

1960

You should have seen me yesterday. (A practical pamphlet for parents of preschool blind children directed toward developing the multi-sensory aspects of the home environment)

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*Thesis
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1960*

Boston University
School of Education

Thesis

YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN ME YESTERDAY

(A Practical Pamphlet for Parents of Preschool
Blind Children Directed Toward Developing
the Multisensory Aspects of the Home Environment)

Submitted by

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In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
for Degree of Master of Education

1960

Boston University
School of Education
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Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Acknowledgement	I
<u>Chapter I</u>	1
Introduction	1
Purpose.	1
Justification.	2
Scope.	4
<u>Chapter II.</u>	6
Review of Literature	6
Professional Literature.	6
Literature for Parents	9
Standards of Achievement	15
<u>Chapter III</u>	18
Procedure.	18
Criteria	21
<u>Chapter IV</u>	22
To You, The Parents.	22
May I Introduce You To My Family?.	25
You Should Have Seen Me Yesterday.	27
More Activities.	48
These May Be Helpful	52
<u>Chapter V</u>	53
Summary.	53
Limitations.	54
Suggestions for Further Study.	54
Bibliography.	55

Acknowledgement

To Miss Saphronie Peterson, I wish to express my gratitude for the example she has given me. Her understanding and patience with blind children so often demonstrated to me, have been the basis for the contents of this booklet for parents.

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Most parents of blind children are sighted. Many of them have not had close contact with a blind person. For this reason, the entrance of a blind child into their family circle presents a completely new situation. The most obvious factor to the parents is their child's blindness. He is different, so they make changes and adjustments in their daily living activities to compensate for the child's loss. In doing so, they sometimes fail to challenge his abilities.

However, few adaptations in method need to be made for a blind child. Activity during a regular household day has many multisensory aspects. A few examples of these are: the swish, swish of the washing machine, the bubbling sound of a perculator and the sweet aroma which accompanies that sound, the humming sound of a vacuum cleaner, and the sound of letters dropping in the mailbox. These and many others can be utilized in acquainting a blind child with his environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to develop a booklet for parents of preschool blind children to illustrate the way in which every-day activities can become a meaningful part of their child's life. The blind child can be led to discover the associations between his mother's cooking, baking,

washing and ironing and the sounds, smells and feelings which accompany them. The numerous examples in this booklet are expressed with the hope that they will suggest other variations and elaborations for the same basic methods which are presented.

Justification

Meaningful experiences for blind children must be presented at the preschool level.

"It has long been recognized that the foundation of a child's character and future is laid during the preschool years. The patterns of feelings, thinking, and behavior which he acquires during this period are likely to remain with him through life. The kind of personality he thus gradually develops will either help or hinder him in realizing his aims in life."¹

Proper development will not come unless parents acquaint their child with his environment in a realistic manner.

A considerable amount of published material seems to indicate that methods geared to blindness are necessary. It is true that all children differ and blindness creates a vast difference; however, all children possess many similar needs and abilities. A manual which centers its activities around the development of existing senses seems to be missing from present literature.

¹/Harriet E. Totman, "Why Should We Be Concerned About the Preschool Blind Child?" Journal of American Association for Instructors of the Blind, Austin, Texas, (June 21-25, 1948,) p. 47.

Because the child cannot see, he must be assisted in developing his abilities. A manual which uses a practical approach to the development of the senses of hearing, smell and touch, would be meaningful to parents and beneficial to their blind child.

Parents have need for guidance in determining when their blind child's requirements are merely those of any child and when he needs some special modification of what the sighted child should have. Any kindergarten teacher knows there are social and emotional and developmental gaps in many young blind children.

"A group of new comers in the primary department of a school for the blind presents an amazing picture for one who observes such a class for the first time. Compared to a group of normal seeing children with corresponding ages these little boys and girls, are in general, considerably retarded in their speech, and their knowledge of the world around them. They are also retarded in their ability to amuse themselves, to get along with their playmates, to cooperate in games, and to care for themselves in eating and in dressing. Many of them show symptoms of maladjustment such as temper tantrums, day dreaming, enuresia, extreme timidity or other infantile reactions."²

Although some retardation is necessarily present in all blind children, much can be eliminated.

A kindergarten teacher should not be expected to provide preschool training.

"The most obvious fact about the whole situation is that the kindergarten teacher is forced to attack these problems

²/Harriet Anderson Fjeld and Kathryn Maxfield, "Why a Program For Research on Preschool Blind Children, Arthur Sunshine Home, Provincetown, Massachusetts, 1938, p.43.

at a period far too late in the developmental history of the child."³

Parents should be helped to understand that their blind child is similar to other children.

"Blindness does not change methods of child care and education though it modifies some of them."⁴

Scope

The child described in this booklet is a member of a family whose activities are similar to most American families. The child is blind. A detailed presentation of the way he learns about his family and his home is given in a step by step account of one day's activities. The child eats, "helps" his mother with household chores, plays with his sister and brother and talks with his father as he gets ready for bed. Because of his blindness, the mother's approach and that of all his family is directed toward maximal use of his existing senses. Since the blind child cannot glance at a refrigerator and observe the number of shelves and other parts it possesses, time is taken for a tactual investigation which would not ordinarily be engaged in by a sighted child. Doing and learning and getting to know can be exciting activities for a blind child. The suggestions and examples used in this pamphlet are just a few of the many ways in which the

³/Ibid., Fjeld, p. 44.

⁴/Berthold Lowenfeld, Ph.D., Our Blind Children, Growing and Learning with them, Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1956, p. 4.

"ordinary" can be made meaningful and interesting to the blind child.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

The field of special education is steadily enlarging with greater particularization each year. One branch of special education is the education of the blind and the partially seeing child. A particular aspect of that branch is the training of the preschool blind and partially sighted child.

Within this area, the literature can be conveniently classified into two groups: 1) That which has been written about preschool blind children and their parents for the benefit of educators and other professional people and, 2) That which has been written to and for parents of preschool blind children. In this instance, the latter group is of greatest importance; however, the former represents a recognition of the need for proper child development and training at the preschool age. A great deal of observation of and discussions with parents and preschool blind children have been fostered. Those who have investigated this matter have drawn some conclusions about the needs of the preschool blind child and his parents.

Professional Literature

"Educators, psychologists, pediatricians, psychiatrists, and social workers are in agreement that any service for children must be based on a wide and thorough knowledge about the stages in the individual's growth process in formative years. These years are the strategic ones, and the effects of experiences then are actively demonstrated

in adult life. Security for the young child usually nets a well-integrated adult personality."⁵

This viewpoint was expressed by Lowenfeld in 1947 and has been re-established by others in succeeding years. Those who have discovered the need for the provision of proper training of the preschool blind child have expressed themselves at meetings of educators and other specialists. In 1948 Harriet Totman addressed the American Association of Instructors of the Blind as follows:

"It is disturbing to see that, by and large, educators of the blind have been neglecting the five most precious years of these children's lives--the years when they learn or lose the most, the years when the basic physical habits and skills are laid down, and the years that have been most profound in the influence on the character and personality of the child."⁶

Having agreed that there is a need in the field is a step forward in itself, but the next step must be the providing of facilities which will remedy the situation. As yet, there is a lack of personnel to meet the needs of parents of blind babies. Preschool institutes have played their part in alleviating the problem but the number affected by their existence is small in comparison to the total population of blind children. In 1951, the American Foundation for the Blind published the results of a questionnaire which represented the existing services to preschool blind children and their parents, according to type of program they were:

⁵Berthold Lowenfeld, Ph.D., The Blind Preschool Child, American Foundation for the Blind, Inc., New York, 1947, p. 43.

