crafts project:

*Just one thing bothers me very much about the arts and crafts part. We're doing paper cutting and stuff. In the beginning of the year...the teacher was cutting out green Christmas trees for all of them and cutting out shapes and [the children] were going to stick the shapes on Christmas trees. And that bugged the hell out of me.*

The student told the teacher that she thought the children should be able to create their own shapes. In making her plea, the student took the children's stage of development into consideration:

*...if the kids do not have the muscles in their hands to cut, all right [then] it's all right to cut for them, or let them tear. But [if the children can do it], let them do it themselves. Don't dare cut that tree out for them.*

The student ended by acknowledging that she was expressing her own needs and values, that she knew that what she was asking for the child was what she would want for herself. "It just really bothered me. Cause I'm sort of--into it."

Such communication is not easy to achieve, because it involves nourishing in the student a wide range of skills in observing and in integrating observation with knowledge about child behavior and development. It also demands that fieldsite teachers understand the needs and strengths of the students who work with them, and find "natural" ways and times in the busy, ongoing life of the fieldsite to share ideas and information.

EXPLORING CHILDHOOD materials are designed to help students become more skilled and knowledgeable in their work with children. Materials will be helpful *only* if both course and field teachers establish conditions that allow the kind of communication described above. This includes having the course teacher take time to orient field teachers to the goals of the program and to the needs of participating adolescents, as well as maintaining close contact with the field teacher throughout the year. For field teachers it means orienting student helpers to the particular goals and philosophy of the fieldsite and to the ways children are encouraged to learn there. It also means finding opportunities for contact with students during the course of their work.

Only when these conditions are created can the final component of good communication be realized: a developing trust between field teacher and adolescent. In this case, trust means suspending judgment about what the other is doing and can do until the two people can explore it together. It also means assuming--in spite of real differences in style, knowledge, experience, and values--that both students and teachers share a basic concern for the growth and happiness of the children committed to their care.

## Sample Classroom Materials

In the following pages are samples from the classroom materials, to give you a few insights into what the students' classroom experience will involve, particularly in connection with the fieldsite. We hope that this background will be helpful to you as you talk with the students about their work at the fieldsite and help build their understanding of development.

If your schedule permits, try to arrange times with the classroom teacher when you can visit the high school class. You may also want to see some of the films being used in the program--either in class with the students, during a teacher workshop, or during a meeting with the classroom teacher.

Some of the ways students will be learning that will affect what they do at the fieldsite include:

- observing children
- talking and listening to children
- keeping a journal
- making collections
- setting up situations
- trying out activities
- supporting children's activities
- trying to understand a child's point of view

The samples that follow provide examples of these ways of learning. They are taken from all three modules of *EXPLORING CHILDHOOD: Working with Children, Seeing Development, and Family and Society*. (For further information about classroom materials, refer back to the chart on pp. 5-6.)



“How do I know what I think until I see what I’ve written?”  
—W. H. Auden

## Keeping a Journal

Your journal is a place where you can talk freely to yourself. It is private, and what you choose to share with others is up to you.

Journal-writing gives you a record of both what is going on in the fieldsite and what you think about it. It helps you keep track of things that bother you, that interest you, or that you want to ask someone about. When you have made notes in your journal over several weeks or months, it can help you think about how a particular child is changing and how you are changing in your work with children.

A journal is a personal notebook for observations and reactions, ideas and questions. It is a place to write down incidents, thoughts, feelings, and questions arising from your experiences with Exploring Childhood.

Here is a sample entry from a student’s journal. This entry was written in two parts. The right-hand pages of the journal were used as a running record of events. The left-hand pages were saved for questions, ideas, possible activities to do with children, and personal feelings.

Look how long he stuck with this!  
I don't believe it!

He's experimenting. People say that's how little kids learn. How can they? It's so confusing. Mrs. J. often suggests learning kids to fend out for themselves. It's so slow. Why not tell them?

Wonder what his thoughts were? Look at what he said before — about engine being okay in tunnel. Why did he say that? Wonder what his feelings about dark places are? I used to be really hung up about that when I was small. He really seems to care that it works. Really wants to practice — why, unless there is no one else to see?

I thought he'd throw down engine, kick in tunnel. (what does that say I think of Peter? Are my feelings fair?). I'm amazed! Always am when I see kids being destructive. Makes me angry and sad. I feel like yelling at them and comforting them at same time. It's his thing and I guess he's got a right to ruin it. But doesn't that encourage him to destroy things? They do that so much here, but the teacher lets them. If I say something, will she think I'm criticizing?

April 7 - late morning, block corner

Peter is really into the blocks - building a tunnel. ~~Keep~~ really giving him trouble - can't figure out which is right-sized block. Keeps bringing ones that are short. Seems to enjoy fending out. Talks to self - "long & long, long wall, great big wall." Finally has right-size block. Working really fast and happy now. "Big, big tunnel. My engine's going in. It's dark and long and big. But the engine is okay."

Runs to cubby for fire engine, rushes back to tunnel, piling on stomach right in front of opening. Seems to be thinking out of seeds, engine shooting through but won't let go for several times. Lets go - engine goes off in wrong direction. Does on trying. Doesn't quit, not discouraged. At last engine shoots through. Tries again. Engine smashes tunnel, crashing down the whole thing. Peter laughs, picks up engine and uses it to break down rest of the tunnel.

