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1953

### Children ...Here and Now [Vol. 1, No. 1, 1953]

Bank Street College of Education

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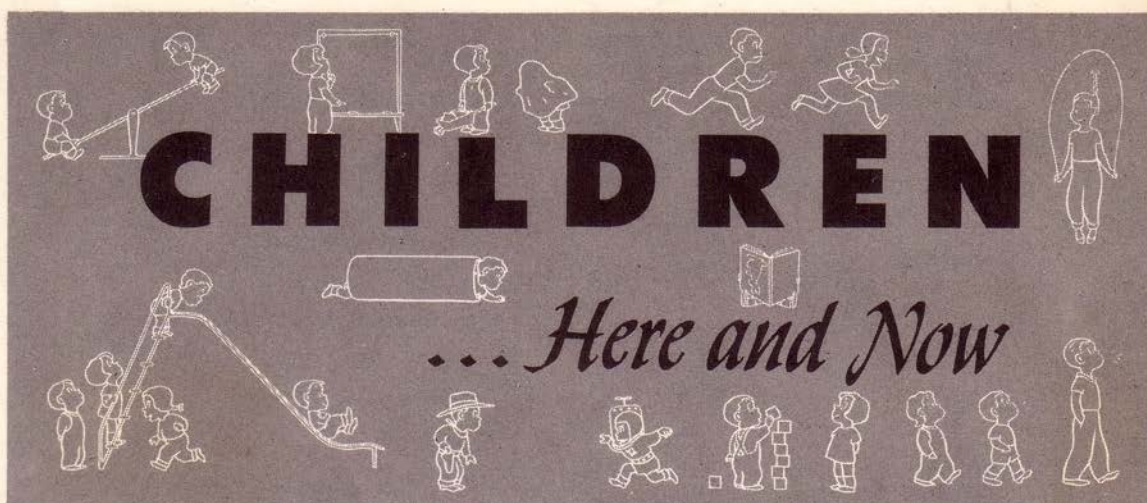
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*Notes from*

**BANK  
69  
STREET**

# *Education's Want Column*

## **WANTED CHILDREN**

who are having a sound childhood  
who will grow into adjusted adults

## **WANTED PARENTS**

who love their children  
who want to understand their children  
who are not afraid to enjoy their children

## **WANTED TEACHERS**

who have a zest for living and for teaching  
who are warm human beings  
who are learners seeking to understand children and the world around them

## **WANTED THE BEST MINDS**

to work on problems of human beings young and old

## **WANTED THE LARGEST HEARTS**

to understand differing human beings

## **WANTED A PEACEFUL WORLD**

of sound human relationships.

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BANK STREET COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

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# *The Most Important Procession on Earth*

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CHILDREN form the most important procession on earth. They march unceasingly in every land where human beings live. Millions of babies are ever joining the procession. Millions of young men and women are leaving the procession to take their individual places as grown-ups among the workers of the world—workers inside their own homes with their own children, and workers outside their homes from our humblest voters to our Presidents. In the procession of today's children marches our future.

WHAT KIND of grown-ups will today's babies and children be? Will they meet life with zest or with fear? Will the world around them seem full of important wonders or just dull? Will they be doers or side-liners? How many of them will be filled with a vision of making a world where more people have a better chance for a good life—how many indifferent to what happens to all except themselves and their small group? How many will be tragic misfits who crumple under the strain of what life brings them, or the even more tragic misfits who undermine the standards of their marching companions?

THE ANSWERS to these questions lie with us, today's grown-ups.

WHATEVER NICHE today's children may occupy tomorrow in our complicated and changing society, each will carry within him the imprint of his life experiences on his important march from babyhood to adulthood. Each has potentialities for growth. Each is still building his patterns of behavior and his values. Our children are strategic members of a democracy. *While there are children there is hope.*

TODAY, MORE PEOPLE than ever before are not content to be sideliners, merely watching our children march by. They want to help children develop to the full their potentialities on their march toward maturity. These people are doers, working with or for children.

WE, THE ASSOCIATES of the Bank Street College of Education, are a recently organized group of such people. We have two general purposes: to spread the interest in constructive work for children; and to help Bank Street College to carry on such work. CHILDREN HERE AND NOW is a part of the program through which the Associates hope to fulfill their pur-

● **LUCY SPRAGUE MITCHELL**

*Author of The Here and Now Story Book, Our Children and Our Schools, Two Lives: The Story of Wesley Clair Mitchell and Myself, and others.*

poses by having some workers with children tell what they have found out about children through their work. Children are undoubtedly good theater! We want to show children in action—attacking their own world in their own ways, playing out the drama of their own experiences and phantasies, pursuing their intellectual curiosities, wobbling between dependence and independence, relishing, protesting, greeting life with cheers and tears and fears—for such is the stuff out of which an educational and social philosophy evolves.

These "NOTES FROM 69 BANK STREET" will, at least for the present, be issued once a year. This new publication, of which this is the first issue, aims to supplement the many good magazines that interpret children to various groups. We hope through the common interest in children to become their co-workers, not their competitors. We want our modest new publication to interest groups who are important to children and groups who believe in children and work with children—parents, teachers, research workers, and forward-looking folk in any field who think the education of children and their teachers is society's greatest tool for improving itself. Thus we shall have articles from people in several fields of work. For we feel that the pooling of knowledge gathered by people in many fields is imperative today. Children will be the common denominator in our articles—children in their homes, in their schools, in their local communities, in today's culture.

CHILDREN HERE AND NOW will be sent first to all Associates of the Bank Street College of Education as part of their membership, and will later be sold at Bank Street Bookshop. Suggestions for future issues—subject matter or authors—will be welcomed by the Associates' Publications Committee who want to make this new venture meet the needs of those who think that children form the most important procession on earth.





# Education for Emotional Maturity

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## HOW CURRENT CURRICULUM TRENDS ARE RELATED TO MODERN CONCEPTS OF CHILDREN'S GROWTH

In modern schools we base the curriculum upon the growth needs of children. We let our young children stay young. We provide more room for young bodies to keep active, more things to do and make and shape and express after one's own fashion, more opportunity to play out and live over and over again the impressive experience of living and growing up in a home and a family, in a world full of new wonders and daily perplexities. Children become aware of and related to each other and are helped *gradually, patiently and sympathetically* to learn what it takes to play or work together peacefully and happily.