⁶Harriet E. Totman, op. cit., p. 47.

"Home visiting or counseling by a public agency 15
 Summer Institute with limited part-time service 12
 Day nursery conducted by a private agency 6
 Residential nursery conducted by a private agency 2
 Hospital counseling service 2
 Residential nursery conducted by a public agency 1"

7

The forty-five agencies represent twenty-two states. Those programs existing represent only temporary personal contact with parents with limited frequency. While the program cited is encouraging, it is obvious that the majority of preschool children and their parents are not being served. In concluding this survey, the first recommendation which was made by the authors was:

"1. The development of more adequate services to parents of blind children."⁸

A great deal of time and effort has been spent by specialists striving to discover and understand parental reactions and attitudes. Understanding the need is the first step toward meeting it. In his Parental Problems Associated with Adjustment Difficulties in Handicapped Children,⁹ Isaac L. Battin, Consultant at the Boston Home for Blind Babies, discusses parental attitudes and uses a diagnostic approach to problems.

⁷/American Foundation for the Blind, Bulletin, 5 West 16th Street, New York, New York, (April, 1951,) p. 2.

⁸/ Ibid., p. 19.

⁹/ Isaac L. Battin, Parental Problems Associated with Adjustment Difficulties in Handicapped Children, Center for Blind Children, Boston, Massachusetts, 1958.

The ways in which various types of parents react to the arrival of a blind child into the family include denial of the handicap, recognition of the handicap resulting in rejection of the child, or some form of acceptance which might include over-protection of the child. He also discusses guilt feelings and numerous compensatory reactions of parents. Pauline Moor, American Foundation Consultant in Education, discusses parental reactions and guidance needs within her Meeting the Needs of the Preschool Blind Child and His Parents.¹⁰ She particularly emphasizes the need for preschool counseling, casework services, institutes for parents and formation of parents' organizations. She also recognizes the need for special training of workers in the preschool field.

Literature for Parents

Since there are many parents who cannot be assisted by counselors or social workers, various manuals and guides for parents of preschool blind children have been written for their benefit. Only a few of the more recent publications have actually reached and been used by parents.

Within the Perkins Blindiana Library¹¹ are many publications written in foreign languages, particularly German. Among the few which have been translated are two pamphlets of some import to the preschool field. Each very definitely and

¹⁰/Pauline Moor, "Meeting the Needs of the Preschool Blind Child and His Parents," Education, Vol. 74, No. 6, (February 1954,) p. 383-389.

¹¹/Perkins Blindiana Library, Watertown, Massachusetts.

quite abruptly specifies that the blind child should be treated as if he were sighted. Along with his brief but inclusive list of household and outdoor chores which should be assigned to the blind child, Sizeranne states:

"10. Educate blind child to live among the seeing and in his carriage and in his habits of life and in his work to differ from them as little as possible."¹²

The first of seventeen points in the German pamphlet is:

"1. Treat the blind child as a seeing child."¹³

The seemingly indifferent and impersonal treatment which is given to the blind child in the two pamphlets mentioned above, would never appeal to the contemporary American parent; nevertheless, the practicality of the approach is significant.

A milder but similar approach is given by the well known pioneer in education of the blind in the United States, Dr. Edward Allen. He concludes his Message to Mothers of Blind Children as follows:

"I want to leave with you what I consider the most fundamental and vital suggestions I can give, namely, never allow the blind child to be inactive or unoccupied, and treat him entirely as though his eyes were open to the light, and truly you shall have your reward."¹⁴

In their haste to become specialized, the writers of today

¹²/Maurice de La Sizeranne, Manual for Early Training of Blind Children, translated from French, Publisher unknown.

¹³/Schneider, (translator,) How Should Parents Train and Treat Their Blind Children? Translated from German, Publisher unknown.

¹⁴/Dr. Edward Allen: Message to Mothers of Blind Children, Published by order of the National Conference of Mothers, 2nd and 3rd annual meeting, 1888-1889.

sometimes miss the point which the writings of earlier times so steadfastly make. The blind child should be treated as a child.

The extent to which those in special education specialize is illustrated in manuals for parents of preschool blind children. The National Institute for the Blind Bulletin in 1951 asks the question, "Ought we to treat him in a special way from the beginning?"¹⁵ Although the answer implied is negative, examples of special ways to train the blind child to eat, walk, talk and play are given. The majority of writers treat of these same topics.

These are basic learning patterns and it is not surprising to discover that so many specialists have taken the time and paper to describe methods which can be used while teaching the blind child. Those manuals which contain the same basic categories--eating, talking, walking and playing--are Mikel's Normal Growth and Development of Children with Visual Handicaps,¹⁶ Edith Speer's A Manual for Parents of Preschool Blind Children,¹⁷ and Leah Katz and Eunice Kenyon's Understanding

¹⁵/Norah Gibbs, M. A., The Care of Young Blind Children, National Institute for the Blind, Bulletins, No. 18, N.I.B. publication, London, 1951.

¹⁶/Robert Mikel, Normal Growth and Development of Children with Visual Handicaps, American Foundation for the Blind, publication, Preschool Series, No. 3, 1956.

¹⁷/Edith L. Speer, A Manual for the Parents of Preschool Blind Children, New York Association for the Blind, New York, 1944.

Your Blind Child.¹⁸ Also included within the group which stresses the "special" way to teach a blind child his basic learning processes is Anna E. Wolfers who in 1936 directed her discussion of the physical care of the blind child to parents and primary teachers.¹⁹ Gertrude Van den Broek's Guide for Parents of a Preschool Blind Child²⁰ is an all inclusive description of the child's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual life. Although it is not as specific and detailed as some, it is an appealing and enthusiastic approach which parents would enjoy reading. Such practical suggestions as teaching the child orderliness and providing him with an abundance of first-hand experiences exemplify the practical and realistic attitude expressed in Miss Van den Broek's guide to parents.

Still another author, Gordon Connor,²¹ covers these essentials in the life of the preschool blind child with emphasis on the desirable relationship between parents and child. He brings forth the idea that the blind child is more impressionable than any other child and therefore, his experiences should be ideal and somewhat prearranged.

¹⁸/Leah Katz and Eunice Kenyon, Understanding Your Blind Child, New York Light House Nursery School, New York, 1953.

¹⁹/ Anna E. Wolfers, The Preschool Blind Child, Boston Nursery for Blind Babies, Boston, Massachusetts, 1936.

²⁰/Gertrude Van den Broek, A Guide for Parents of a Preschool Blind Child, New York Association for the Blind, New York State Department of Social Welfare, publication, (Sept. 1945.)