# Fieldwork Previews

The following incidents took place in centers for young children. When you have read the incidents, try to suggest some explanations for why things happened as they did. In preparing your explanations, take into consideration what each person in the incident might be feeling. Similar situations may come up at your fieldsite, so you might think about what you would do at these times.

## Poetry-Writing Project

*People involved:*

*Lois, a student*

*Ms. Johnson, the teacher*

*Several second grade children*



Lois was working in a second-grade class. After class on Tuesday she told Ms. Johnson that she wanted to do a project on writing poems with a small group of children.

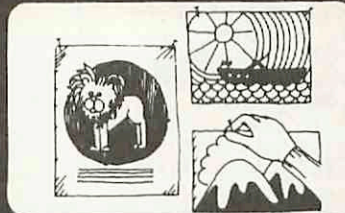


Ms. Johnson said, "That's a good idea, Lois. I can think of four or five children who would be interested."

"Here's a book with some ideas on teaching poetry—it's been very useful in the past."



Lois read the book, and borrowed several more from the library. She talked about poetry with her English teacher, and arranged to visit another class where the children were writing stories.



The next class day, Lois brought in some colorful magazine pictures. She pinned them up on the bulletin board next to a large table.

Ms. Johnson sent a group of children to Lois. For a while Lois and the children talked about what a poem is. Then Lois said, "Let's write some poems about these pictures."



"Big lions in the circus have big mouths and don't scare me at all," Sue said. "I'm going to write that."

"I want mine to rhyme," James said.

Roberto went over to look more closely at the pictures.

Soon they were all busy writing.



Ms. Johnson came over to watch. She seemed puzzled and called Lois aside.

"I thought you were going to use the ideas in the book I gave you," she said.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK?

1. What do you think of Lois' project?
2. What do you think Ms. Johnson meant when she said, "I thought you were going to use the ideas in the book I gave you?"
3. What would you do at the end of the story if you were Lois?

### GIVING HELP

The first taped episode is about a student helper who has an idea of how to improve the children's juice period. She approaches the teacher in a critical way and at the wrong time.

In the second episode, another student approaches the teacher with enthusiasm, choosing a good time for the teacher, but the teacher does not think the suggested change is an improvement.

- After hearing the tape discuss what improvements in offering help you can suggest for each of these students.

### ASKING FOR HELP

This episode is one in which a student has been assigned to work with a withdrawn little boy. The student is ending her second week working with this child and cannot see any improvement. She has tried everything she can think of. The child is docile enough, but still just stands or sits apart when left alone. The student, who was not sure whether to ask for help or not, thought the child needed individual attention, but it hasn't helped, apparently. So when the teacher asks her how things are going, she says, "Just fine."

- What do you think was keeping this student from asking for help?

### GETTING HELP

This episode is one in which the teacher tries to give help to a student who hasn't asked for it. The student has been helping children make scrapbooks. The teacher is concerned because the student has been doing the pasting for the children instead of letting the children do it themselves.

- How should a student respond when the teacher offers help in a situation like this?

### INTERVIEWS

In order to help clarify what the members of the Exploring Childhood team expect of each other, interview members of the class, the course teacher, or the fieldsite teacher. Use the following questions for the interviews.

When we work together . . .

- What are some things that might come up as problems if we don't have a clear understanding about them to begin with?
- What kind of help can we give each other?
- When is the best time to give help?

The data from these interviews is to be brought to the next session, when you will be discussing mutual understandings and expectations.

### CONTRACT-BUILDING

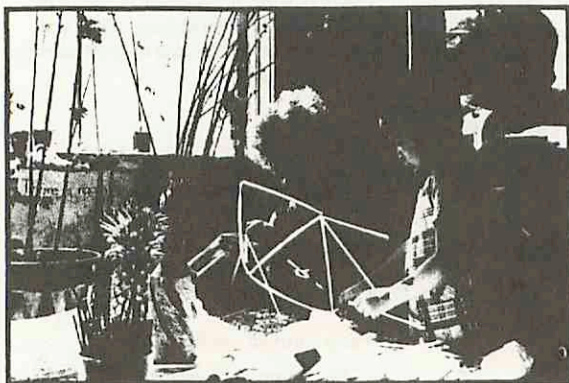
The working relationships in the Exploring Childhood course can be described as a "four-way contract."

- The contract among students
- The contract between students and course teacher
- The contract between students and fieldsite teacher
- The contract between students and the children they help

Telling stories, singing, drawing, doing experiments, and cooking can be great fun for children. Such activities allow them to express their feelings and ideas, try new roles, develop physical coordination, and discover new and exciting uses for a variety of materials. While exploring and testing his or her own imagination and skill, a child can discover new feelings and ways of doing things. For you, activities offer a chance to be inventive, to gain understanding of what affects young children, and to find out what matters to them most. This two-way learning is one of the most exciting parts of being with young children.