The climate we establish in the early grades resembles in quality, without wishing to duplicate it, the family atmosphere which is the child's major environment before he comes to school. Food appears, even candy. The teacher has a ready store of sympathy for childish troubles without scorning them for being childish, does not expect that the six or seven-year-old is already pastmaster at controlling his feelings, knows how to take crying spells without shaming a child out of them, is not too surprised if the first separation from home is a matter of weeks of adjustment rather than a few hours, and can even keep her equilibrium when confronted with a puddle on the floor.

In all this there is evidence that as school people we are becoming increasingly sensitive to what children are like, are integrating into our practices the outcome of observational and clinical studies of childhood. But there is more than that to be seen in this trend. We are working along with the concept that to precipitate children into being grown-up before they are ready will not only deprive them of happiness but will damage their potential for effective, gratifying learning experiences. This forward trend, like all others, needs a "watch out" sign. We can carry it too far. In this case, literally, too far forward on the developmental scale, and make the error of keeping children young for too long, meaning, of course, longer than is consonant with their healthy emotional maturing. The criteria for what is long enough and yet not too long are hard to determine. In fact, the experience of teachers in schools could be and should be a source for studying this important developmental problem and, ideally, integrated with systematic research and clinical approaches to the question.

● **BARBARA BIBER**  
*Chairman, Studies and  
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cation*



Turning to our somewhat older children, in the elementary years, we think at once of numerous new techniques all of which aim at making learning as lively, as interesting, as satisfying as possible. Techniques that include putting children into direct contact with people and places and things; accenting the relations, the meanings, the applications of ideas; letting them be discoverers and experimenters; giving them genuine work responsibilities. Our purpose is to help children relate themselves effectively and responsibly to the world in which they live and our premise is that, unless we succeed in this, the process of emotional maturing will suffer lasting injury. Emotional maturity cannot be accomplished in a vacuum. Adequacy and competence are essential to it. This, in a sense, teachers and educators have always known. What we have been adding, in recent years, is greater understanding of how possible it is for a child to act competently and yet not register feelings of adequacy within himself, to know all his lessons and yet not have learned anything that makes life more meaningful for him, or that helps him develop a more realistic confidence about himself in relation to it.

In other words, unless our programs feed the expanding interests, the growing minds, the curiosity and the zest for life that our children bring to school, we will not be supplying children with the essential means for discovering and realizing their potential as people. Self-discovery and realization essential to emotional maturity, is a process bound in with all learning experiences. To insure that the process is a healthy one, we are working toward enriched curriculum, reduced rivalry and the fusion of fact and meaning.

A figure of speech might be a short cut in referring to another active trend in our schools. We seem to be fighting a kind of Battle of Jericho. In any case, walls—all kinds of walls—are tumbling down. First, among the children themselves. Committee work, play activities, cooperative jobs, discussions under teacher guidance, group murals, group dramatics are the mechanisms through which children are coming into constant vital relation to each other. School is a place in which to get together with other children at all hours of the day. By contrast, one need only think of the pathetic social breather that the recess period offered the silent, virtuous children of earlier days. The teachers, too, have new ways of escaping the boredom and sterility of isolation through workshops, grade level meetings, district curriculum meetings.

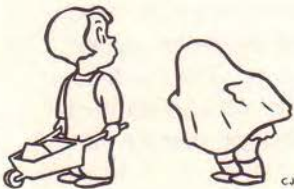




Still other hard dividing lines are gradually dissolving. Between teachers and parents, between principals and teachers, between classrooms. We see older children helping younger children, coming into their classrooms to read to them, making toys for their playroom. Most important of all, from the viewpoint of this discussion, is the shrinking of the distance between teachers and children. The changed quality of teacher-child relationships in our schools need only be referred to here—the lighter tone, the sharing of fun as well as trouble, the decreased dependence on stern methods of discipline, the teachers' interest in their children's happiness. From the children's viewpoint, the humanization of the teacher figure, generally, is outstanding. There was a time when a friendly, gay, understanding teacher was like a benediction from Heaven. Now, more and more children expect and receive befriending by their teachers.

The changing relation between teachers and children can be looked at on several levels. In one sense it represents the rapport of friendship, relaxation and the lessening of strain and tension in connection with learning experiences. In another sense, it represents a basically changed motivation for the learning activities of children. When teachers can become idea-figures, not in the romantic pedestal sense, but as real human everyday people whom children would like to be like, they are playing an important role in the total emotional maturing of the children they teach as well as providing added momentum to help the child jump his learning hurdles. For sound emotional maturing, children need to find in addition to their parents, people through whom they can construct their own systems of wishes, values and ideals. Teachers who can partly fulfill this developmental need at the same time that they lead children carefully and wisely to greater knowledge of and proficiency in the world around them are truly exemplifying the basic trend stated above—the merging of the learning process and the emotional development of the child.

How to be, how to find such teachers? This, as we know, is no short-time goal. It is first a matter of selection and then a complicated process of education at all stages—pre-service, in-service both. We approach this goal to the extent that we have teachers who realize how much teaching is a learning job for themselves and are willing to put the energy and devotion into teaching that such an attitude requires, not because they are expected to but because they are happier teaching that way.



The little girl rolled over on the pine needles and nuzzled up to her companion. They had been watching the clouds move slowly across that bit of sky framed by the silver-green tree tops above them. The little girl butted her friend with her dark curly head and the two laughed deeply in the quiet of the woods. Without need for further communication, they jumped up and continued their walk along the scarcely visible trail. A chipmunk, not in on the joke, chattered crossly after them. Nearby, in the lily pond a solemn frog cleared his throat disapprovingly.

The little girl bounced along the path, her feet no longer able to put up with such silly business as plain walking. Her companion, being considerably older and more earthbound, scrambled along behind as best she could. The little girl darted off the path, following some fleeting whim, then back again to tug her companion's hand, urging her forward with laughter clear and cool as a brook-song. The path swung sharply up a hill and the two, slithering and slipping, finally crested the rise. They flung themselves on the stretches of cool moss, content for the moment to feel their blood push wildly through their bodies, to allow their breathing to slow itself to normal.

After a moment the little girl sat up, hugging her folded knees tightly. Her lips were parted slightly as though by breathing through her mouth she might taste all the scent and coolness of the woods. She stretched out her hand and moved it slowly over the moss, now firmly, now lightly as the brushing of a moth. She leaned forward to look more closely at the miniature mosses. Kneeling, she swiftly outlined a section about a foot square with the sharp edge of a rock. Out of her pocket came four small white stones, gathered earlier for who could guess what emergency. Placing one at each corner of her outlined square, she joined each stone to its neighbor with a row of baby ferns. To her delight, she found a golden-capped mushroom nearby and carefully transplanted it to her patch of green. Balanced on her toes in a position that only small children seem able to maintain for any length of time, the little girl thoughtfully contemplated her handiwork.