²¹/Gordon B. Connor, Preschool Blind Children, unpublished paper, Perkins Blindiana Library, 1953.

Pauline Moor's efforts to assist parents of preschool blind children are well known and worthy of mention. She has written many a directive note to parents with much particularization. Among her writings is an article considering toilet training the blind child.²² Her work exemplifies the philosophy that blind children are "different" and should be treated differently.

Berthold Lowenfeld is a name which represents experience in the field of special education. His contributions are partially found in his book published in 1947, The Blind Preschool Child.²³ Although it is primarily beneficial to educators and specialists, its treatment of social work, educational and medical aspects regarding the blind is enlightening and highly desirable reading for parents.

His more recent book, Our Blind Children, published in 1956, is one which all parents of blind children should read. The purchase of this book is recommended at preschool institutes for parents. If the parents of preschool blind children had early access to Lowenfeld's Our Blind Children, some of the initial shock and bewilderment might be lessened. The positive and optimistic approach which is expressed throughout is refreshing and would be encouraging to any parent.

²²/Pauline Moor, Toilet Habits, Suggestions for Training a Blind Child, Boston Foundation for Vision, publication, Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, 1951.

²³/Lowenfeld, The Blind Preschool Child, op. cit.

Included within the book is a resume of various educational and occupational possibilities for the blind individual. The book concludes with a chapter titled, "Questions Parents Often Ask."²⁴

Chapter V of Lowenfeld's book might be called a composite of all previous manuals and handbooks for parents of preschool blind children. "Growing Toward Independence"²⁵ treats the physical and emotional needs which are always included in writings directed to parents. The topics included are: learning to eat, toilet training, sleeping habits, learning to dress, gaining body control and learning to walk, learning to talk, play experiences and emotional growth.

Because of the similarity of the writings mentioned previously, it is unnecessary to particularize any further. Each has its individual way of describing methods of teaching the blind child, but the general result is teaching the child to do all the life processes before mentioned. The majority of these writings has appeared since 1950 and reflects the specialized attitude which has existed in the past decade. An effort has been made to understand and meet the child's particular needs, and so the fact that he is blind is foremost in the minds of the writers. What they have to say about methods in teaching the blind child usually suggests adjustments which must be made with new procedures in mind, rather than modifications of methods used with all children.

²⁴/Lowenfeld, Our Blind Children, op.cit.

²⁵/Ibid. pp.25-99.

Standards of Achievement

There are standards set by educators which list the expected achievement level of kindergarten children. The achievement level of a sighted child is herewith compared to that of a blind child of similar age.

The following is a list of specific expectations for school readiness for sighted children. The child should:

- "1. Be able to care for his personal needs, feed and dress himself, take care of his own toilet needs, walk up and down stairs unassisted, be able to go about the home, yard, and neighborhood without getting lost and get to and from school without assistance.
2. Be able to speak clearly, use sentences, and give more than single word answers to questions.
3. Be sufficiently developed in motor coordination to use scissors and simple tools.
4. Play by himself for definite periods, play reasonably well with other children, respect persons and property of others, know how to take care of play equipment without constant supervision, be sufficiently mature to be able to get along without parents for reasonably long periods.

Specifically for reading readiness the child should have:

1. Some idea of number, color and size.
2. Ability to pay attention for long periods of time.
3. Be able to resume work after interruption without forgetting what he is doing.
4. Carry out simple instructions.
5. Follow a line across a page.
6. Have hand and finger coordination.
7. Have had first-hand contact with many objects.
8. Have had real experiences."

26

In comparison to the previous quote, the expected achievement of a blind child of kindergarten age is here taken from A Social Maturity Scale for Blind Preschool Children.

"Age 4-5:

71. Takes active part in dramatic play. Begins to interpret songs and stories, and acts them out. Plays singing games.
72. Separates from parent or other familiar person with little or no fussing. Leaves home for school or other destination with playmates without difficulty in parting from adult to whom he is emotionally attached.
73. Cares for self at toilet. Takes care of toilet needs including use of toilet paper without more than minimum help from adult.
74. Eats with fork with only moderate spilling. Fork may be used in spoon fashion.
75. Puts on coat or similar garment unassisted. Can put on outer loose garments without help.
76. Washes face unaided. Completes washing of face satisfactorily and without help.
77. Adjusts readily to group situations involving some conformity to rules. Without too much difficulty, child accepts limits or regulations in a relatively well-structured situation such as a nursery school group or on a shopping trip.
78. Goes about the immediate neighborhood freely. This does not necessarily include the crossing of streets and knowledge of a child's whereabouts may be required but he goes about outdoors alone.
79. Uses sled, wagon, skates, or tricycle. Uses at least one of the articles mentioned or something similar without apparent timidity in steering himself.
80. Makes forms with some approximation to that of the intended object. Makes such things as pies or cakes out of mud, clay and/or other media. Recognizes familiar forms well enough to try to imitate in three-dimensional media.
81. Asks questions about meaning of words, how things work and what they are for. Seems to be really inquisitive about objects and happenings in environment.
82. Is spurred on in various activities by competition of other children of approximately the same age and group. Does his best to win the game, jump the highest, etc.

83. Tells a long familiar story. Retells stories of at least two or three episodes that he has heard before with a fair degree of continuity and accuracy.
84. Unbuttons front and side buttons if they are not small. Buttons should be large enough to handle comfortably and should fit easily in the buttonhole.
85. Carries out extended projects involving physical activity which continues from one day to the next. Plays and organizes games which involve his interest and activity. Will leave toys set up until the next day when he will continue the game"²⁷

In many instances the sighted child and the blind child are expected to perform comparable tasks. However, the difference in time required for the blind child to learn a process and the modifications of that process must be recognized.

The literature which has been cited here represents research and study on the part of the authors. Their awareness of the problems which parents of preschool blind children must face is encouraging. Their understanding should serve as a means for educating preschool and social workers. A further establishing of preschool services such as the ones described in the April, 1951 American Foundation Bulletin,²⁸ should provide the immediate assistance which is so vital to parents. The proper contact at the correct time should reduce maladjustment and unnecessary retardation in preschool blind children.

²⁷/Kathryn E. Maxfield, Ph.D. and Sandra Buchholz, M.A., A Social Maturity Scale for Blind Preschool Children, American Foundation for the Blind, New York, 1953, pp. 33-35.

²⁸/American Foundation for the Blind, Bulletin, (April, 1951.), op. cit.

CHAPTER III

Procedure

The most valuable information received in the preparation of this booklet for parents of preschool blind children was obtained through personal contact with preschool-age and primary-age children and their parents.

The major sources used in formulating material for the booklet are:

1. Discussions with Miss Saphronie Peterson, primary teacher and preschool institute worker at the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped.
2. An interview and discussion with Mrs. Karl Tabery, head kindergarten teacher at Perkins School for the Blind.
3. A talk given at the Wisconsin Preschool Institute, 1958 by Mr. John W. Melcher, head of Bureau for Handicapped Children.
4. Personal associations with blind children during practice teaching and work at preschool institutes as well as discussions with persons blind since birth.