Creating activities that are fun and engaging for children seems to happen best when the following things are true:

- You are willing to follow the children. Once you present an activity, stand back a moment. What interests them? Where do they want to go with it? What do they want to try?
- You have put together a good mixture of preparation and experiment. It is important to provide the right materials, enough materials, clear directions, and ideas and questions to get children started. (The fieldsite teacher may be able to help you with the preparations.) But it is just as important to provide "room" for experiment and discovery—space, time, and freedom to explore. You can draw out a child's interest by saying things like, "Let's build from boxes. What will you make?" Or, "Could you make new colors by putting colors together?" There are many things that children can and want to learn, but it takes "messing around."
- You contribute actively to the project. For example, what could you do with plain and ordinary materials? Have you ever thought about the hundreds of things that could be made from a cardboard box? If a child becomes fascinated with a spider found in a corner of the preschool, could you follow up on this interest? What about telling stories about spiders, drawing pictures of spiders, counting the spider's legs and the legs of other insects, or taking yarn outdoors and weaving a huge web?



The activities suggested here are just starting points—samples of all the things you might do. They are not meant to be followed precisely. You may want to amend them as you try them out and develop your own ideas. What new activities do these suggest to you? What new twists can you or the children introduce? How can you vary or extend an activity? Add your thoughts, notes, and observations to this book, so you can use them during the year.

<b>Art Ideas.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Music and Movement... 10</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Science Projects.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Foods.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Stories and Plays.....</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Games.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Other Resources .....</b>	<b>40</b>

# Activities

## Observation Exercises

There are many observations that students can make in regard to discipline. Some might appropriately be assigned as a problem-solving approach for students who bring up problems occurring at the fieldsite.

1. One assignment might be to collect observations of situations outside of school involving parents or others that the student would classify as discipline situations. Students should be reminded that such situations need not be only those in which a child is being corrected or controlled, but may be incidents where examples of acceptable behavior are being provided the child, before any test of the principle has occurred.

Such observations might be collected as journal entries, but should also be entered on file cards: one colored card describing the situation and a different colored card describing the solution. Notations should include who was involved (age), what each seemed to be feeling, what started the situation and, on the "solution" card, what responses were made and what the outcome was.

After observations have been collected, the class should allot time for a discussion of this exercise:

- did everyone agree about what kind of situation represents a discipline problem? (Compare this exercise to "A Hunt for Play" in *Child's Play*, p. 17.)
- where did you go to look for these discipline situations--the playground, the dimestore, the grocery store? Why did you choose these places? Is there something about the kind of atmosphere they provide for children that leads to trouble?
- when did you look for trouble? For example, is bedtime a time when disciplining occurs? Why?

2. Students should take time to observe themselves at the fieldsite, asking questions like, "What makes me mad?" or "What things come up at the fieldsite that I feel need some disciplinary action?"

One teacher asks students to keep lists in their journals or on cards, each page (or card) with headings such as:

- Things that bother me.
- Things that baffle me.
- Things that please me.
- Problems this week.
- Things that bother children.
- Things that bother (name of a particular child).

3. Another exercise is to ask the students to list from memory the children who were at their fieldsite on a particular day. After they have finished, ask such questions as:

Whom did you forget?  
Whom did you name first?  
Whom did you name last?

When they have finished, discuss why particular children come to mind instantly. Are they "problem" children? Are they "characters"? And why are other children listed last or forgotten? Should they be observed carefully, to see if their anonymity is a symptom of how they get along at school? You might plan a conference with each of your students, using their responses to these questions as a starting point for a discussion of their ideas about discipline.

4. Each student might plan a conference with the fieldsite teacher to discuss observing and other ways of learning about discipline. The agenda for this meeting should include:
- Conveying the approach to discipline and the suggestions in the student booklet to the fieldsite teachers for their reactions.
  - Asking the fieldsite teacher to relate some situations which presented discipline problems to him or her and how they were solved.
  - Asking the fieldsite teacher how the student is handling discipline problems to date, and for suggestions of ways to be effective at discipline situations in the classroom.

- Telling the fieldsite teacher what the observing assignments will be for this section, and asking for help in choosing a child to observe (see 5, below), a problem to observe (see 6, below); and a topic for exploring the effects of various discipline techniques (see 6, below).

5. Each student should plan to observe one child over a period of time; making notes about that child's problems, the adults' responses, and how the child seems to be doing. Selecting a child to study is part of the learning process; students often to choose a child who is very 'cute' or very verbal or a child who reminds the student of him or herself as a child. The fieldsite teacher will help the student to select a child who has a problem that might show progress over the next week or two.

Students might also return to the lists they made for activities 2 and 3, and look for a name which appears frequently. That child might well be the subject of a set of planned observations.

6. Students may observe one kind of problem over time, for instance problems in situations involving sharing, to see which children are involved, what causes problems to arise, and which adult responses seem to be most effective.

Imaginary Companions

Imagine that a child with special needs is going to spend a typical morning at your fieldsite. What preparations will need to be made, if any? The following exercise is designed to help you think about such a situation.

Divide into small groups (four to six students) according to fieldsite placement. (If there are only one or two fieldsite placements, you may want to subdivide into smaller working groups.)

As a group, write out a description of a particular "special need" on a slip of paper. (You might refer to the Glossary of Medical Terms, page 86, for an alphabetical listing of "special" conditions and their definitions.) After pooling the descriptions, one student from each group should draw from the pile.