Her complete stillness was invitation enough and a handsomely ugly toad jumped into the center of the mossy square. The little girl sucked in her breath softly. Her eyes were wide and dark as she whispered, almost inaudibly, "I made a world!"

● **CARRA MATTHEWS**

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# A Primer for Writers

FROM THE  
FORTHCOMING BOOK  
"STORIES IN THE MAKING"  
(Simon and Schuster)

"How do people feel when they are grown up? Do they feel tall and fat? Do they feel all finished?"

When I came upon this query by a little girl, aged seven, recorded on scratch paper in a teacher's hasty handwriting, I said to myself, "This takes me straight to the point I have been trying to make for years in my workshop for juvenile writers." No doubt about it, *children know how they feel*, inside and out, from their toenails to their teeth, while we grown-ups—and would-be writers at that—have long since lost contact with our physical selves. Oh, we know that we have headaches, backaches, fallen arches—yes. But tallness and fatness, or their equivalent, no. This child's comment strikes upon our blunt ears like a language from another time and place.

It is a children's language, and a writer's language; one to learn from, whether we call ourselves juvenile writers, fiction writers, poets.

It is a writer's language because it springs from lively sensory perception, and is for that reason evocative and fresh. It is a language close to the living source. ("Original" means just that.)

The child speaks this language because he is by nature a kinesthetic creature, tapping the world through feeling, touch, sight, and sound.

In his early encounters with our adult speech, he is bewildered by abstractions or metaphors one step removed from concrete experience. Ask him, "Did you have difficulty this morning?" and he may answer: "No, I had an egg." Comment upon what sharp eyes he has, and you may only disturb him. "My eyes don't have points on them!"

He puts the world together for himself, bit by bit, touching, reaching, trying, an explorer pushing back his concentric horizons with his own hands. "Suede feels like liver." "When your foot's asleep it feels like cracker crumbs." "Oh!"—upon seeing blue grapes for the first time—"blueberries on the cob!"

He has not had time yet to learn the conventions we adults lag among. Ask a five-year-old to tell you what the "easiest thing in the world" is, and it isn't likely that he'll say anything about pumpkin pie, nor do such stereotyped expressions as "Slow as a snail," and "Quiet as a mouse," belong in his early vocabulary. Instead, an "easy" thing to him is "Easy as when you wash your face in the morning your cheeks get red." He can still think and

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talk in terms of "Slow as your new teeth come in," and "Quiet as a thermometer goes up." He comes racing in from watching a parade; "I saw a man with a big big drum, from his knees up to his neck!" His *eyes* measure the world around him. He hasn't yet taken over those wooden rulers we try to foist upon him. "The bread in the toaster just stayed bread," he tells us, as he tries to explain that the electricity is not working at his house. And with simple, honest acknowledgment of what it feels like, in his young responsive body, to stand in the presence of new-fallen snow, he reports: "The snow was very very deep, and I said, 'How nice it looks,' and so I lay down in it."

Secret wish of us all, but how we cast it from us. Tall, fat, and finished. No more lying in deep snow to test the weight, to feel the softness, to wrap ourselves round in snowy texture. No. The snow is "beautiful." Let it go at that.

Yet the urge tweaks at us. It is there. Beneath our protective coverings, we, too, have nerves and muscles, eyes to see with, a body to roll in snow with.

If we could just take ourselves by the collar and shake the sterile wooden pencils from our hands . . .

Begin by tearing off those top layers of yours, I say to the students who come to learn "how to write for children." You, too, have your own perceptions, your own feelings. Take some experience that was vivid to you—pleasant, exhilarating, frightening, anything that had strong sensations connected with it. Now forget these adjectives that I have just used, these non-descript borrowed words. What really happened to you? And by "you" I mean the breathing, balance-loving body of you with its two movable legs and arms, its emotion-registering stomach, its need of warmth and dread of cold, its marvelous perceiving eyes.

Try a familiar summer vacation experience like lying in the sun on the beach. (Forget "lazy," "restful"). See how the telling of it can jump into life as a child's telling is alive, when we keep the words close to the sun and sand as we felt them:

"I spread my white, blanket-size towel on the dry, deep and hot sand and stretch out on my stomach. I feel the sand move and grind under me as I mold the towel into it with my body. I feel the sun reach down to find me. It slowly, gradually heats every part of my body until I think I feel myself turning brown at the edges. It beats insistently until it draws out droplets of perspiration that crawl down my cheeks and down the creases of my neck. I feel them in back of my knees and under my





arms. I touch my back and my arms, and they are as hot as the sand around me. I slowly turn over and sit up, squinting at the brilliant whiteness of the sand and the brightness of the sea. Then a light sea breeze stirs and touches me, and I am refreshed and cool again. Now I lie back. I mold my body into the sand again, and my face points up at the orange heat above me. The sun heats my body until the strength crawls out of my arms through my fingers and out of my legs through my toes.”\*

Or take a common thing like gardening:

“I made the rows with my fingers, letting the earth cover my hands and get under my nails. Soon my hands would feel very dry, as though the skin were being pulled tightly toward my wrist.”

Yes, we say, the dry skin, it is like that; how is it we had forgotten!

Obviously we have become too used to our skin. Yet when someone says “See here, remember that feeling at the wrist,” then the dormant past stirs in us, disturbingly.

It is through our wrists and hands, our eyes and ears—through our tallness and fatness, if you will—that we find our way to vitality of word and thought. This is the primer lesson for the writer, and the teacher is the child himself.

“Brother Find Brother!” we used to chant, when a ball was lost, and we flung another out to retrieve it. . . .

There will be time enough to consider the questions of what to write, after we have equipped ourselves with the child’s own coin.

He listens to those who speak his language. It is a language of action, of sensory images, a language telling of the touch of things, and their colors, odors, sounds.

It has movement, pace, rhythm. For the child is not a static creature. Out of his reservoir of sensory responsiveness come rushing up the words that move with the rhythm of his thought; galloping, bumping, coasting, swinging words. How does the choppy sea go? Why, “Wibbly, woobly, dabbly, dubbly, bibbly,” of course. And the child dances this as he speaks it. Rhythm of



\* These examples were written by students in the Language Arts courses at Bank Street College of Education. They are presented not as models to be copied, nor as illustrations of expert use of language, but rather as examples of first steps a beginning writer can take for himself.

sounds, rhythm of movement, these are one.

Kipling spoke this language of imagery and sound, and children do not forget the "great grey-green greasy Limpopo River, all set about with fever-trees." They go back again and again to the story teller who talks with the live words tumbling, as it seems, from his mouth: "In the High and Far-Off Times the Elephant, O Best Beloved, had no trunk."