In order to particularize more specifically, examples of ideas obtained from these sources are provided here briefly.

Miss Saphronie Peterson, a blind teacher at the Wisconsin School for the Visually Handicapped has taught in the primary grades for thirty years and has directed the preschool institutes there for ten years. During this time she has had a

great deal of contact with many blind children. Personal contact with Miss Peterson has benefited the writer. Her practice of playing an object naming game in class suggested similar activities which have been incorporated in the pamphlet. Another game suggested by Miss Peterson is the music box game which can be played with a clock or any other noise-making object. The understanding of the feelings and thoughts of a blind person possessed by Miss Peterson is immeasurable and this author's indebtedness to her is the same.

There are two specific contributions to the pamphlet made by Mrs. Karl Tabery, head kindergarten teacher at Perkins School for the Blind. Firstly, she supplied the writer with a list of concepts which a kindergarten child is expected to know upon entering kindergarten, or at the very latest, upon entering the first grade. Some of these concepts included on the list and within the pamphlet are:

above	below	behind
beneath	around	beside
back	front	between
in back	before	in front of
straight	up	down
left	right	slow
fast	push	pull
round	circle	square
yesterday	today	tomorrow

The second contributing factor is the one involving the blind child seeing things as a whole. Mrs. Tabery pointed out the fact that blind children have difficulty forming a realistic picture of articles or objects which are too large to be held in the hands and must necessarily be examined piecemeal.

Along with this same idea is the fact that a part of a whole; for example, a piece of pie does not represent the total picture of the whole from which it came. To a blind person, a piece of pie means the pieces he puts on his fork and into his mouth unless, at some time, he has had the opportunity to feel the whole pie before it is cut, and the whole piece of pie before it has been cut into bitesize pieces for eating. This idea has been considered in the presentation of the every day activities included within the booklet.

The ideas brought forth by Mr. John W. Melcher can best be illustrated by direct quotations. He begins:

"First of all, your blind child is a child. I could spend thirty-four days on how he is like other children and just one day on how he is different. We must remember this because so many times we're carried away by the idea of how any handicapped youngster is different because this is obvious to us. I will be dwelling on his differences but I want it understood that I recognize him first, as a child with all the needs, and all the abilities and all the shortcomings that other children possess."²⁹

Mr. Melcher's comparisons between his own sighted children and other blind children proved inspirational to the parents present as well as to this writer. The advice given by Mr. Melcher to the parents assembled served as guideposts to this author. He said: "Be consistent" and "The best deterrent for discipline is activity."³⁰

²⁹/John W. Melcher, "The Social and Emotional Development of Preschool Blind Children, an address given to parents at the Wisconsin Institute for Parents of Preschool Blind Children, (August 11, 1958.)

³⁰/Ibid.

It is impossible to determine the extent to which the author's personal experience and informal relations with many blind people influences that which is found in the pamphlet for parents of preschool blind children. It is suspected that since the author is herself partially sighted, and since she is a member of a family possessing two of three siblings with limited vision, the presentation has inevitably been influenced by personal experience. The birthday game described is one which was devised by the author and her sister at a very early age when the tactile sense must have outweighed all the other senses. The writer has been fortunate enough to possess parents who had the foresight to magnify the existing abilities of all of their children while, at the same time, minimizing deficiencies.

Criteria

The criteria upon which the booklet for parents of preschool blind children is based can be outlined as follows:

1. The blind child is first and foremost a child--his blindness is one of his qualities.
2. The blind child possesses certain innate abilities which will develop naturally if given the appropriate stimulus.
3. Parental treatment of the blind child should be consistent with treatment of the blind child's siblings.
4. The blind child's concept of objects too large to be held must evolve from a thorough examination of the parts of the whole.
5. Methods used with sighted children in teaching them to eat and play and to do all the essential life processes need only be adapted for the blind child when his blindness dictates.

CHAPTER IV

You Should Have Seen Me Yesterday!

(A Directive Note to Parents of Preschool Blind Children)

TO YOU, THE PARENTS

Is your child blind? Notice that child precedes blind. If you have a child who is blind, the child is, first, a boy or a girl. You have given him or her a name. When you speak that name, whether it be Joe or Marie, do you immediately think "My little boy," or "My little girl."? Or do you think of your blind little boy or your blind little girl? In other words, which is most obvious to you, the blindness or the fact that your boy or girl is first, a child?

If you could look into the mind of your blind child, you would discover that he thinks first and foremost that he is a little human being anxious to learn about the world in which he finds himself. He busies himself with discovering the way and means he has been given to explore this world. He is not immediately concerned with the limitations which his blindness produces. There is a great deal to be done with what he has, and, for some time, he is totally unaware of his deficiency until others refer to his blindness and the adjustments he will have to make because of it.

Of course, the blindness cannot be ignored or overlooked; however, it should not be the axis upon which all activity

revolves. The part which is "child" is so much more important than the blindness. The two cannot be separated, it is true, and the two should not be weighted against each other. One is a quality and the other is a quantity which possesses that quality.

Try to let your child learn as a sighted child does. Let him do everything possible in the usual way unless his blindness requires an adjustment. When it does, wait till it is needed and do not over anticipate your child's needs.

This little booklet contains a day's activities of an imaginary little boy who is blind. He is taking part in everyday activities which most American children enjoy. The detailed processes described as the day passes, are presented as examples. You may find yourself thinking of ways in which you might use similar methods and, perhaps, you will find comparisons with happenings in your own home.

For the sake of developing a family group, this little boy has a mother, a father, a sister Christine and a brother, Jackie.

As you read this little boy's account of his activities, you may discover some ideas which had not yet occurred to you. It is hoped that the ideas which are included here will suggest many more to you. It is not the spectacular and unusual method which must be used with the child who is blind. Most common objects have many sensory aspects which are obvious if one takes the time to notice them. The mere recognition of these

aspects will prompt the utilization of them.

The examples given in this booklet are not standards. This is but one approach which may have some practical value for you. If it provides you with one idea which enables you to help your blind child better understand his environment, it will have been worth your reading.

May I Introduce You to My Family?

I wish you could meet my family! However, since you will never have the chance to meet my mother and daddy and my sister and brother, I'd like to tell you about them. You notice, I said, "chance" to meet them. I said that because they are pretty special people and I feel pretty lucky to be a member of this particular family.

If anyone saw our family picture, they'd say we look like an average family and I suppose that is really what we are. However, there is something special about our family. You see, I am blind, and this is the first time that my family has ever lived with someone who cannot see. When I take that into consideration, my appreciation for them is even greater. They make it easy to be blind. They show me things, explain things, (Daddy teases Mommy about talking too much, but I'm glad she does,) and they never seem to run out of fun-things to do. But then, I guess Jackie and Christine are lucky too because they belong to the same family. I used to think that maybe Mother and Daddy treated me differently, you know, kinda specially, but when I see Jackie and Christine having the same fun and getting the same spankings I get, I expect it wouldn't be any different if I could see. But the "ifs" don't matter since things seem to work out pretty well just the way they are now.

There's just one "if" I would like to imagine and I hope

you would too. Let's pretend you could be an invisible member of my family for one day. If you could, things would go something like they did yesterday. It was Tuesday.....

