Exploring Childhood Revision Planning Project
Final Report

to

**Smith Richardson Foundation, Inc.
grant # 1185-94-03**

June 27, 1995

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An Informal Study of the Feasibility of Adapting and Implementing the
Exploring Childhood Program in Middle School
and Elements of a Strategy Based on Findings

Brief Progress Update

In June 1994 your foundation gave us a grant to determine the
feasibility of implementing the Exploring Childhood program of the
seventies for schools today and to explore the parameters for adapting
it. This research was essentially completed and reported to you in the
mid-year progress report, dated December 29, 1994. That report (with
some minor revisions on the earlier version) is reproduced on the
following pages.

In brief, we found the climate inauspicious for launching such a
program. Although schools were genuinely interested in the active
pedagogy of Exploring Childhood and the opportunity it offers for
service-learning tied to an academic program, they were too were
overwhelmed by back-to-basics reform agendas to find room for the
program. The questions we had intended to focus on, i.e. ones relating
to how to adapt the program, gave way to questions of how to find room
for the program.

A few more avenues remained to be explored during the second six
months of the grant period. One was to see if we could identify a
state with a political climate that would support and nurture a
program like Exploring Childhood in the schools. We would then look to
that state to be a laboratory for the nation in regard to the
question: Given political support, can a year-long academic and
service-learning course in human development take root in the regular
curriculum? Ultimately we identified Colorado as a state that has a
positive political climate on child welfare and family issues and is
diverse enough for pilot testing. At this time we are making the first
inquiries into Colorado's interest in the program and the responses
are promising.

Another encouraging development is that a small foundation has come to
us, interested in promoting education for parenthood and willing to
work with us in seeking funds to launch the program.

Your grant was invaluable in helping us understand the political
climate and the crowded agendas facing schools. It will help us design
a viable program when the time is ripe.

Background on Exploring Childhood and This Study

In 1972, the U.S. Office of Child Development, the National Institute for Mental Health and the office of Education launched "Education for Parenthood," a highly acclaimed effort that resulted in nationwide implementation of parenthood education in schools and voluntary agencies. "Exploring Childhood", the cornerstone curriculum, came to be adopted by 6000 schools and seven national voluntary agencies and remained in use for nearly twenty years.

The two-year national field test showed students growing in an understanding of children's abilities and needs, able to apply classroom concepts in work with children, and impressed with the degree of responsibility involved in having a child.

Yet, the program never reached full potential; the majority of future parents were never involved, partly because the program was taught mainly in the area of Home Economics, where child development has always been part of the curriculum, but where only a small percentage of the student body and very few males were enrolled. Use of the program declined in the second decade, partly for lack of a sustainable way to fund support services and program updating, and partly, we believe, because, not being an explicit and established priority, it simply got swept out of the school curriculum by new priorities.

Last June, Education Development Center, the developer of Exploring Childhood, received a small grant to study the feasibility of adapting and implementing Exploring Childhood in middle schools, where a much larger percentage of the student body might be reached. This paper presents what we are finding and some preliminary conclusions on directions to take.

In our study we interviewed EDC staff involved with early childhood programs, middle and high school innovation programs, evaluation, and school dissemination networks; school system superintendents; teachers; and scholars and child development specialists, some of whom had worked with Exploring Childhood in the seventies. In November, a Carnegie Corporation meeting on parent education and family support allowed us to test out what we were finding in the context of a range of views on strategies and the general political climate.

In interviews we presented our goal as implementing not a specific set of materials but a program with Exploring Childhood's general goals and pedagogy. The heart of Exploring Childhood is regular student fieldwork with young children; the fieldwork is supported by classwork that is structured to help

students learn about the world of children and families and about themselves as caregivers. We presented the program as requiring a school-year of classwork and fieldwork because we believe students need that much continuity with their teachers and with the young children to attain program goals: a working knowledge of child development, a repertoire of good child care approaches, an understanding of the influences on children and families, and an understanding of their own reactions as caregivers.

We explored seven questions: Would middle school offer a hospitable "home" for the program? What sites can be used for students' fieldwork with young children? How should the content be updated? How should formats be changed? What evaluation measures would interest funders and public? What are current models for a sustainable system for teacher training and technical assistance? What else is being done for parenthood education?