They go back to Kenneth Grahame, for the sake of the little Mole who "scraped and scratched and scrabbled and scrooged" till he popped up into the sunlight. They go back, too, for the sake of that very sunshine, striking hot on the fur, and for the sake of the little Mole "jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living."

The youngest ones recognize their language with delight when they hear it in the loved refrain of *The Little Engine That Could*: "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can. . . ." or "I am the gingerbread man, I am, I am, I am, . . ."

Whenever the writer can seize upon a phrase of living speech; whenever he can make us feel the hot sun on our backs, or dampness against the skin, or light and dark around us; when he can make us see his characters kicking up their heels; whenever he can strike out sounding and rhythmical clinks, snaps, thumps, from the black print letters, children will listen, and will return to listen again.

Is there nothing more to it? Is this *all* children want?

No, of course they want a great deal more. A story that offers only a succession of vivid words and images—sound without content, or plot or plan or surprise—is scarcely a story at all. And a distinction must be made between what the 3-year-old wants and what the 8-year-old wants.

Children, however, are not to be thought of as any less receptive than adults to language that is art as well as communication. Primarily they want what we all want when we open a book—words that can work a little magic, a language strong enough to hold emotion.

The juvenile writer's first step is to become aware of the kind of words he is putting together. His first step is to ask himself, "Is there any life in what I am writing?"

The vitality—or "art"—of language, as children so clearly show us, has to do with the writer's ability to make use of his own wellsprings—of the feelings and perceptions that lie within his own live orbit.





## THE TWO-BLOCK WHALE

I have a two-block whale. The whale's name is Moby Dick. I caught him at Jones beach. I caught the whale with a worm and a hook. The whale was so big it took up two blocks. Moby Dick is two blocks big. Moby Dick didn't fit in the car, so I just dragged him along. No, I mean I shoved him into one window and slid him across the inside part of the car and through the other window. If I want to cross the street now, I can do it with the two-block whale, because I can make him lie across the road, and I walk on him.

Moby Dick eats everything. He eats scraps. If I tell him, "Put those scraps in the garbage can," Moby Dick just eats them up, instead. And if I leave a boot around, Moby Dick just gobbles that up.

And the whale Moby Dick eats people. He eats bad people who hit me. He chews the people up and he spits the bones out. But sometimes I pull the bones out of the whale's mouth and I dump them out where nobody can see them.

I never let anybody see my whale. I keep him in the closet. I can get him if you want me to. And I can tell Moby Dick who to eat up and who not to eat up. You know how I can get him? I can drag him. He can scare you, too. Moby Dick sure can. The end part of the story: HA-HA—I was just fooling. I don't really have a whale.

*—Told by a four year old boy*



## THE BROOK

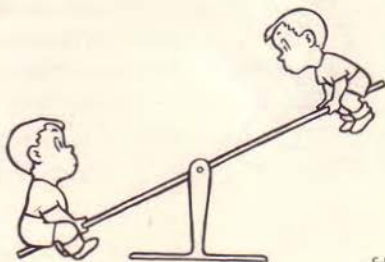
Brooks go ever ever on  
Like a stream or a path  
That travels far from home.  
Oh how I wish I were one  
That talks to the trees with a soft  
murmur.

*—By a seven-year-old girl*

## IN A PALACE

Once I was a littel  
boy yong and prancing  
filled with joy  
I had a dream that  
a king I shod be.  
Oh but that is boyish  
glee, said mother  
scornfull and angry  
at me. Now a great  
king have I become  
injoying life and siping  
my rum  
When I was a  
boy I was outside  
the walls but now  
I am here attending  
the ball with cortoirs  
bowing and standing  
around

*—From the notebook of a nine-year-old boy*



## THE TRAIN

As the train goes dashing by like lightning it goes down through the wilderness, up through the mountains.

Hurrying, scurrying from station to station, passing the houses, passing the zoos, passing the country like the wind, on, on, and still farther on, that is the way the train goes by.

—By a nine-year-old boy

## AWAY DOWN UNDER

Digging up a city  
Bit by bit,  
And bit by bit putting it back.

Tapping its lifelines,  
Puttering with its pipes,  
Sinking its sewers,  
Away down under.  
Keeping the wires from getting mixed,  
Away down under.

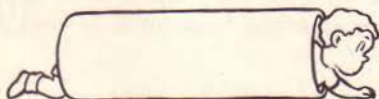
Away down under is the city's heart  
And it beats all the day and all the night.  
Away down under is the city's blood,  
And it flows through its veins with  
surging might.

Away down under is the city's life;  
Though people may bustle above,  
Away down under's where the city lies:

Forgotten:

The unseen hand within the glove.

—By a twelve-year-old girl



## "ON A STORY BY . . ."

I.

I am a writer.  
I think that I am powerful!  
Original!  
Dynamic!  
I think that I know all about  
Life and Industry.

I write long stories  
With strong mean phrases.  
I think that I'm strong  
'Cause I say "Hell!" and "Damn!"

My Heroes are brown skinned,  
Weather beaten,  
Seam faced.  
They're fishermen,  
Or farmers,  
Street workers,  
Truck drivers,  
They're brown skinned,  
Seam faced Blustery men.

II.

I am a writer.  
I *think* I'm a writer  
I *think* that I'm  
Original,  
Dynamic as can be.

But I'm *really* not a writer,  
And my heroes aren't  
Working men,  
I'm *really* not original  
Or powerful at all.

I really write long fairy tales,  
I've never known a working man,  
I've never *seen* a working man  
And my phrases aren't powerful  
At all.

—By a twelve-year-old girl



# *Weaving the Pattern of His World*

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A classroom record of how one child came to know his environment with the conceptions and misconceptions that he formed along the way. From the forthcoming book: "Know Your Children in School", by Mitchell, Lewis, Stall and Schonborg. Published by the Bank Street College of Education.

We look over the shoulder of nine-year-old John, completely absorbed in drawing strange designs on a nine by twelve piece of paper. They look like long, well-chewed bones. One looks like the outline of a primitive tool, others like long islands with curly shores, and the big one in the center is most interesting of all, resembling a real land mass with several points and peninsulas of different shapes and sizes. John is so deep in his thoughts he does not even know you are standing behind him watching until he has finished and looks up.

## **What Does It Mean?**

What can it mean? You wonder, but do not ask. Perhaps he could not tell us, and it would be intruding, preventing further development, so you go down the aisle and look at the drawings of the other children, but after a while you manage to stroll by John's desk again. Now it is perfectly clear. He has named everything. Here on this nine by twelve piece of paper is John's world. He was putting all the pieces together like a puzzle, making them fit. Making them belong to each other in an harmonious whole.