You Should Have Seen Me Yesterday

"I could tell I had a busy day ahead
Just by the feeling I had when I got out of bed."

When I got up in the morning, Mother was doing the dishes. She didn't seem to mind stopping to get my breakfast. She said, "Good morning," so cheerfully and then, "You look as bright as the sun itself this morning."

She didn't even mind that I had my slippers on the wrong feet. I must have hurried too fast. She just reminded me that I could tell the right from the left by feeling the buttons. They are on the outside of my feet when they are on the right feet and when they're wrong, the buttons click together when I walk.

"I like to have eggs most every day.
Yesterday we poached them, the fun kinda way."

We have a poacher that's fun to put together. It's a pan with a metal rack with five holes that hold the little pans over the water. Mother says there's an easier and quicker way to do it but I think it's fun to rub the butter around in the little pans--that's so the eggs don't stick when it's time to take them out. After Mother put the water in the pan and cracked the eggs into the little buttered pans, she helped me place them in the rack. Then we put the cover on and waited for them to cook. While we waited, Mother showed me the egg shells. They feel so slippery inside and smooth outside. They are so brittle that they crackle when you squash

them. Sometimes I can fit the two halves together just like they were before the egg was cracked but when the shell breaks into too many pieces, that doesn't work so well.

"Does your toaster click when it's through
Toasting the bread just right for you?"

We have a pop-up toaster that almost grabs the bread right out of your hand when you hold it above it. I can tell when it's almost ready to pop out because the toaster gives a "click-click" almost as though it were saying, "Ready." I don't butter my own toast yet--Mommy does that--but when it's time to get some more butter from the refrigerator, I can do that. It's on the bottom shelf of our refrigerator so it's easy to reach. Those long sticks of butter that come four in a box feel so fresh and new when you first take them out. Sometimes they're wrapped in tin foil like gum comes in. Mother had to get the milk bottle when I asked for another glass of milk because that's on the top shelf and I can't reach that high. Besides, a full bottle of milk is pretty heavy and the bottle is so cold and slippery that I might drop it. It's easier to hold the milk that comes in the carton with the spout on the side.

"Our refrigerator has some shelves and a vegetable drawer
The freezer and refrigerator each has its own door."

A refrigerator is kinda like a house with little compartments inside. One day when Mommy had a little extra time

before dinner, she lifted me up and let me feel the freezer. It's all snowy feeling inside there and the hamburger in its package feels just like a brick. Some people have freezers separate from the refrigerator, but our freezer is like the top floor of the house--it's the upstairs of the refrigerator.

We have four shelves in our refrigerator and a drawer that pulls out just like a dresser drawer. There's where the fruits and vegetables keep cool. There's even a light bulb in a refrigerator. I noticed it 'cause it was a little warm. When the door opens, it lights up automatically and when it closes, the light goes out. But I was telling you about yesterday.....

"The nice warm soapy water makes dishes really fun. The hose on the faucet makes the soap suds really run."

After I finished eating, Mother pulled up a chair to the sink and helped me do my own dishes. She was almost finished with the others and the water was still soapy. I just added a little hot water. The hot water is on the right and the cold on the left but even if you didn't know that you could tell by feeling the faucet. When I let the water out, I turned on the little spray hose that Mommy uses when she washes our hair. That really clears the soap suds away in a hurry.

"In the morning Mother helps me choose my clothes. When there are small buttons, she helps me with those."

Jackie and I have a room together. He has the two top

drawers in our dresser and I have the two bottom ones that I reach myself. My coats and a few of my pants and shirts are hung in the closet on the lower rod but the closet belongs mostly to Jackie since most of my things fit into drawers. My undershirts and shorts are in the second from the bottom drawer and I can usually get those on without any help from Mommy. She used to help me before I learned how to tell the back from the front by the little tags she sewed on the back. The socks are in that drawer too. Quite a few of my trousers have elastic around the waistband and they're simple to get on. The ones with zippers in them are fun. T-shirts are simple, but those long-sleeved shirts with all the buttons take a long time. Mother always helps me with my shoes. It's so hard to tie. She says I'll learn how to tie my shoes real good when I get to kindergarten. Maybe if I play with that wooden shoe Christy has, I could learn it before I get there. Mother says Christy needs practice too so I think I'll ask her to help me.

"Some day when I'm bigger, I'll talk on the phone. Without Mommy helping, but just me alone."

Before we did anything else yesterday, Mother ordered the groceries. We go shopping for them sometimes but most of the time Mommy orders them over the phone and Daddy picks them up on his way home from work. I like to listen to the clicks when Mommy dials, (they sound almost like my toy telephone.)

I know what the dial tone sounds like and the busy signal too. One time when Mother was calling Grandma, she let me do the dialing. I did it a few times for practice on my phone before and she helped me on the real phone. I can help Mommy too when she's using the phone. I helped her remember to order butter yesterday.

"There's lots of fun for everyone on washing day. That's one time when we mix our work with play."

The washing is something we all can do. By "we" I mean Christine, Mommy and me. Christine was playing on the back porch but when she heard the washer start she came running. We have an automatic washer and drier and there is no ringer. I did see one once on Grandma's washer.

There's an awful lot of room in our washer. I can't reach inside without standing on a chair but I did feel all around inside one day. Mother wasn't using it to wash so Christy and I got up on the washer and took a good look. The drier has like a big wheel inside it and it goes around real fast while the hot air blows through the clothes. It takes about a half hour for most clothes to dry.

"When wash has been hung out, there's one way to tell. Sunshine in washing has its own special smell."

When it's nice out like it was yesterday, Mother hangs some of the larger clothes like sheets and blankets and Daddy's and Jackie's shirts and her dresses. We help Mommy by taking

turns handing her clothes and clothes pins. I'll really be busy next year when Christine goes to school and I'll have to help Mother alone.

"Did you hear the noise that I just heard?
Was it the squeak of a door or maybe a bird?"

Christy and I played our listening game while Mother hung up the wash. We see who can hear the most noises and take turns telling what we hear. Sometimes it's a dog's bark, or a truck's squeaky brakes, or a train whistle or an airplane or a bird or maybe the wind blowing the sheets Mother has hung up to dry. Sometimes it's a little quiet sound like Mommy dropping a clothes pin. Even clothes pins make noises. When Mommy pushes them over the wet clothes, they squeak and the springs in clip clothes pins sometimes squeak too. Funny, how many different sounds are called squeaks. Daddy's shoes squeak too.

"The next sound we heard meant the mailman had come.
The drop in the box made us know we had some."

We take turns going after the mail. It was my turn yesterday. It's fun to see how many real letters come--you can always tell them 'cause they have stamps that you can feel. The letters that aren't from anybody usually have little paper windows or come without stamps. Some magazines and papers and catalogues you can tell by their size--I knew right away that we had a Sears catalogue yesterday because it is so heavy.

"Should we have sandwiches for dinner like Jackie takes
And maybe vanilla or chocolate milk shakes?"