On the initial question of a school "home", the obstacles that respondents foresee are formidable and need to be resolved before it makes sense to pursue other questions. While we gave the lion's share of attention to this question, and devote the main part of this report to it, we found interesting answers to other questions which are presented at the end of the report.

Is the Middle School a Hospitable Home for the Program?

WHY CONSIDER MIDDLE SCHOOL AS A HOME FOR EXPLORING CHILDHOOD?

In the seventies Exploring Childhood was developed mainly as a program for high schools. Problems we found with the high school level at that time related to its departmentalism; additional problems now are that high school can be too late- many students have either dropped out and/or are already besieged with-serious life problems, or are focusing on college preparation. Middle school, with its concern for interdisciplinary pedagogy, character development, active learning, community service seemed to offer a more promising context for Exploring Childhood.

OBSTACLES TO ESTABLISHING EXPLORING CHILDHOOD IN MIDDLE SCHOOLS:

Interviewees pointed out major obstacles to establishing a program such as Exploring Childhood in middle schools. (Few, however, thought high school would be a more promising home.) Comments included:

"Middle schools have no time for more than 5 core subjects." (usually construed as: reading skills, writing and other communication skills, math, science- life, earth, chemical, physical-, and social studies)

"There's too much turmoil around middle schools already." (in terms of the number of new programs people are trying to establish there.)

"On the one hand it's hard to find work that links the disciplines (so Exploring Childhood would be good), on the other, teachers believe they have to cover a certain amount of content and it's hard for teachers to feel they're not doing that (a problem for Exploring Childhood which may not seem relevant to the currently required content)."

"With new subject matter, teachers need time to dig-in, become familiar with the content, and within the life of a middle schools there's little time for the teacher. And if you're going to try to involve all teachers of the various core areas you'll be asked 'Do they all have to take the institute?'"

"Teachers are throwing up their hands saying, 'When do we have time to teach all we're required to teach?' We're pulling kids out for health, chorus....' Interest in a one-year child development course is very unlikely; people like short to-the-point courses such as drug or alcohol education, especially the good courses that are based on decision making. Now we have an adolescent assault prevention program-- date violence."

"The world is so full of good will to do things to and for kids that it's hard to fit in an additional one. People have to be persuaded that this is as important as band or French or football."

"If I (a school system superintendent) were to try to introduce a program like Exploring Childhood, I'd have three problems right off the bat:
> "One, there is a backlash in Maine, from the commissioner on down, against 'affective' programs. The feeling is, 'the public is never satisfied with the academic work students are doing, yet they continue to heap more of these affective programs upon us.'"
> "Two, the staff is skeptical of 'canned programs,' for example 'Learn Not to Burn.' DARE is 'canned' but what makes it acceptable here, even very popular, is a police officer who's great at what he does."

"Three, we have spent eleven years envisioning what we want as a
school system. The staff wants to see links. If they can't see
where this (Exploring Childhood) fits, in terms of what they're
trying to accomplish, they won't be open to it. (After agreeing
that the pedagogy of Exploring Childhood 'fits'...) However, if I
said 'we're now incorporating this .... that would be the kiss of
death.'"

These reactions reflect three changes that have taken place for
schools over the past twenty years:

. Schools have been deluged with "affective" programs. By contrast, in
1972 when Exploring Childhood was introduced it was new and refreshing
for students to have an opportunity to reflect on such things as
identity and their own growing up. Many of the affective programs are
ad hoc, in response to a specific crisis- AIDS education, violence
prevention, substance and alcohol abuse prevention, suicide
prevention, date rape prevention. While some of the programs are
considered excellent, especially those with a "decision-making" base,
teachers still feel burdened by the number of them, the piece-meal
effect the courses have on the curriculum, the unpredictability of
when they'll be asked to teach yet one more new program.

. In contrast, or perhaps in reaction, two major waves of school
improvement studies, one in the 1980's focusing on high schools and
one currently on middle schools, have recommended that schools return
to "academic subjects' or redefined basics, or core subjects. The
result is relegating "affective" programs to narrow time slots and
expecting them to be "short and to-the-point".

. A change has taken place in the accepted process by which
course content is developed: now it is developed locally,-
systemically, and by teacher teams. Centrally-developed curricula are
viewed as "canned." In contrast, the structured help of change agents
in changing a school's curriculum is acceptable and is, in fact, the
mission of many of EDC's programs: Make It Happen, Science
Improvement, etc. The trend is supported by major improvement efforts,
for example, the ATLAS program of which EDC is a part.