The long "island" on the edge is named, ATLANTIC OCEAN. In the upper right-hand corner is NORTH POLE. At the bottom another long "island" is PALESTINE. And just above it, SOUTH POLE. The center of the "primitive tool" is a group, NEW YORK, UNITED STATES, NEW HAMPSHIRE, and at one tip of the same "tool" is MANHATTAN, at the other, THE BRONX. There are many more, BRIDGEPORT, PORT-CHESTER, HACKENSACK, WASHINGTON, RICHMOND, AFRICA, CHINA, BRAZIL, TEXAS CITY.

## **Just Geography?**

Is this just geography? Or is it something much deeper and more personal? What has this to do with John's development as a human being? As a growing nine-year old?

Next day when there is time and the other children are absorbed in work they can do without help, you call John to your desk and ask, "John, would you mind telling me more about your map? It reminds me of some of the maps I have seen in books, and I think it is a very nice one because it is your very own."

### ● DOROTHY STALL

*Former Staff Member,  
Public School Work-  
shops, Bank Street  
College of Education*

John is pleased and goes to get it, sits on a chair by the desk and allows you to write down what he says about each place.

NORTH POLE: "Eskimos live up there."

BRONX: "My father used to live there. It has a park and trees."

NEW YORK: "I like New York a lot. I like to go in the Empire State Building. The Chrysler cars that drive around, they come from the Chrysler Building."

UNITED STATES: "It's a big country. And a proud country. Its brave."

MANHATTAN: "I think Manhattan is in New York. There is a Manhattan Bridge."

ATLANTIC OCEAN: "My aunt told me about it. It was pretty up there. One of her friends lives right next to it."

PORTCHESTER: "I used to live there. We had feasts and everything. And the children were very nice. We bought balloons."

BRIDGEPORT: "I went up to Bridgeport yesterday. It's something like the country. You play in the grass and everything. And I like the way my aunt cooks."

WASHINGTON: "One of my friends went to Washington. She has a house in the woods. And she saw the White House and everything. She didn't go in it though."

RICHMOND: "Richard told me about Richmond. I think he knows."

HACKENSACK: "My uncle is in Hackensack. I go up there to play with my cousin. We have lots of fun. I told my uncle that the Indians named it, and he said, 'How did you know?' And I told him we were studying about Indians and a lady told us."

AFRICA: "We saw movies about Africa upstairs. And I copied the name of Africa out of a book. The movies showed elephants, and people carrying things on their heads."

TEXAS CITY: "That's where the cowboys live."

BRAZIL: "Something like Mexico."

CHINA: "In the old days when this country wasn't here, why China was rich but now they're poor because of the war. I read a story about a Chinese Emperor."

PALESTINE: "The war is going on in Palestine. I hope it will stop. It might control this whole country. I saw in the papers an Arab commander came to Jerusalem to stop the Arabs from making war."





SOUTH POLE: "Very cold up there. I hope I don't go up there. Don't want to freeze."

NEW HAMPSHIRE: "It's some center of New York, but I think it's out of town."

### ***John and His Nine-Year Old Needs***

What does this show about John? This effort of his on his own initiative to relate the elements of his world to one another? What does it show, not just about his vague and sometimes distorted concepts, but about his feelings, his strivings, his fears?

He is impressed by bigness, the big buildings, the fine cars, the big and brave qualities of his country, recently at war. He has a good family life, affectionate relatives, and he loves the country. He has good memories of feasts and playing in the grass, and the beauty of the sea. And he is trying to take in wider horizons, different ways of living, and serious problems of poverty and war. Everything is said seriously and with feeling. John is trying to relate himself to his world.

### ***What About the Teacher?***

This teacher is interested in John as a human being. She is not primarily concerned about what facts he knows. She is interested in the development of his mind, but also his feelings, his wishes and his desire to think for himself, his initiative. Her first consideration is to know John. So she does not laugh or make fun of his misinformation, or clumsy expression. Compared with what is going on in his mind and heart, these things are temporarily unimportant. They can be corrected later when he does not know the information is directed at him. To hurt his feelings now would only destroy her relationship with him, and he might not be willing to let her in on his thoughts at all. He might simply close up like a clam, and, from then on, do his thinking without her.

### ***How Can This Teacher Help to Meet John's Needs?***

John wants to know his world, to be related to it, to be related to the people in it who are different, as well as to his familiar uncles and aunts. He wants to know more about the life of the people in Africa who carry burdens on their heads, in Palestine where two peoples clash over ancient, historic soil, and about the Chinese who "were rich but now are poor."

How can the teacher best satisfy these strivings to under-



stand? How can she help John's world to become even more real?

The great city in which he feels at home, and which he "likes a lot" holds the answer. Here he can know children whose parents came from that larger world. He does not have to depend on dry facts which are found in books, for every neighborhood holds life and much of this rich life reflects other parts of the world.

The larger world John is trying to fathom is real through real people. He is striving to relate himself to real people through stories, through what he reads, and the pictures he sees in the newspaper. Far away places have meaning only because people live there. He feels with these people in terms of their enjoyment of grass, the sea, feasts, gaiety, war, poverty, all of which he, too, has experienced.

### **John's New Friends**

Now we see John and his class, after preliminary letters and arrangements, entertaining the fourth grade class of a school which is mainly Chinese-American.

As they file into the room, each is told to look up and down the aisles and find the letter he wrote to a member of the class and sit with him.

Thirty children in seats are looking over thirty children walking slowly up and down, wondering which child belongs to the name on his desk. One by one they find their partners, and each seat has two instead of one. At once the Chinese-American children begin to carry out their plans.

John's friend answers in very good English the questions John had written in his letter, then teaches him to write a few words in Chinese. And as he sits there beside a child whose father was born across the sea, he gains a new personal dimension in terms of a foreign land, and a reality almost as clear as that which concerned his aunt whose friend lived near the Atlantic Ocean, or his friend who lived in the woods near Washington and saw the White House but didn't go in.

After John and his Chinese-American friend have talked together, various children entertain with poems in both Chinese and English, with songs and with a dragon dance. New, rich, human relations and knowledge and beauty are being woven into John's world.





# Margaret Wise Brown

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1910-1952

Newspapers and magazines told the world that on November 14, 1952, Margaret Wise Brown died in France. They told that she was 42, that she was the most "successful" of modern writers for children, that she had published over 60 books for children in less than 20 years, some under her own name and some under three pseudonyms. Millions of children and their parents who had read and loved her books grieved that Margaret Wise Brown would write for them no more.