When Christine and I play in the morning, the lunch is a surprise but other times Mother lets us help decide what we'll have. Daddy gets his lunch in a restaurant but Jackie takes a lunch pail to school. It's fun to look in his pail when he brings it home. Sometimes he leaves a radish or pickle or a part of a sandwich but he never seems to leave a cookie or piece of cake. Those cute little plastic containers that go into lunch buckets are fun to play with. Christy and I like to pretend we're packing our lunch so we put our food in those boxes and cups and dishes on Saturdays when Jackie isn't using them. We pour our cocoa from the thermos bottle and eat our pie from the plastic box that's shaped like a piece of pie. But yesterday we just ate regular.

We had pea soup and lettuce and tomato sandwiches. We had some peas left from the night before so we had whole peas in the soup. Peas are easiest to eat when they're with something else or in soup, otherwise they're so little and round that they roll all over the place. Soda Crackers come in such neat little packages. We have a tin box just the right size to hold the cracker box so they stay nice and fresh.

"The vegetable drawer is full of surprises.
Inside are so many different shapes and sizes."

When I went to get the tomato and lettuce for our sandwiches, I almost got an apple instead of a tomato. They feel

a little alike but the tomato is smoother and softer than the apple. Mommy says that apples sometimes look like tomatoes when they're red. Lettuce looks a lot like cabbage too but it isn't as big and round and hard.

"The hum of the mixer changes sometimes. The faster it goes, the higher it climbs."

We make our milk shakes with the electric mixer. Of course Mother runs it because the beaters whirl pretty fast. It makes a sound almost like the malt machines in the drug store. It just purrs at first and then the faster it goes the higher the sound. Sometimes it sounds like it's sleepy and other times it sounds like it's in a hurry.

"After lunch comes the time we all rest. That's the time that Mommy likes best."

As Mother does the lunch dishes, Christy and I get ready for our nap. Sometimes we just take off our outer clothes and sleep with the bedspread over us, but Mother likes it better if we put on pajamas and get right into bed. I like it best that way too, it's much more comfortable. I can get all undressed by myself unless I happen to be wearing those hard-to-unfasten overalls. I can wash my hands by the sink because we have a little stool to stand on. My wash cloth and towel are on the rack beside the sink so I can reach them.

Mommy lies down a little while too, but she never sleeps as long as we do. After she rests awhile and before we get

up to play, she does the quiet things like mending and ironing or writing letters to the bank or telephone company.

"Christy and I both had birthdays today.
Of course, that's only part of a game we play."

We made up a game one day when we were looking at Mommy's jewelry. We pretended that we were giving each other presents and we picked out our favorite piece of jewelry and take turns guessing which one was taken.

This is the way we play the game now. We each choose a room which is to be the store where we get our gifts. Yesterday I had the den and Christine had Mother and Daddy's bedroom. Then we go to the kitchen to get enough bags to use for wrapping paper. Mommy saves all her paper bags and shopping bags and puts them in a bottom drawer in the kitchen so they're easy to find. The place for putting the presents for each other is on the rug in the dining room. We pile the gifts on opposite ends of the rug. We decided to give each other five presents. When the game begins, we try to be real quiet so we can't hear each other collecting things. Of course the paper always rattles and makes a lot of noise but that doesn't give any hints about what's inside.

When we both had five gifts put on the rug, it was time to open them. We open each of them, one at a time and take turns trying to guess what's inside before we look. I gave Christy a letter opener, some scotch tape, a pair of scissors, a spool of thread and some marbles from the Chinese Checkers

game. She guessed the marbles before she opened them because they rattled. I guessed two of my birthday presents. One was a hair brush which felt prickly even from the outside of the bag and the other was Daddy's shoe. It was so big and heavy, I knew it had to be a slipper or a shoe. The other three gifts Christy gave me were a wash rag, one of Mother's handkerchieves, and a shoe horn. The wash cloth and handkerchief were so thin that I thought at first the bags were empty.

After we look at the gifts, we have to put them back where they belong. I went with Christy into the bedroom and tried to figure out where she got the things and she went with me into the den to find the places for the gifts I gave her.

"Wash day isn't over till the clothes come in
And the pins and clothes are put in order again."

After that game Mother was ready to take the clothes off the line so we helped her bring it in. I can fold towels and wash cloths pretty well when Christy helps me but Mother has to do the rest. Right after we brought in the clothes, Mommy sprinkled the starched clothes and rolled them up and put them in a plastic bag. That keeps it from drying out too much before ironing. Funny, how you wait for the clothes to dry and then you wet them again. Mommy says the iron gets the wrinkles out better when you do it like that. She showed me the difference once and the sprinkled shirt did feel nicer and smoother than the shirt that hadn't been sprinkled.

It's fun to empty the sprinkling bottle when Mother's finished using it. You just shake it up and down in the sink and it sprays just like a salt shaker. Takes quite awhile to empty it that way.

"Is he up on the table or under the chair?
Be quiet so I can hear where's the bear."

While Mother ironed we played a game we learned last Christmas. I got a music box teddy bear from Santa Claus and one day it started playing by itself. We tried to guess where it was because Christy couldn't see him anywhere. He had fallen behind the sofa and we finally got back there and picked him up.

Now we just take turns hiding the bear somewhere. The one who hides it just gives the little key a couple turns so he'll play a short time. After that, the one who has been standing in the middle of the room listening must try to remember where the sound came from. He gets three guesses before his time is up. Of course Christy has to be blind folded for this game.

Some of the places we hide the bear are on the buffet, under the coffee table, on top of the TV, behind the piano, between the magazines in the magazine rack and just anywhere that might be hard to guess. I do pretty well at this game but it's probably because I know where things are without looking and Christy sees where everything is and doesn't have to know.

"We're having an oven-baked dinner tonight.
Wonder how Mommy gets the pans in just right."

We have our dinner at night at our house. Last night we had meat loaf, baked potatoes, cabbage salad and corn. For dessert we had my favorite--strawberry shortcake.

Last night's supper was easy to make, Mother said, so she let us help. Everything except the corn went into the oven. Oh yes, and the cabbage of course--you never put salad in the oven.

First we looked in the potato bag for five potatoes just right for baking. Then I got the vegetable brush and put the potatoes in water and washed them. They weren't really dirty, just a few grains of sand, but it's good to make sure 'cause Daddy likes to eat the skins with butter on them. After that I poked a couple holes in the potatoes with a fork, (Mother says you do that so the potatoes won't burst inside the oven.) I can't put the potatoes in the oven myself because it's already warmed up when you put the food in. Mother can see inside 'cause there's a light like the refrigerator has and so she doesn't get burned. Besides, when it's time, she has to put the meat loaf and shortcake in the right places so it all fits and gets baked just right.

There's a lot that goes into making meat loaf but Mother says it's the easiest thing to make. I wonder how she remembers to get it all in so it comes out just right. One thing she lets me do is crumble up the soda crackers in a plastic bag

Sometimes the meat loaf gets too sticky and gooey so Mommy puts in oatmeal to make it drier. The stuff that makes it gooey is the eggs and the catsup. We have a cute plastic squeeze bottle for the catsup that's fun to squirt. Onion is what really adds the taste to it. I like the smell of onion but it kinda makes my eyes water when I get too close to Mommy when she's cutting it up. Besides onion, we put in green peppers. They feel so funny--so smooth and hard with little ridges. They don't feel like anything else I know. Of course you can't make meat loaf without salt and pepper so I try to remember to remind Mother to put it in.