. A final potential obstacle, voiced loud and clear at the Carnegie
Corporation meeting, is that the growing political right views
"education for parenthood" at any level as intrusive on families.
Gordon Ambach, Executive Director of the Council of Chief State School
Officers, advised that the only way parenthood education can be
pursued in the current political climate is to

"embed nurturing in the life of the schools." We see this as more of a caution than an obstacle, telling us about the way we present Exploring Childhood, i.e. as essentially a course in human development with an opportunity for service learning.

ON THE OTHER HAND, WELCOME ASPECTS OF EXPLORING CHILDHOOD FOR MIDDLE SCHOOLS:

Interviewees pointed to strikingly many aspects of Exploring Childhood that would support middle schools in moving in the precisely the directions they desire. These aspects include:

. opportunities for active hands-on learning;

. opportunities to focus on "metacognition", helping students discover the factors that aid young children's learning, and, in reflection, factors that aid their own learning;

. an aid to interdisciplinary teaching, giving a focus for all the core subjects. In addition to the life science and social studies areas the program is specifically designed for, math and language arts teachers can participate fruitfully in an extended program that supports cross-age helping in math and language arts skills;

. opportunities for students to explore their own development and build such components of self esteem as efficacy and self respect;

. a breeding ground for the development of "virtues" of civility, responsibility, protection of, and an investment in the development of, those who are younger and more vulnerable;

. an opportunity to engage students on the margins;

. validation for latchkey kids in their role of caring for siblings;

. an aid to pregnancy prevention; the work with children demonstrates concretely the time and attention children required;

. furthering of the "village concept": school and community links are made through the childcare field work; home and school links are made through the questions students ask about their own childhood, parents come to class as resource people. An inner-city principal maintains, "cross-age work has a webbing effect that counters nihilism and decay.";

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. a framework that can be used to advantage to address urgent concerns of the nineties now addressed in a myriad of ad hoc programs. Working with young children, learning to understand them, considering the influences on their world, and then reflecting back on oneself allows students to learn a great deal about their own lives by indirection. For example, students considering what arguments they might use to help younger siblings avoid drug and alcohol abuse, or helping young children avoid and prevent conflicts, may find applications to their own lives;

DEVELOPMENTAL APPROPRIATENESS

In considering middle school as the target grade range, our interviewees tended to focus on schools' willingness to have the program. The other major factor is developmental readiness of the students. Consensus was that the program is a good fit developmentally for the upper middle school grades- 7th, 8th, and 9th (sometimes part of middle school, sometimes part of high school).

While some interviewees noted that middle schoolers are this society's babysitters, high schoolers having other priorities, others questioned middle schoolers' fitness for child care responsibilities ("they can be too 'squirrelly', exclusionary, distractable" "too preoccupied with self, too far from thinking of others"), and several questioned whether 5th and 6th graders had the cognitive ability to profit from the self-reflective potential of the program. In contrast, our urban middle school principal, thought 5th and 6th graders adequately mature for the program.

In addressing the developmental question, Caroline Newberger made such a strong case for the potential social impact of the program that we present her remarks in full below:

> "Ages 10 and 11 still have a concrete operational mindset. Their capacity to understand the relevance for their lives may be limited. They can look at the child externally, but not at the child looking at them- they may miss the reciprocity, the idea that changing how you relate to a child changes how a child relates to you. "Ages 12-14 are beginning to expand their world, understand they may become parents and have responsibilities; they are embedded in the larger world. This requires more formal, abstract thinking "Still, Exploring Childhood would be good at 10 and 11. They still see themselves as children in families and could

make meaning in new ways of the ways they are raised. "Ages 12-14, though, are when they need such a program most. They are starting to question who they are, seeing if they're in a dead end, looking for gangs to serve as alternative families. If no intervention now, they go on to believe violence is inevitable, you're perpetually a victim. "Now, in a time of unprecedented violence, this is a time to give new options. "Kids are just on the cusp of solidifying into a belief about human relationships that supports violence and despair, if families are not a place you can give and receive nurturance. Families are the crucible for all human relationships. "In Exploring Childhood we'll be teaching them that children are valuable, children are not for hitting. We're teaching them to respect a child's humanity through understanding and non-violence. If we teach them to respect a child's humanity, we're teaching them to respect their own humanity. Childhood gives them a metaphor. They may have been children who were hit and degraded, who shouldn't have been treated that way, but they don't know it yet. Exploring Childhood will help them know it for themselves and for others. "Ages 12-14 are a marvelous time to do that- before they become jaded, solidified, discouraged- embedding them in hope."