In your group, work out a "portrait" of the child with special needs you have chosen. Next, make a careful outline of a typical day's routines at your fieldsite. Where do the children go, what do they do, and with whom? Now try to imagine your "special child" participating in all of these routines, without your intervention or help.

What things are the other children expected to do for themselves that he or she cannot do alone?

What places/things in the classroom might be unsafe or unmanageable?

What activities might he or she find overwhelming or scary at first?

What activities/places/routines might be the most fun for the child?

In what kinds of activities will the child be able to participate easily as a member of the group? When will he or she feel most comfortable with other children? When will alternative activities be advisable?

Do you predict that this child will begin by spending most of his/her time alone? in the company of a teacher? with one other child? with a group? On what do you base your prediction?

Finally, consider how staffing, equipment, activities, and routines might need to be modified to provide for the needs of your child.



# Collecting

When growth takes place in a child it shows up in everything that he or she does. Tony has just learned how to do and undo buttons after several months of trying. He talks to his friend Chris about the red buttons down the front of Chris' sweater, and offers to button them up for his friend. He shows another friend that he can do even the tiny buttons on the doll clothes. Much of his play in the housekeeping corner centers on putting on shirts, buttoning them, unbuttoning them, and taking them off. When he takes a turn at the easel, he covers his paper with big spots of paint which he calls buttons.

If you are just listening to the children at your fieldsite, it is sometimes hard to remember changes that take place from day to day or week to week. But you can keep track of children's conversations, the stories they tell, what they build with blocks, what they paint, or what questions they ask. By doing this, you can "map out" changes in behavior and begin to see development as it takes shape.

One way of "keeping track" is to make collections. Your collection should be made over a period of at least several weeks, and can be put together in any number of ways. For instance, if you choose to make a collection of a child's questions, you could write down each question when you hear it. If you choose to collect drawings, that would be easy, as long as the child was willing to lend you his drawings and paintings – but be sure you return them when you are finished with your collection. If block structures interest you, take a camera to the fieldsite and photograph the structures or make sketches of them. A tape recorder could help you collect stories children tell or things they say. Collections can help you look at growth by:

- keeping track of what happens with one child over several weeks or months;
- comparing two or three children of the same age over a period of time to note differences and similarities in how they learn something new;
- comparing what children of different ages do.

## NOTES ON MAKING A COLLECTION

1. Decide what it is you want to watch.

It might be children's changing ideas about people's roles as shown in their stories.

It might be children's ability to make their ideas understood to other children in the games they play, or their ability (or lack of it) to play a game by the rules.

2. Decide whether to look at one child, two or three children, or children of different ages.
3. Decide how you want to collect.

You might choose to keep drawings, tape stories, write observations of play. (Be sure to label what you collect with name of child, age, and date.)

4. Collect. (This phase may cover a few weeks or several months. The longer you are able to collect, the more evidence of development you will see.)
5. Review your collection.

Arrange it from a child's earliest story to his latest, from the drawings of younger children to those of older ones.

6. Are there any changes? What are they?

# Setting Up a Situation

“My mommy is my sister, too, because she is a girl like me.”

“No, he’s not my father, he’s my daddy.”

“When I get bigger, I will be my big brother.”

How do children come to understand the relationships between people? How do they see their mothers and fathers and themselves? Often you overhear the things children say and you realize that their understanding of people and situations is very different from your own. By the time they reach your age, they will understand things pretty much the way you do, but how do they get from one point to the other?

You have already learned how to gather information by observing. Up to now, you have observed what children did in response to the situations they find all around them at the fieldsite. But you could also *set up a situation* so that children share certain understandings with you, show you what they can do, or let you know how they think. First, of course, you will need a specific question – one that can be answered by seeing how the children respond to your situation. Below are some questions that might occur to you after working in the fieldsite. With them are some ideas about situations you might set up to help answer your question.

*What do children feel or know about families?*

You could:

- Ask children to tell you a story about a family. Tape-record what they say. Play their stories back at a time when you can listen to them carefully. What ideas do the children seem to have about each member of the family?
- Compare the stories told by two or three children of the same age or the stories told by children of different ages. If you decide to study children of different ages, ask yourself, What changes are there in the child’s ideas about families as he or she grows older?
- Ask a child to draw a picture of a family all together, then collect the drawings. What does a child appear to do in a family? What is the child’s relation to the parents? to brothers and sisters?

*What are children of different ages physically able to do?*

You could:

- Take children of different ages onto the playground. Ask them to play with different kinds of equipment and make notes on what each does. Compare the activities of children of different ages.
- Or, set up an obstacle course outdoors. (Confer with the fieldsite teacher about the right kind of “obstacles.”) Ask children of different ages to try going through the course. Make a game of it. Take notes on how children of different ages navigate the course.

## Planning Your Situation

- Choose a question that interests you.
- Plan a situation that would help you answer the question.
- Carry out your plan at the fieldsite.
- Make notes on the children’s responses.
- Think over what you’ve seen.

## The Eyedropper Experiment

Learning to draw is one example of a child's acquiring a new skill. In a young child, this learning takes place over a period of months and years.