We, at the Bank Street College of Education, grieved with them—grieved not only for children but for ourselves. "Brownie," as we called her, came as a student to our School for Teachers in 1935, and later, for several years was on the staff of our Writers Laboratory. Always she remained a member of our larger Bank Street group dropping in for a talk every now and then.

It is Brownie herself—not just her external achievements—that I think of now. I shall miss a Brownie that none of the sketches of her that I have read suggest. I shall miss the vividness of the picture she always presented, with her golden hair—some friends called her "Goldie"—set off by some striking touch of contrasting color in dress or scarf and accentuated by her constant companion—a Kerry Blue dog.

But chiefly I shall miss her talk. Brownie's talk was shot through with glints of sudden insight that often held one suspended in surprise. One expected a surprise but never the surprise that came. "What time is it?" some factual soul once asked her. And she answered, "What time do you wish it to be?" A priest meeting her for the first time inquired, "Daughter, what interests you most?" "Magic," she said, "The world is full of magic." And the priest, catching her gleam replied, "Daughter, magic is what interests me, too."

What was magic to her?

The rustle of leaves as the wind stirred them. And so in her summer home in Maine, she built herself a place to write high in a great tree amid leaf magic. She listened to sounds. They held a magic to her as they do to children. And she wrote *The Noisy Books* for children.

Color was magic. She cut out little strange-shaped bits of bright-hued paper and moved them around, watching the magic of pattern come and go. She planned her stories for

● LUCY SPRAGUE MITCHELL  
Founder, Writers  
Laboratory, Bank  
Street College of Edu-  
cation

children to include the magic of color.

She felt magic in her finger-tips in the warm softness of fur and the sliding smoothness of satin.

The dark was full of magic where busy little animals with gleaming eyes went about their work and play and the moon moved silent overhead.

Words had their magic too—the infinite magic of rhythm, of changing tempo and of pattern. She moved words across a page even as she did her scraps of bright-hued paper, listening to the pattern they made. And children listened to her words and they too heard the pattern they made.

Yes, Margaret Wise Brown was sensitive to the magic of the world. In that she was an artist even as children are artists. This quality has been widely recognized. But what is less known is that she was an experimenter, a kind of scientist. She was as experimental as anyone I have ever known. When first I knew her as a student of Bank Street College, she was indifferent, even impatient if asked to think in terms of the work-a-day world around her. She told me she liked trucks as “big, powerful, noisy colors in motion,” but she “didn’t care where they were going or why.” But as she listened to children and watched their play, she found they *did* care about the work of trucks and all the other busy machine and human workers around them. From children she gradually learned to find a new kind of magic in the work-a-day world.

When she and I were struggling together to write a new kind of Social Studies Readers, again and again she asked, “What did you say social studies mean?” In the last talk I had with Brownie a few days before she sailed on her last trip to her beloved France, she reminded me that after talking about the real living situations that social studies dealt with, I used to say, “You know, Brownie, I want something from you that I don’t seem to want.”

She said this somewhat cryptic remark suddenly opened up the possibility of giving back to children the realities in their own world, not with photographic literalness, but magically heightened. So she began experimenting afresh.

Always Brownie was moving on to something new. This often kept her from perfecting a technique. Her experiments were not always successful. But a new exploration intrigued her more than perfecting an old one. She chose to “follow the gleam” ahead. This is the way children learn. I think it



is the way Brownie learned.

For years she had told me that she wished to stop writing for children. She wanted to write for grown-ups. And I always had the feeling that some time she would. But not until she herself had really grown up. In the last few years, which were full of human suffering for her, I felt that time was approaching. To my thinking she had potentialities that far exceeded her achievements, great as these were. Given a few more years of living, of experimenting, where might that gleam of hers have led her? I chiefly grieve that now we shall never know the writer that Margaret Wise Brown might have become.

## HOW DO YOU KNOW?

*By* MARGARET WISE BROWN

How do you know it's spring,  
And how do you know it's fall?  
What if your eyes were always shut  
And you couldn't see at all?  
Could you smell and hear the spring?  
Could you feel the fall?

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## SOME FRUITS OF SOLITUDE

by

WILLIAM PENN (1644-1718)

We are in Pain to make (our youth) Scholars, but not Men!  
To talk, rather than to know, which is true Canting.

The first Thing obvious to Children is what is sensible; and that we make no Part of their rudiments.

We press their Memory too soon, and puzzle, strain, and load them with Words and Rules; to know Grammer and Rhetorick, and a strange Tongue or two, that it is ten to one may never be useful to them; Leaving their natural Genius to Mechanical and Physical, or natural knowledge uncultivated and neglected; which would be of exceeding Use and Pleasure to them through the whole Course of their Life. . . .

Children had rather be making of Tools and Instruments of Play; Shaping, Drawing, Framing, and Building, &c. than getting some Rules of Propriety of Speech by Heart: and those also would follow with more Judgment, and less Trouble and Time.

## *The Public School Workshops Program*

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*We at Bank Street were delighted to receive this letter sent to us by the principal of one of the public schools where the Workshops function. The letter is printed below because it describes from its inception to the present a program initiated ten years ago in the public schools of New York City by the School for Teachers of Bank Street College and the Board of Education. Six elementary schools have since been involved in this program; four are currently served by the Workshops.*

*The results in P.S. 68, as described by Miss Clark, are those we had wanted to achieve—had hoped we had achieved. But now Miss Clark's letter leaves no doubt that this Workshops Program, cooperatively sponsored and staffed by the New York City Board of Education and Bank Street College, can and does bring a livelier and more meaningful school life to children and their teachers.*

Mrs. Charlotte Winsor  
Bank Street College of Education  
69 Bank Street  
New York 14, New York

Dear Mrs. Winsor,

I recall very vividly my conference with Mr. Conroy, then Assistant Superintendent in charge of this school district, concerning your coming to Public School 68. He described to me the assistance which you were planning to offer our staff. You would lead a workshop, limited to our own teachers, and concentrating on our own special problems. You would further send consultant teachers right into the classrooms to help the teachers carry out the plans made in the workshop. Really it seemed too good to be true.

However, the years have proved Mr. Conroy right. Month by month and year by year, Bank Street College has been giving, giving, giving—staff, time, guidance, and inspiration—and asking little in return but the satisfaction of knowing a job well done.

What are some of the results at 68?