IN SUMMARY:

FACTORS FOR EXPLORING CHILDHOOD IN UPPER MIDDLE SCHOOLS

- developmentally appropriate
- supportive of evolving goals and pedagogy, especially hands-on active learning, attention to metacognition
- supportive of the ethos of middle schools- service learning, the village concept of bringing school and community together.

OBSTACLES

- programs perceived as "affective" or non-core are given little time
- there is no room for more than five core subjects: reading, writing and communications skills, social studies, science, math
- a perception of any centrally developed curriculum as "canned"

The potential benefits outweigh the obstacles enough, in our view, to put effort into developing strategies to deal with the obstacles. We will describe the elements of our strategies below, but first we want to share our reaction to the third obstacle, the perception of centrally-developed curricula We have asked ourselves:

WHY DO WE WANT TO IMPLEMENT EXPLORING CHILDHOOD IN PARTICULAR, WHAT IS OUR GOAL?

The following is our thinking:

No set of materials is sacrosanct. What we want to preserve is a careful design that integrates students' regular work with young children with classroom reflection and study, and is structured to deepen students' understanding of children, a child's world, and themselves as caregivers.   Woven into the fabric of each existing Exploring Childhood unit are opportunities for students to observe children, design activities to do with children, build understanding of development, observe themselves as caregivers, consider a range of caregiving approaches, and consider the influences on the world of a child. And, there are opportunities for teachers to apply similar reflections to the stewardship of their own teenage students.

The pedagogy and design of the materials would take a long time for any school to develop on its own, although, given experience with the materials, teachers could certainly go on to develop their own units. We believe that materials will be a key part of any program, providing the initial scaffolding that makes the pedagogy replicable from one classroom to another. So we stand behind some set of structured multi-media materials, knowing we have the responsibility of demonstrating that the structure is not stultifying and closed, but, in fact, enabling and open. Teachers from participating pilot sites would, of course,- be involved in revision and development.

HOW TO PROCEED IN THE FACE OF THE OBSTACLES

Joan Lipsitz, author of Successful Schools for Adolescents and Director of the Middle Grades Improvement Program at the Lilly Endowment, remembers Exploring Childhood very favorably, but concurs that it will be hard to place it in middle schools. She suggests that we proceed "opportunistically", developing and piloting the program in schools that are strongly interested, working out the difficult issues in the incubator of these friendly schools, and later using their experience illustratively, i.e. the way they fit the course into their

school schedule and curriculum, the changes they made in the program, the fields from which they drew teachers, the logistics of organizing field placements, etc.

ELEMENTS OF A STRATEGY:

When the time is ripe, as soon as we can find or generate interest in even a small number of schools, we will proceed as follows.

GIVE EXPLORING CHILDHOOD A PRINCIPAL ACADEMIC HOME

Exploring Childhood is certainly affective as well as intellectual, as is nurturing. But if it is perceived as an "affective" program, it will be designated an "exploratory", or "service program" or "special interest program" and will not be given the needed time, continuity or resources.

We propose a year-long course in "Human Development", to be offered, most likely, by social studies departments in collaboration perhaps with life sciences, with a fieldwork/service component of observing and caring for young human beings in the early stages of their development. The academic component of Exploring Childhood had eminent scholarship as its base, as it would again in a middle school adaptation, and the fieldwork component could offer the hands-on pedagogy and service-learning activities so desired by middle schools. In some schools there are cross-age helping programs already in place or forming, and the National Center for Service Learning in Early Adolescence has excellent fieldwork support materials. our program would provide the academic context for classwork and earn the program a full school-year's place as a core subject. (We have been considering the possibility of devoting part of one semester to the young and part to the elderly, providing--the academic background for the two areas of cross-age service.)