What are the steps in acquiring a new skill?

Take an eyedropper, some blotting paper, and a cup of water with food coloring added. Fill the eyedropper and try to draw some pictures by squirting water onto the blotting paper. Afterward, get together with other students and discuss:

What did it feel like to draw with new, unfamiliar materials?

How did you "get to know" the materials?

What difficulties and frustrations did you have? How did you deal with them?

What experiments did you try? How did they turn out?

Did your experiments with one drawing teach you anything that you used in your next drawing?

When you finished, did you feel you had learned to do what you wanted to do with the materials?

Acquiring the skill of making pictures with an eyedropper and blotting paper may give you some idea of what a child goes through when learning to use a crayon, a brush, or any other new material. For the child, of course, the skill takes months and years to develop.

One way to think about what anyone, child or adult, goes through when trying to learn a new skill is to see it taking place in four steps:

getting to know the materials, finding out what they can and cannot do;

trying to create something with the materials, gaining control, learning from accidents;

recombining, putting the results of different experiments together, creating something new or closer to what you intended;

gaining more control, learning to predict the final result, knowing how to get this result, being able to use a variety of techniques or strategies.

At your fieldsite, notice how children experiment with materials—paint, crayons, blocks, water, even toys with wheels—and invent new ways to use them. In particular, watch how very young children (around two or three years old) get to know materials and grow better at using them.



## Listening to Children

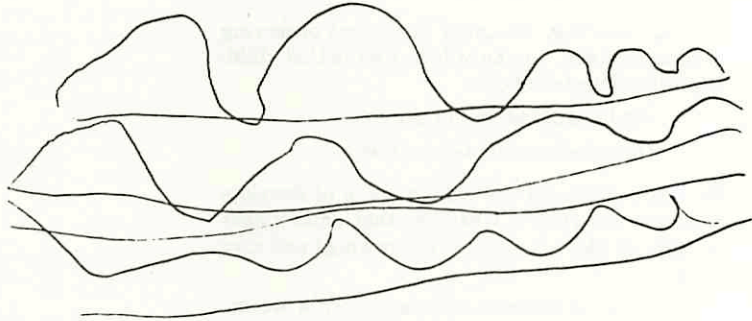
If a child wants to talk about his or her drawing, be encouraging. Talk about what the child has done, not what you would like to see. Try to mention things that may matter to the child—what he or she is drawing, how he or she is using materials. If what you say is a response to what you see, your comments can help the child see what he or she can do, and what possibilities drawing offers.

Try not to say things like, "A person doesn't have blue hair." Drawings are like play. They are not snapshots; they don't have to be realistic. While drawing a blue-haired lady, a child may be trying to use a crayon in a new way, discovering how to make hair, or finding ways to turn a figure into a "lady." He or she may not notice or care that the lines are blue.

Avoid asking questions like, "Did you feel happy when you made that?" "Did you plan to do that?" Such questions may just lead the child to say things to please you.

What would you say to the children who made these drawings?

If the child says, "Do you like this?" you might say, "Yes, I like the way you've made both curvy and straight lines." What else could you say?



If the child says, "This is my car," you might say, "Those wheels are great. Can you go fast in it?"



## A Longer Look at Children's Art

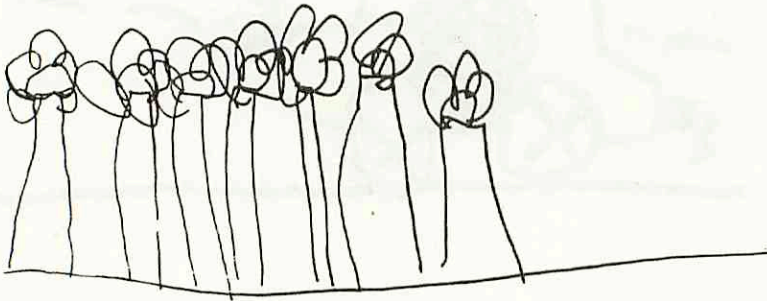
Through reading, watching films, and observing at your fieldsite, you have found ways that children's drawings tell about:

- the lives of individual children,
- the experience of development.

Both the child and the child's stage of development are reflected in whatever that child makes or does: in play, in stories, in drawings and clay work.

At your fieldsite, over a period of weeks, look at the stories, finger paintings, and clay pieces of a single child. What can you learn about "who that child is"? Consider temperament, experience, ability to handle materials, and stage of development.

Collect the stories, finger paintings, and clay pieces of children of different ages. What can you learn about the process of development?





### FINDING OUT FOR YOURSELF

Children do begin to consider people's reasons for doing things, but around what age? To explore this question, you might ask several children (of various ages) this set of questions made up by the Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget:

Who is naughtier: a little girl who broke ten cups when she was helping her mother or a little girl who broke one cup when she was sneaking some jam from a cupboard?

Should each be punished? How much? Why?