First and foremost you have helped us to think of every child as a unique personality. Even though they deal with children in groups of 30 or 35, our teachers have been led to



see the youngsters as 30 or 35 individuals—not as a class of the same number. You have been practical about your aid and suggestions. One of the things most deeply appreciated in our contacts with Dr. Biber especially was the fact that her suggestions for dealing with the problems of individual children always were of the sort which could be carried out by the busy teacher of a large group. A comment which visitors frequently make about our school is “Your atmosphere is so relaxed. No one seems to be under tension.” This, I think, flows from the fact that you have helped us all, teachers and supervisors alike, to carry on our work with stress on individual values.

Under the guidance of Mrs. Mitchell and yourself, we became more aware of the possibilities of the use of “the here and now” in developing our curriculum. Trips, dozens of them, to the familiar close-at-hand places—the engine room, the corner vegetable stand, the stable across the street—loomed larger on our horizon than the text book or even the museum trip. Our social studies program took on a concreteness which it had never possessed before.

We began to experiment with a variety of media of art expression. The teachers lost their fear of a mess of wet papier maché or a crock of clay when they themselves spent genuinely happy hours experimenting with them in your workshop.

The results of the thinking which went into developing better teaching of science in our classrooms were applied to wider fields when “Working with Science,” grades 4, 5 and 6 guides, developed by your Mrs. Pine, our Mr. Levine, and the district science coordinator Mr. Weiss, were distributed to the teachers of the entire city as part of the official curriculum bulletin “Source Materials in Elementary Science.”

With your help, our teachers began to see and develop the poetry in the “every day” talk of the children. The trips and other lively vital experiences of the classes provided the material for oral expression that was worth listening to. Dramatic play became a familiar technique.

You helped us develop the “work-shop-playroom” for the little ones. Here, in a room uncluttered by desks or other traditional classroom paraphernalia, the youngsters could play, build with blocks and experiment more freely than was possible in their own crowded classrooms. The room also served as a center for training our teachers in many play techniques

later introduced in the classroom.

Your staff members did an especially fine job in helping us to introduce freer methods of dealing with the curriculum in the classes for the physically handicapped. For many years these children had worked alone or in extremely small groups because of the wide range of grades and abilities in any one room. You helped the teachers of these wide-range classes develop units of work in which all could participate. You assisted them in planning frequent trips away from the building in their special bus. You helped develop a lively vital program in a corner where it was much needed.

I have left for the last the factor which seems to me the most important one. That is the wonderfully warm feeling which developed very early between the two staffs. The "free and friendly" give and take has done more than anything else to make your project here a fruitful one. Classroom consultants, if they develop happy relationships, can come closer sometimes to the classroom teacher and her problems than can the supervisor. Here the friendly camaraderie of the Bank Street College teachers made possible the closest relationships from the start.

We shall miss you very much when you leave us as I realize you must, but you will leave behind the happiest possible memories in the minds of the staff of Public School 68.

Sincerely  
Marion Clark  
Principal

## *The Workshop in Action*

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*The following account of a particular project within the larger Workshop Program which Miss Clark has described shows how the teachers' attitude towards teaching grew with their own group experience.*

### ● CHARLOTTE WINSOR

*Director, Public  
School Workshops;  
Chairman Executive  
Committee, School for  
Teachers, Bank Street  
College of Education*

The suggestion was made by one of the teachers in the after-school workshop course that we seek a common experience to develop together that would have meaning to us as people and then see if there were implications in that experience which could be applied to improving teaching methods. The practical limitations of time and space as well as the less tangible limitations of teachers' fatigue at the end of the school day and the



reluctance of adults to participate without inhibition led us to puppetry as a compromise if not ideal solution to our problem.

And we were ready to begin.

There followed a number of sessions of exploration of interest—what would we want our puppets to play out. It was decided that more valuable experience would be gained if we planned an organized but original play rather than purely extemporaneous puppet performances. But what would be the theme for our play? There were many suggestions reflecting the interests and problems of thinking adults. Among those brought forward and discussed at some length were the current elections, academic freedom, democracy in a large school system, the teachers' new role in the changing curriculum. There was plenty of heat and some light generated in the eager, often tempestuous, response of the group to these suggestions. The analogy with the quality of children's social studies discussion was so clear that the group leader hardly needed to comment. A teacher would suddenly cry out, "Whew, no wonder the children get noisy when they're interested."

The final choice of subject was none of these but one that grew out of and included most of them—namely the life of the teacher in the classroom. Then the workshop took on the manifold aspects of an art room, a class in creative writing, a carpentry room, a music studio, and of course a dramatic club. The teachers modelled their papier maché puppet heads, painted faces, made wigs and costumes, painted scenery, worked out a simple puppet stage and lighting for it, practiced some simple songs, wrote outlines of scenes after the group as a whole had developed the pattern for the play and assigned parts of it to different groups, and rehearsed the semi-extemporaneous dialogue. The informality of the set-up provided for rich opportunity for true multi-lateral discussion from class member to class member rather than the accepted student-leader type that is almost inevitable even in a most democratically organized group situation. Four or five people sitting around a table working (sometimes only playing or even messing) with clay find themselves talking out their questions as teachers and groping sincerely and profoundly for solutions, and if the workshop leader happens to help with clay modelling and lingers to listen or seek answers with the group, so much the better for all.

These teachers began to understand that creative activity

demands a relaxed atmosphere, that even chatting among children is often the most positive intellectual exercise that they are capable of at some stages of development. And how important it is not only *not* to demand absolute quiet, but even to provide opportunity for child-to-child communication.

Up to this point there had been no talk of presentation of the finished puppet play. We were truly absorbed in the process rather than the product. But the opportunity to "put on" our show before a meeting of teachers and supervisors presented itself and it was decided to finish it up and accept a deadline. The plus and minus of the need to put our material into a form acceptable to others—working for a product and an audience—became apparent at once. Pressure there was of course, not only the pressure of time but also standards. "Is mine good enough to use?" "Will they understand this scene?" "Will they see the joke?" And on the other hand there was also exhilaration and some subtle mischievousness about the chance offered by puppets to get some long standing hostilities out of their feelings.

Does one need to articulate the comparisons with children—the important emotional values in situations that are dramatized?

We were careful not to set perfectionist goals for our performance, and our puppet show was far from a professional job. But the quality of spontaneity and gaiety made up for muffed lines, the piece of scenery that fell down, the need for quick ad-libbing here and there. Our audience caught the spirit of the undertaking and responded intimately and with warmth.

Then we had a session together when we were teachers again. What and how had we learned and what bearing did it have on what and how we taught? When we summarize values we tend to lose sight of intangibles but evaluation is a necessary procedure nevertheless. In ascending order of importance these were some contributions of the members of the group.