"It only takes a minute to make
The batter for the strawberry cake."

Flour has a dusty smell especially when it's sifted. I can always tell when Mommy is about to bake something because the flour smells. I like to hear the sandy sound of the sifter. It's something like the sound mine makes in the sand box. Mine never makes the sand as fine and fluffy as the flour gets. I like the smells that come from the spice canisters. There's a whole set of little aluminum--that's hard to say--cans with covers that are all the same size. I don't see how Mommy keeps them straight but I guess they have labels on them. I can smell the difference between some of them but it gets confusing. Cinnamon and cloves are easy to tell. About the only thing we help with for making the shortcake is greasing the pans she puts the batter on.

"Making the salad is what you do
While waiting for the rest to get through."

While everything else is baking we put the salad together. There are funny gadgets and sounds that go with making salad. The carrot cleaner makes a high scraping sound, the knife on the breadboard makes a chop, chop, chop on the celery, and the cutting of the apple has a fresh, watery sound. The two gadgets that I can work are the nut grinder and the salad maker. The nut grinder is like a jar with a screw-top cover that has teeth in it. When you turn the little handle of the top, it grinds up the nuts real fine. Then you unscrew the cover and pour out the nuts.

Christy and I can work the salad maker together. It has three legs with rubbers on their feet so they don't slip. You put the grinder over a sauce dish or cereal bowl and then start it working. Christy holds the little metal arm down so the cabbage stays in and I turn the handle that shreds the cabbage. After a few turns you have to empty the dish in the salad bowl and start again with a new piece of cabbage. When we finished that we just put all the things together and Mother made the salad dressing. There are so many different noises that go with the kitchen that sometimes we stay in the dining room where we can't see what Mommy is doing and guess what she's doing by the sounds she makes.

"After school Jackie had a Cub Scout meeting.
When he and Daddy came home it was time for eating."

Jackie had a Cub Scout meeting after school last night

so he didn't take the bus home like usual. Daddy picked him up after work and they both got home at 5:30.

Daddy usually looks at the mail when he comes home. After he hangs up his coat and hat, he sits down and one of us brings him the mail. It depends who hears him first. If we're not too busy playing or helping Mommy in the kitchen we hear the car drive into the garage.

"Everyone seems to have something to say
When it's dinner time at the end of the day."

Daddy gave me a horseback ride out into the kitchen. I figured he must have had as good a day at work as we did at home because he whistled and swung me up on his shoulders. I can tell when he's tired and worked hard because then he doesn't talk much at the table.

Last night he told us about some man who is leaving his office to take his family to Colorado to live. Daddy said that's over five hundred miles from us. That sounds like a long way. When we visit our Uncle Pete and Aunt Marie, we have to go one hundred and fifty miles and that takes such a long time. Course, the time goes faster when we play games in the car. As we're riding, I tell Jackie and Chris if it's a car or truck or maybe a bus we're meeting and they tell me if I'm right. I get trucks and buses mixed sometimes. They make an airy "Sh, sh, sh," sound when they put on their brakes at a stop sign. Sometimes we take turns pretending the cars and trucks that come along belong to us. The one

who gets the most trucks by the end of the trip is the winner. Mommy and Daddy help us keep track so we get the amount right. Sometimes they count animals. Jackie looks out one side of the car and Christine out the other. But I was telling you about last night at the supper table...

Chris and I told Daddy about our birthday game. I told him she gave me one of his shoes and he said he hoped I put it back in the right place because he didn't want to get his shoes mixed and go to work with one brown one and one black one on. I know he was just teasing but I bet the people at work would really laugh if he did that.

"I can't wait till I'm a Cub Scout
And can do the things Jackie tells us about."

It's funny how you need money for so many things. Jackie asked for some last night and when he explained what it was for, Mommy and Daddy said he could have it. The Cub Scouts are planning to make some leather things and they had to pay for the stuff they were going to use. Daddy said he would pay for the belt and Mommy said she'd pay for the billfold. I bet Jackie is planning to give them to Mommy and Daddy anyway. I don't know what he'd do with a grown-up's billfold and a man's belt.

"The strawberry shortcake was delicious last night.
The berries were soft and the whipped cream just right."

I remembered to remind Mommy to whip the cream for the

shortcake because that's my favorite part. Sometimes Mommy lets us kids lick the beaters but we didn't take time for that last night. The strawberries were all thawed out and there weren't any pieces of ice in it. They were hard as a brick when we took them out of the freezer in the afternoon. Jackie and I like to find those pieces of ice in the strawberries, (tastes like popcicles,) but Daddy likes his berries straight, he says, no ice.

After supper Mother did the dishes with Jackie drying. He doesn't like to do dishes but that's one of his chores every other week. Probably the reason he doesn't like to do them is because he likes to watch westerns on TV. There must be a lot more to see than there is to hear in cowboy pictures. They all sound alike to me. All there is, is shooting guns, galloping horses and fighting men. I'd rather listen to records except for Walt Disney programs which are pretty good.

"The record I like best has instruments in it. Whenever I can choose, I can't wait to begin it."

My favorite has so many different sounds and instruments in it. The little boy Rusty has so much fun talking with all the instruments. I've tried to decide what I want to play when I get big but I always seem to change my mind every time I hear the record. Mommy plays the piano and Daddy used to play the clarinet he says, but I never heard him. It was so long ago that he played it in the band at school.

111

Christy listened to the record too last night and she says she likes the flute the best. But then she's a girl and the flute is a high-voiced instrument that would be right for a girl. I think it would be fun to make those big deep low tones on the bass viol.

We have a little record player that Christy and Jackie and I can work ourselves. Daddy helps us with it when we use big records that have to go slower but most of the time we can run it alone. I remember one time I left the record player on over night--I forgot to turn the switch off--and Daddy said I couldn't listen to records for the rest of the week. I didn't like that at all but it did help me to remember. I guess that was no worse than Jackie having to miss Wyatt Earp the time he wouldn't give Christy her turn for choosing the television program she wanted last week.

"When Daddy's paper has all been read,
He helps us get ready for bed."

Christy and I get ready for bed about the same time, but Jackie stays up a little later 'cause he's older. We like it when Daddy helps us. Course he doesn't have to do much but just be there. Sometimes he waits out in the hall and Christy and I have a race to see who can get ready for the bath first. When one of us shouts, "Ready!" he comes in to see how ready we are. If our clothes are just dropped on the floor and not put on our chair, the game doesn't count 'cause that's part of the rules. Last night he went into Christy's

room first because she was ready.

We had bubbles in our bath water last night. There were so many that I almost lost my sponge duck that I take into the tub with me. Daddy says a rag does a little better job of washing especially when it comes to the ears, but it's still fun to have a sponge.

Daddy taught us a new way to rub our back dry. You just take one end of the towel in one hand and the other end in the other hand and throw the towel across your back. Then you just pull it back and forth across your back so your hands go up and down like a teeter-totter. It's fun.