By asking children questions like these or telling them a story like the one about Bernice's boat, you can collect examples of their ways of thinking about fairness. Collect six to eight examples on 4" by 6" index cards. You might fill out your cards like this:

<b>Child</b>
<b>Age</b>
<b>Response</b>
<b>Did he/she seem to consider someone else's motives?</b> (give evidence)
<b>Did he/she seem to consider someone else's needs or wishes?</b> (give evidence)
<b>Did he/she seem to consider someone else's feelings?</b> (give evidence)

Share your collection of responses with the class. What differences do you find at various ages? Does what the class has collected seem to bear out the "path" which researchers have described? If not, what do you think accounts for the difference?

*Try It Yourself*

You might want to try one of these tasks with children you know or you might want to make up activities of your own. Here are instructions you could use to play the game *Birthday Present Store*. Report back to your class what happened when the children played the game.

This activity asks children to consider the preferences of other people. You will need to take to your fieldsite a doll, a toy truck, a necktie, a piece of jewelry like a bracelet or earrings, and an adult book.

Place these items on a table and sit down with a child. Say, "Let's pretend that this is a little store and it's your mother's birthday. Which gift would you choose for your mother?"

The child can pretend to buy the item; you could "charge" a penny for each item. Then have the child put the item back on the table and say, "Now let's pretend that it's your father's birthday; what would you choose for him?"

You could repeat the game for each of the following: friend, teacher, yourself, and the child himself (ask what he or she would prefer). After each choice the child makes, ask the child why the recipient would like that gift.

As storekeeper you can record each "purchase" and the reasons the child gave for choosing it on a chart like the one below. The filled-out chart will help you remember for class discussion exactly what the results of the game were.

*Questions for Discussion*

Did any children at your fieldsite choose toys for adults?

When you asked the children the reasons for their choices, which children seemed to be considering the preferences of other people?

Did age seem to make any difference in children's ability to choose what the person would prefer?

What did they choose to give you? Did their choice and their reason (if they gave one) show understanding of you?

The researchers who first did this experiment with children found that children's age made a difference in their choices. In general, the three-year-olds and some four-year-olds were so tied to their own point of view that they chose a toy truck or a

**Birthday Present Game**

Child

Age: 3 Sex: F

Choice for What Why

Choice for	What	Why
Mother	doll	because
Father	doll	(said nothing)
Friend	doll	so we can play
Teacher	book	cause we have lots of books in school
Me	doll	cause you're nice
Yourself	doll	cause I like it

---

# Your View and the Child's

Do you sometimes wonder what a child at your fieldsite thinks of you? Using your journal, consider in the following way what some of those thoughts might be.

Think of a specific child and write a brief description of how you think that child sees you.

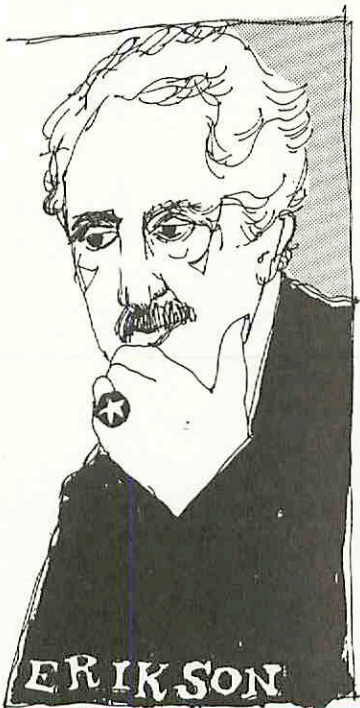
- What does he or she think of you? feel about you? expect from you?
- How does he or she treat you or respond to you? What do you think that behavior means about the child's opinion about you?

A great deal of what you do in situations involving other people, like at the fieldsite, is probably guided by your guesses about other people's point of view, and particularly their view of you.

Erik Erikson describes adolescence as a period when young people are "primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others compared with what they feel they are." He feels that teenagers during these years are trying to fit their own view of themselves with how they think others view them.

It has been said that the "special egocentrism" of teenagers is that they constantly assume that others are thinking about them and judging them.

- Do you agree?
- Do teenagers pay too much attention to their ideas of the views of other people?





## A Play File

Look at the data poster category "Relating to Other Children" and you will find the play of young children described. The poster has examples of the earliest infant and toddler play as well as the play of older children.

In the previous activity, you discussed how preschoolers might play. During your next week of visits to the field-site, try out your ideas. Collect examples of the play of young children and put down your information on 4x6 index cards, using the list at right. Collect six to eight such examples.

When all class members have their observation cards ready, put them all together. One person should then order the cards according to age. Divide into small groups, with each group looking at all the cards for a particular age — all the three-year-old cards, for example. Then, as a group, write a description of the kind of play that seems to go on at this age. This may be hard because not all children of the same age have the same skills or interests. But look for the ways in which most of the children seem to play. Your description should suggest what interests children of this age and what is possible in their play.

**Child**

**Age**

**Sex**

**Materials Used**

**What he/she did**

**What he/she seemed to be feeling**

**What he/she seemed to be getting from this play**

**What adults did**

# Supporting Children's Play

Before you try to extend or enrich a child's play, think about some questions:

What is the child's own play like?

What materials does the child enjoy playing with?

What does he or she do well? What gives him or her a hard time?

At the same time, what you do depends on what role you are playing and what you want the children to gain through this activity.

## What role will you take?

A fellow player?

A supplier of materials?

A resource for information?

An instructor?