Perhaps such a program might come to serve as a rite-of-passage at a significant point in students' school life- students have been the recipient of caregiving and teaching- now its time for them to take on the caregiving role. Perhaps older children caring for younger ones would come to form the core of an entire school's curriculum.

LET INTERESTED SCHOOLS AND AGENCIES IDENTIFY THEMSELVES

Considering the degree of effort that a school is likely to have to make in order to make room for a year-long program, it seems more productive to have schools who want to make the effort

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to identify themselves rather than have us seek out interested schools.

We propose sending out an RFP: seeking a small number of schools interested in piloting a year-long program in Human Development with a regular fieldwork/service component in work with young children. In the RFP, schools would be ask to address:

. how they will make room in the daily schedule for the program;
. how they will provide sites for fieldwork;
. who will teach the program, with an emphasis on pedagogy and discussion-leading skills as well as content background;
. how they see the long term fit of the course in the school curriculum plan;
. how they would fund program costs after the pilot year.

Voluntary organizations would be asked to address similar questions in terms of agency priorities.

INCENTIVES

 The incentives for these pilot sites would be:

. having a program that exemplifies the pedagogy most middle schools are currently aiming for;
. providing opportunities for service learning, and perhaps funding through the Corporation for National Community Service;
. being in the center of a development effort;
. receiving free materials;
. receiving any lacking audio-visual hardware needed to present materials;
. having teachers be candidates for future teacher trainers;
. possible continuing education credit for teachers (EDC is currently working out strategies for providing teachers with continuing education credit for many of its programs.);
. possible "incentive grants", depending on the funder.

BUILD ON THE INTEREST IN YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE

We need to explore ways school or voluntary agency programs can tie in with the Corporation for National and Community Service's "Learn and Serve America K-12 program."

CONSIDER VOLUNTARY SETTINGS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOLS

A. Could Exploring Childhood provide a bridge between two major government initiatives -- Head Start and the new interest in Community Service? Later on we discuss the possibility of using Head Start centers as sites for fieldwork with young children. Might Head Start centers serve as the locus for classwork as well, with teachers trained to work with adolescents implementing the curriculum?

When we asked Joanne Brady, Director of Early Childhood Programs at EDC, whether there would be a welcome role for 7th to 9th grade students at Head Start centers, she was at first skeptical, thinking that the center staff had enough to do let alone supervise young adolescents. But as she remembered a visit to a Head Start center where, at closing time, the director and staff anxiously watched a group of 13-year-olds who were lurking outside with spray paint, she decided that Head Start centers had a vested interest in making friends with local teenagers, even turning them into community protectors. Instead of graffiti they could be painting a mural for the children. Building community and fostering the expression of affection between age groups would be incentives that may interest Head Starts if the participation of the students is adequately structured and funded.

B. Would any of the national voluntary agencies be interested in offering a program that would provide young adolescents with a year of experience and group discussion support in caring for children? Seven national voluntaries joined the previous Education for Parenthood effort.

WHAT THE "RFP" OPTION COULD PRODUCE AT THE END OF THREE YEARS:

. a set of tested materials that have been updated and, in some cases, newly developed with the involvement of test schools
. a matrix of ways that schools made room for the program and its requisite fieldwork
. a potential corps of future teacher trainers
. public visibility

This approach would allow us to offer what we believe is the optimum program and to see how educational institutions respond. It allows interested schools and agencies to tell us how they will make room for what we consider the essentials of the program, and we may find some interesting variety. If no institutions respond to the RFP, that would tell us to return to more modest options.

MARKETING STRATEGIES

While the program teaches about the whole world of children, families, and nurturing, there are several features we can select for marketing.

Two "ounce of prevention" features:

- teenage pregnancy
- prevention violence prevention

and two positive features, in favor and seemingly fundable:

- community service
- an excellent interdisciplinary course

A POSSIBLE SCHEDULE FOR DEVELOPMENT

year 1:   seek funding
           develop RFP and recruit schools and voluntary agencies
           begin revision planning
           investigate legal issues of fieldwork
           choose schools and agencies

year 2:   develop pilot materials with consultation from chosen
           schools and agencies
           summer: teacher training institute

year 3:   pilot test the program in the chosen schools and agencies
           formative evaluation of implementation issues and
           strategies, use of materials
           develop system for dissemination, technical assistance and
           training
           summer: revise materials

Findings on our Other Questions

#2 Can we devise a more flexible practicum, one that is appropriate for middle school settings? (In the 1970's the logistics of transporting students to off-site child care centers was cumbersome.) There are several promising developments here:

   A. Child care centers may now be closer to the schools. Some systems, and the School of the 21st Century movement, are setting up early child care centers at the site of schools.