The value of *creativity*—making something however simple, and having it function.

The value of *group performance*—especially when there is reality to interdependence of members of a group.

The value of an organic *wholeness* of a project—how many subject areas can be learned in the context of a group goal.



We have only done this superficially but we were constantly aware of the many leads there was no time to pursue.

The value of zestful *pleasure* in a learning process.

The value of making a *contribution*—we gave our puppets to the school for the children to use.

For the leaders of the workshop the final decision of this session was most meaningful of all. The group decided to carry on next semester in somewhat similar fashion—namely to develop a project in another area of school program. They decided to work on a neighborhood survey, which later was mapped out and used by the teachers of the school in a study of the environment.

## SILENCE

Silence isn't.  
Silence is.  
But sometimes  
Nothing can break the dull or sharp  
Ways of Silence.

In the summer  
When the air is humid  
And the weather hot  
Silence is a dull affair.  
But in the fall or early  
Spring,  
When the air is brisk and chilly;  
The Silence then,  
Is crisp and sharp.

The man with no hat,  
Whose ears are red and cold,  
With only the  
Tap, tap, tap  
Of his heels against the hard  
Cement sidewalks of the big city  
To break the monotony of the  
Silence.

The small child with bare legs  
Covered with goose bumps.  
Only socks to keep her ankles and feet  
Warm. Chattering teeth  
Are the only things that break  
The surface of the  
Silence.

Here's the stray cat with padded feet  
And a furry coat that  
Serves its purpose in  
Any kind of weather.  
The cat makes no noise  
At all, and has no protection against  
Silence.

And the lonely tenement,  
Long since vacated,  
With broken windows and a  
Few slats to serve as a  
Door. The wind  
Whistling through the  
Jagged edges of the windows;  
It has protection from  
Silence.

—By a thirteen-year-old girl

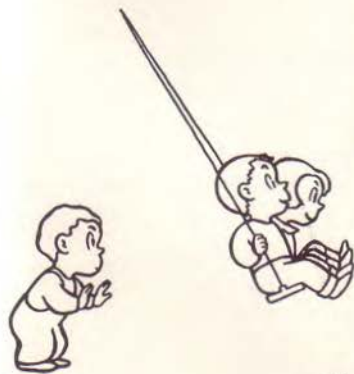
## *What is the Bank Street College of Education?*

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The Bank Street College of Education conducts a demonstration Nursery School for a hundred children from two and a half through five years old, with an extensive program for parents. It conducts a School for Teachers, a pioneer experiment in teacher education for college graduates working for a Masters Degree as preparation for teaching children of nursery and elementary school ages. The School for Teachers also carries on a large and varied program of evening courses for teachers who are engaged in professional work in nursery schools, day care centers, in elementary schools—public and private—in public playgrounds and settlements. Through the Bank Street Workshops, the School for Teachers has developed an extensive program with teachers in our public schools. And the Workshop staff also cooperates with many of our Board of Education Committees and Departments on curriculum planning, parent meetings and research projects. The Bank Street College research staff works closely with the faculty of the School for Teachers on the problems which arise in their own intensive experiment in teacher education; and also with outside community organizations on problems that arise in a great school system. From the Bank Street Writers Laboratory, where professional writers for children and about children combine the study of children's needs with the study of children's language, has come a large number of books for children. The Bank Street Bookshop, housed in the college building, carries the publications of the Bank Street research staff, the teaching faculty and the Writers Laboratory, and also a careful selection of books for children, teachers and parents by outside authors.

Yet these many kinds of work are closely interrelated in practice. This is the outstanding characteristic of Bank Street. The staff of the departments work jointly on a unified program, with a common philosophy or credo. It has proved a fruitful, even an exciting experience to see a problem through the eyes of people with differing training and knowledge. Each group learns more about children than any group could learn by itself.

At Bank Street we not only believe in children; we enjoy children. We hope CHILDREN HERE AND NOW will succeed in presenting children not merely as problems to be studied, but as the growing human beings we know and love.





## *Message from the President of the Associates*

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You who are reading CHILDREN HERE AND NOW will want to know about the Associates of the Bank Street College of Education.

The Charter Associates came together in the spring of 1952 because we are friends of Bank Street College and share its philosophy about children. Bank Street believes in the serious attempt to understand what children are like. This we call research. Bank Street believes in the serious attempt to use what knowledge we have about children so that their homes, their schools, their cultural environment, may become better places in which to grow up. We believe that an Associates organization can further these goals or aims by spreading this interest in constructive work for children and by helping Bank Street to carry on its work.

Our program this year has been designed primarily to bring the work of Bank Street College before a larger community. And so there has been an Open House at 69 Bank Street; an appeal for membership which included a brochure describing the College program; an educational conference at the Hotel Biltmore on "The City Child Learns to Live." To keep the Associates themselves in close contact with College activities, members have received reprints issued by the Publications Division. Now we are sending out this first issue of CHILDREN HERE AND NOW. There have been special days scheduled for the Associates to visit the Nursery School, to attend parent meetings, to see the activities in the Public Schools Workshops and the School for Teachers. Finally in May there will be the Annual Meeting of the Associates with a program presented by members of the student group.

I want to acknowledge with great appreciation the spirit and work of all those Associates and staff members at Bank Street who have made this first year's program possible and successful.

It has been a stimulating and gratifying experience as President of the Associates to be working closely with Bank Street College. It is a privilege that I wish I could share with many. In the name of the Associates and their Charter Members, I greet those who have joined with us in this first year of our organization and issue a cordial invitation to other friends of Bank Street to become one of us.

BEATRICE W. LAMM.

# Small, Yet Large

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## FROM A CHARTER ASSOCIATE

The influence of Bank Street has been likened to that of the proverbial drop of water in a pond. Others say the better mouse-trap analogy fits. Still others claim that only osmosis explains the extensive life-giving qualities which the multiple Bank Street activities have contributed to child understanding, hence to child and adult relationships and education.

Former students of Bank Street, foreign visitors, social workers, artists, psychiatrists, teachers, psychologists, parents (who may or may not fall into other categories) and others continually remind me how varied and vigorous are the Bank Street findings, methods, and attitudes. Above all, they stress the leadership in ideas which not only stem from there, but find expression both there and elsewhere . . . Small wonder that the chance to be a Bank Street Associate is appealing. What fine company to be associated with, now that we are invited to stand up and be counted on behalf of a richer life for all children in the living of each day!

ELIZABETH HEALY ROSS  
*Deputy Chief, Children's Bureau  
Federal Security Agency*



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