A combination of these?

## What do you want children to gain?

A specific skill?

An opportunity to work together?

A chance to answer some of their own questions and curiosities?

A good time?

Any others?

A combination of these?

The plan you make will include ideas about the materials to be used, the place you will use, the mood you want. One way of looking at all these considerations is through a chart like this:

# Joining Children's Play

Not all support of children's play needs to be a planned activity. The information on the chart is for thinking through activities, but it could help even your casual interactions with children in the fieldsite. Here are two ordinary situations that could happen any morning at the fieldsite. Using the ideas presented in the chart, how might you support these children's play:

I. Four small boys — Michael, Peter, John, and Alex — come outdoors to play and rush over to a large sandpile. When they reach the pile, these four-year-olds talk excitedly about the roads they are going to make:

*Alex:* Mine is going to go to Boston. It's great big.

*Peter:* Mine's going to go round and round, down a hill to the market.

*John:* This road has trucks on it that have horns. They go real fast.

*Peter:* Yeah, the horns are loud, more than car horns.

*Michael:* Alex, put your road here with me . . .

Michael and Alex connect their roads and call their longer road a "freeway." Each boy finds something — a block, a sand toy, a skate, a small spool — that they pretend are cars and trucks. As they play they make traffic noises of starting up, driving, and stopping suddenly.

II. Just on the other side of the sand pile, Tracy and Chris, two two-year-olds, play side by side. Each plays alone. They notice each other only when they both reach for the same red shovel. Tracy scoops up sand with a bucket and pours it into several small cups. Chris makes wiggly lines in the wet sand with a stick. Then as he pushes the stick in and out of the damp sand he sings to himself, "In, ouch, in, ouch, . . ." Tracy remarks, "It goes," and dumps the bucket of sand out from high in the air.



Josef Bohmer

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## Talking with Children at Your Fieldsite

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The best way to take a look at what children at your fieldsite think is to ask them questions about what they are thinking, talking about, or doing. If children are at the water table talking about the sizes of containers, you might ask them to arrange their containers in a row from smallest to biggest. This ordering will be especially interesting if there are tall/thin and short/wide containers at the water table.

If on an outdoor walk a child remarks, "Rain comes from a faucet in the floor of the sky," you might encourage the child to say more about the way he or she understands these things. For instance, you might ask, "Who turns the faucet on and off?" "Does one faucet make rain for the whole world?" "Does snow come from a faucet, too?" Or, if a child asks, "Why are the leaves falling?" you might turn the question back to him or her and say, "What do you think?"

Tuning in to what children say, and talking in terms of their interests and ideas will encourage children to talk and make them feel you care about what they think.

## Patterns in Growth

Now that you have been working with children for several months . . .

What changes have you noticed in any of the children?

What changes have you noticed in yourself?

Do you think the way change comes about is at all similar for you and for the children? Is it different?

### One Child's Growth

At your fieldsite, is there one particular child who you feel has changed a great deal since you first arrived? There are many kinds of change you may have noticed:

- body control and movement
- ability to pay attention and follow directions
- ways of playing with other children
- sensitivity to other people's feelings
- emotional control

In your journal describe some of these changes in detail, using words, drawings, or photographs. What do you think made changes take place?

Afterward, share your observations with your classmates.

Did any of you observe the same changes in different children?

Did any of you observe different changes in the same child?

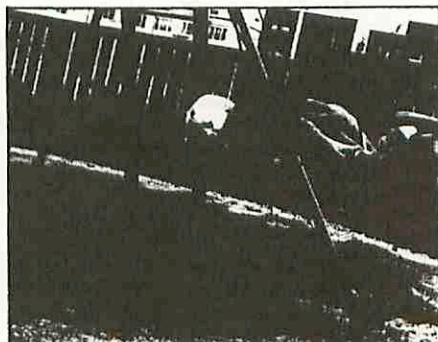
Does the conversation give you any more ideas about why the child you described has changed?

Do you think the child you described could have changed in the same way a year earlier? several years later?

*Earlier in the year  
I noticed that Lee...*

*But lately I've  
noticed that Lee...*

*There are a lot of things that I think  
helped Lee to grow. First...*



Hsieh-Ti Falcone

# The Inquirer

Late Experimental Edition



Eve Arnold

## Students Finding Out How Society Deals with Children

During the next weeks, students from the Exploring Childhood Program will be interviewing people in their community, contacting agencies, collecting sample records and documents, finding out about children's books, TV programs, health care, and legal status. This flurry of activity is all part of an effort to become informed about the ways Americans provide for, influence, and respond to children.

As preparation for the projects, which will be done individually or in small teams, students will spend time selecting topics of interest and learning guidelines for information-gathering. In an effort to help them plan their projects, this edition of the *Inquirer* is featuring the following articles:

## Who Makes the Decisions about a Baby's First Experiences?



Ken Heyman



Charles Pratt



Sharon Robertson

## Society Influences Behavior

People and institutions communicate values, beliefs, and expectations to children. They set examples, express approval and disapproval, prevent or encourage certain kinds of behavior, give instructions, and offer choices. By the time children are three or four years old, they have already felt the effects of many such influences, and have begun to reflect some of the values, attitudes, and beliefs of the society in which they live.