B. Community service, or service learning, is now valued and sometimes required, and caring for young children clearly fits that category. Schools may be particularly willing now to work out the logistics of off-site fieldwork.

    C. The presence of Head Start centers. Earlier we discussed a possibility of actually having on-site classrooms for the young teenager students at the centers. Even if this is unfeasible, the centers may still be interested in having neighborhood students do their fieldwork with young children there.

Since times have become more litigious, an early task for program developers is to work out the legal issues and precautions for the fieldwork-- meet with legal counsel, teachers unions, child advocate groups to establish procedures and guidelines for child care center work and family or community babysitting if that will be a common fieldwork possibility.

#3 What updating does the curriculum need? What new research and approaches should be included?

Revision of reading level: in creating materials the variable that is impacted most by choice of age range is reading level; probably it would be wise to set the reading level in any new materials for the lowest grade that might take the program. Simple reading material does not exclude sophisticated concepts, much is transmitted by pictures in any case, and supplementary materials can included for upper grades.

In general, interviewees found the materials up-to-date, inclusive, creative, and "ahead of their time" in terms of their attention both to diversity and to the total social system involved in program implementation. Only the films were thought to be dated, due to dress and hairstyles.

Our initial thoughts on additions met with approval. They were:
. a unlit on conflict resolution;
. a unit on coaching and physical fitness;
. an underlying theme throughout- concepts of "frames of mind," different intellectual styles and strengths applied to both the young children and the students themselves;
. to be addressed throughout- the challenges of raising children in hazardous environments.

New ideas suggested in the course of our interviews:
. an emphasis throughout on "metacognition," strengthening students ability to analyze needs and conditions for their own learning by asking similar questions of the learning of young children. (Tom McCormack, Gorham Schools, ATLAS Communities)

This suggestion is reinforced by Tom Fitzgerald's (former EC teacher and regional field coordinator) strong recommendation that we take a look at a Vygotsky-based "Early Childhood Curriculum" he has introduced at Colorado Academy. The curriculum emphasizes 'learning to learn';
. reading to and writing for children;
. imaginative math problems with children;
. "touchpoints"- growth spurts during which an infant's behavior provides a challenge for caregiving relationships (T. Berry Brazelton's Touchpoints);
. the baby or child as a shaper of the family environment;
. the child and the caregiver as a system;
. fetal development and the effects of drugs and alcohol;
. new understandings of emotional development, when certain emotions come in, when empathy comes in, memory capacity in the first two years;
. individual temperament (Jerome Kagan's Galen's Prophecy);
. messages in media for children.

#4 What format updating is necessary?

As we believed at the start, we need to take advantage of latest developments: videotape to replace 16mm film, audiotape to replace records.

As noted earlier, we found that videos and film may updating not because of their content or approach but because hairdos and clothing styles become dated and are distracting.

#5 What kind of sustainable system can we devise for providing dissemination, teacher education, and technical assistance?

We have explored the way that EDC provides technical assistance and network building today. School systems pay for teacher development related to particular curriculum "when it is really good." Secondly, EDC gets separate funding to set up dissemination and training networks, but these don't promote any one curriculum (much as the Exploring Childhood field staff promoted a full range of Education for Parenthood programs); this second type of funding, however, may be vulnerable to political trends.

#6 What are a few hard evaluation measures that will be appreciated by the public and by funders?

Many currently favored assessment techniques, e.g. portfolios,

combined with new "parenting scales" offer rich and insightful formative and summative evaluation possibilities.

The main issue, however, is summative evaluation that will answer the questions of legislators, funders, school boards, etc. An interesting approach might be to agree to track precisely those behaviors that the "National Education Goals Panel" addresses under its goal for the Year 2000: "All children will start school ready to learn." They identify the following as desirable but too often neglected behaviors on the part of parents:

- Avoiding smoking and drinking during pregnancy.

- Immunizing children against major childhood diseases.

- Reading to preschool children daily.

- Involving children in regular discussions about family history or ethnic heritage.