Try the following activity. Bring a collection of cereal boxes to class to examine (or survey the shelves of a nearby store). How much influence do the producers of breakfast foods have on the eating (and thinking) habits of young children? What messages do cereal boxes convey about how our society values food? basketball stars? possessions? children's preferences? Answers to questions like these can be helpful in understanding the scope and character of a child's world.

### Guidelines For Project Making

Seven guidelines to help students carry out their projects focus on these questions:

- How do you decide what questions to ask? ..... 2
- What methods can you use to find out? ..... 3
- How do you plan for it? ..... 4
- What do you do when problems arise? .5
- How do you organize the information you've collected? ..... 5
- What's the next step? ..... 6.7

### Some Possible Project Topics

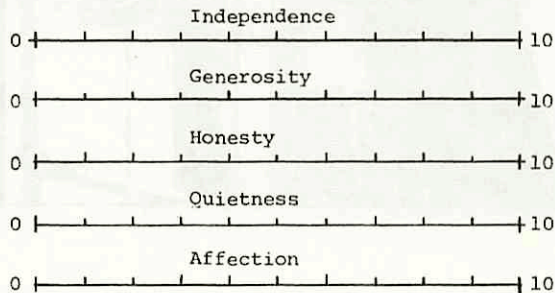
Four general areas of inquiry are described, along with specific topics and methods.

- Play and Entertainment ..... 8
  - The Physical Environment ..... 10
  - Culture and Tradition ..... 11
  - Community Resources ..... 12
- These are suggestions only, and students are urged to explore other topics of concern to them.

## Value Lines

Purpose: To help students consider values in the family films.

After students have explored some of their own values for children and themselves, those exercises can be adapted to help them discuss values expressed in the family films. For instance, you might select five or six characteristics that interest students and have them make a continuum line for each one. For example:



After viewing a family film, ask students to mark the point on the continuum which they feel represents how strongly the parent or parents in the film valued or encouraged each trait. Ask them to give evidence from the film to support their decision: words, actions, even furnishings and use of time can be used as evidence.

### EXPANDING ACTIVITIES

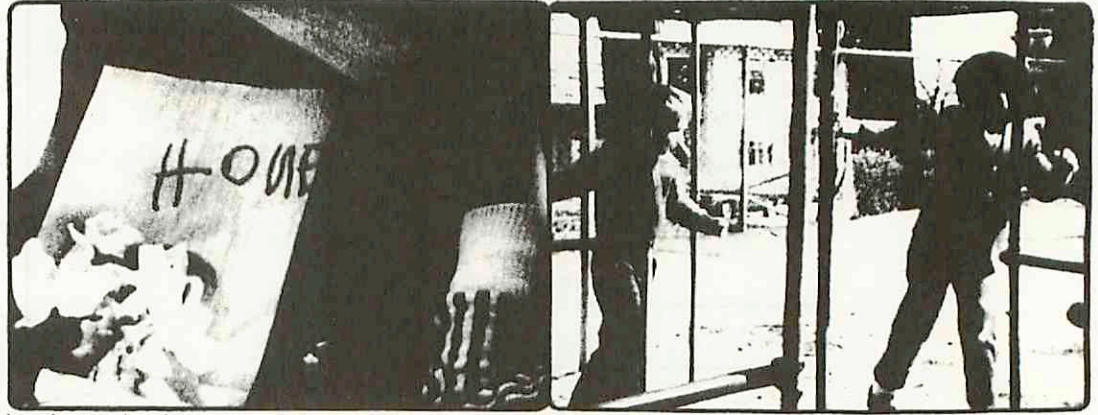
#### 1. Fieldsite Lines

Students could look at their fieldsites in the same way, by picking a set of traits and marking continuum lines for them. Again, stress that they look for actual evidence (words, tone of voice, actions, timing, equipment, and furnishings, use of space) to support their sense of what is valued or not valued. If possible, include the fieldsite teacher in this activity.

#### 2. My Lines

In their journals, students may be interested in making several such value lines and marking each according to what they feel their own behavior shows about their values. Students could write a few sentences about what evidence in their own actions that day, or lately, relates to each marking.

20 Children at School



howie at school

# Children at School

School is a special place for children, quite different from other situations that they have encountered. At home, at the doctor's, or with people they meet, children are being socialized as individuals. At school, children are being socialized as part of a group.

## glimpses through film

Presented in two short films, "Oscar at School" and "Howie at School," are actions and activities that are typical of the children's interactions at their preschools. These are real glimpses of the children, shown in the sequence in which they occurred one day. While viewing these films, look at the incidents as a series of socializing experiences that the children go through. Look at the boys' actions and interac-

tions to see how they are affected by the people around them, and how they, in turn, affect others.

## questions for discussion

- What is expected of each child at school? What does each expect of others?
- What message does each get from his peers? from his teacher?
- How does each respond to the various messages? What self-image do any of these incidents seem to encourage?
- What values and behaviors does the school foster? How?

## a longer look

The film "Rachel at School" allows you to follow a child's interpersonal relationships during a morning at her preschool. By recalling "Rachel at Home," you can consider how this child's experience at home may or may not influence her interactions at school.