The 1993 "National Education Goals Report" presents percentage statistics on these behaviors that could be our baseline data in looking for the effects of a intensive program of education for tomorrow's parents.

To the above list we could add:

- Avoiding early pregnancy (identifying a reasonable age)

- Avoiding use of (harsh?) corporal punishment

as well as other measurable behaviors that child development specialists identify as important for a child's welfare.

Since all these behaviors relate to children under five, doing a 10-year follow up study of our young teenaged students should be long enough to give us some data.

Many possibilities were suggested for evaluating in greater depth or detail:

. Specific knowledge change, certain things the course can really "teach to," like forms of discipline, when to immunize, knowing where to get health care and how to pay for it, knowing why immunization is important.

. Caroline Newberger suggests a "cognitive mediation" model that involves looking at interpretation, information processing, and

problem solving. Ron Slaby's program at EDC uses this model.

. There are many new parenting behavior scales that could be adapted (AAPI; a measurement based on competency developed by Tom Grisso, U.Mass Medical School, Worcester; scales used by Maureen O'Brien, a colleague of Berry Brazelton).

. Look at other arenas of the students' lives for current outcomes although, of course, it would be hard to attribute any growth or change to this type of program. For example: outcomes at the early childhood site, community outcomes, family outcomes, learning outcomes, other courses, emotional and social outcomes, parenting skills outcomes, change in the early pr pregnancy rate.

. Joan Schine, National Center for Service Learning in Early Adolescence, has been developing evaluation instruments and is awaiting funding to write about evaluating service learning.

#7 Other Programs related to "Parenthood Education" (a question we did not list initially but pursued in our interviews):

. Education for Parenthood" started by Sally Scattergood in Philadelphia and Vermont. A pediatrician teams up with a parent and brings in a baby once a month starting in kindergarten. Children ask questions, observe, make predictions for the next visit. This program apparently continues once a month until grade 8.

. In the 1970's Home Economics departments were the only ones offering child development courses in the schools, and the American Home Economics Association was at first concerned that Education for Parenting would take over its turf. Soon, however, home economics teachers were teaching Exploring Childhood classes in large numbers. Today the professional association's name is the Association of Family and Consumer Sciences, and their courses, are described as having a career-related slant. The courses don't get priority from the state vocational education department, however, because child care jobs are regarded as low-paying.

. Safe Sitter -- a program that does not take place in the schools but in hospitals or other community agencies. An excellent two-day program that prepares students on basic safety issues. Based in Indianapolis, Jan Petty executive Director.

. There are many programs for teenagers who are already parents.

. There are many cross-age tutoring or reading programs. They are usually both popular and successful and can teach important skills.

. The National Center for Service Learning and Early Adolescence created the Child Care Helper Program, and produced two guides for early adolescents, one for working in early childhood and one for working with school-age children. The program was arranged in seminars and included a reflective component allowing students to learn about what they were going to be doing, plan, and reflect on the experience. It also included adjunct materials for students to use on their own since they found that a problem for young volunteers in classrooms was that they had trouble knowing what to do, needed and waited for a lot of guidance from teachers, had trouble taking initiative. (An interesting critique for us to consider in revisions, helping students to take initiative, work independently in child care centers when necessary and appropriate.)

#8   Course Time and Shape (an issue that came up many times):

One year once in a student's school life or throughout the school years and less at any one time?
Considering these factors:

. Some continuity for a student with young children and his/her own teacher is important for a student to developing confidence and flexibility with children, understanding of self;

. schools will find it easier to provide and keep track of one long course than many briefer ones; and

. given the mobility of our population in general, it is unlikely that most students would experience the continuity of a program given over the years,

we believe one longterm course is the best format. A program that "spirals", being offered to students at different times over the years, would, of course, be ideal, if the recurrences of the program were in addition to one intensive year-long course.

Our view on this has changed some from the seventies. At that time one design feature we stressed was modularity of materials, allowing schools to take as little or as much as they wanted, reasoning that any start was better than none at all. But the seventies were a time of year-long, highly-structured courses, and if Exploring Childhood could fit into a course in any way the

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first year, it was likely to be used more extensively in following years. Now, in an era of month-long ad hoc courses and frequently shifting priorities, we believe that a brief unit would not get enough of a toe-hold in the curriculum to last.