"One of the books that's on our bookshelf
Is one that Mommy likes to read herself."

Sometimes Daddy reads to us before we go to sleep and sometimes Mommy does. When it's a little later than usual and we listened to an extra record or something, we don't have reading at all. The book that Mommy reads so nice is The World of Christopher Robin.³¹ Mother says he lived a long time ago, but even so, I think I'd like to have him for a brother 'cause he had lots of fun with his Mommy and Daddy and Namny and his make-believe friends. He was always pretending, "What if..." like Jackie and I sometimes do when we're in bed and just going to sleep. We changed the one where he

³¹/A. A. Milne, The World of Christopher Robin, Illus. E. H. Shepard, E. P. Dutton Inc., publisher, copyright, 1958.

says, "If I were the King of Timbuctoo, I'd think of lovely things to do!" to, "If I were president of,...." and then we take turns saying what we'd do. Last night Mommy read one of her favorite poems that she reads so soft and pretty.

Vespers

Little boys kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.

God bless Mommy. I know that's right.
Wasn't it fun in the bath tonight?
The cold's so cold, and the hot's so hot.
Oh! God bless Daddy--I quite forgot.

If I open my fingers a little bit more,
I can see Nanny's dressing-gown on the door.
Its a beautiful blue, but it hasn't a hood.
Oh! God bless Nanny and make her good.

Mine has a hood, and I lie in bed
And pull the hood right over my head.
And I shut my eyes, and I curl up small
And nobody knows that I'm there at all.

Oh! Thank you God, for a lovely day,
And what was the other I had to say?
I said, "Bless Daddy," so what can it be?
Oh, now I remember! God bless me!

Little boy kneels at the foot of the bed,
Droops on the little hands little gold head.
Hush! Hush! Whisper who dares!
Christopher Robin is saying his prayers.

We have more people to bless when we say our prayers. Mommy read in my room last night so after she finished and we said our prayers, Christy went into her room and Mommy and Daddy said good night and went down stairs.

"Sometimes I fall asleep fast at night.
Other times I'm awake when Jackie turns out the light."

Some of the noises that happen down stairs tell me what Mommy and Daddy and Jackie are doing. When they're just talking or reading, it gets real quiet and then I hear the noises outside. It's funny how noises at night sound sleepy. We heard a train whistle in the morning when we hung out the wash but it sounded different when I heard it last night. I wonder where all the people on that train were going and if they got to sleep before I did.

More Activities

The categories and suggestions below are included in the hope that they might prove helpful to you and your child.

Many of these activities will occur to you as the days go by but perhaps you will discover one or two new possibilities.

Your child can help you:

1. Wash the dishes
2. Wash vegetables
3. Prepare some foods
4. Prepare for scrubbing kitchen and other floors, (moving furniture aside, etc.)
5. Roll up and shake throw rugs and other small rugs
6. Assemble vacuum cleaner parts
7. Dust furniture, (if he has seen where each nick-nack belongs because of dusting, he will be less apt to knock them down during play.)
8. Sweep the porch or sidewalk
9. Sweep the floor of the car with hand broom
10. Carry in packages from the car after shopping trip
11. Put mail in and take mail out of box
12. Fold towels and do other chores connected with bringing in fresh wash
13. Fill and empty sprinkling bottle at ironing time
14. Make beds and straighten bedrooms
15. Keep bathroom neat, (clean sink with cleanser and wash combs.)
16. Pick up magazines and papers for magazine rack
17. Wash and dry silverware after it has been newly polished
18. Put groceries in their proper place
19. Shine shoes after they've been polished
20. Set the table

Your child can feel:

1. The difference between textiles in Mommy's dresses and clothes of other members of the family
2. Articles and objects to determine if they are made of plastic, wood, glass, tin, metal, aluminum, rubber, copper, porcelain, kinds of paper, (paper toweling, waxed paper, aluminum foil, saran wrap cellophane etc.)

3. If the clothes is dry or wet, starched or unstarched, wrinkled or pressed, smooth or rough, buttoned or unbuttoned, girl's or boy's, man's or woman's
4. When he's washing--if the water is hot or cold, how deep the water is, where the soap went when he dropped it, if the plug is in or out, if the rag is soapy or rinsed
5. What the weather's like--if it's windy, cold, rainy, snowy, warm, breezy etc.
6. If the plants have grown or if they need water
7. If the light in a room or lamp is on, (position of switch and warmth of light bulb)
8. Size and shape of household objects--roundness, squareness etc.
9. Textures of all things
10. You--what do you "look" like? Do you wear glasses, is your hair long, what dress are you wearing or shirt or coat?

Your child can smell:

1. What's cooking or baking
2. What's inside the jars in the refrigerator
3. What's in the canisters and spice jars
4. What kind of soap or detergent is being used
5. What is this made of, (plastic, rubber, wood or metal or any other substance with characteristic odor)
6. What the breezes bring outside: freshly cut grass, flowers, exhaust from vehicles, burning leaves or trash, etc.
7. Perfume, powder, shaving lotion etc.
8. What you are doing--polishing shoes, painting, gluing, removing fingernail polish, waxing the floor, polishing furniture, washing hair with what shampoo and many other activities.

He can listen to:

1. The telephone, (if it's a party line, he can tell whose ring is ringing)
2. Listen for the doorbell
3. Ironing sounds: sprinkling of clothes, click and hiss of steam iron, the swish and whir of the iron over the clothes
4. The many sounds connected with washing clothes
5. Preparation of and cooking, frying, boiling or baking of food
6. For the mailman and any other community service man who comes to the house

7. What song is playing on the radio or being played on the piano
8. Kitchen sounds, outdoor sounds, sounds connected with various members of the family--Daddy's razor, Mother's electric mixer
9. Rhymes and like sounds in stories and poems
10. Voices--Highness and lowness

These May Be Helpful

Care of your blind child:

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Katz, Leah and Eunice Kenyon, Understanding Your Blind Child, New York Light House Nursery School, New York, 1953.

Lowenfeld, Berthold, Ph.D., Our Blind Children, Growing and Learning with Them, Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, Springfield, Illinois, 1956.

Maxfield, Kathryn E., Understanding Your Blind Child, New York Association for the Blind, 11 59th Street, New York, New York, August, 1953.

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CHAPTER V

Summary

The ordinary happenings of a household day have been presented in this pamphlet for parents of preschool blind children from the viewpoint of an imaginary blind boy of preschool age. The multisensory aspects which are apparent to him as the day passes are included as examples for parents. In some cases, detailed descriptions are given; for example, the poaching of the breakfast eggs, in order to illustrate as many aspects of the activity as possible. In other cases, assumptions are made as to the existing understanding of parents and abilities of their blind child. No time is taken to describe methods of teaching the blind child to eat or to walk since these topics have been dealt with at sufficient length in the past.

This pamphlet should bring to the minds of parents various ways in which they and their blind child can look at a given object or experience a particular situation. The major purpose of a washing machine may be to wash clothes; however, it can also serve to promote the development of the blind child's auditory senses, his sense of smell, his tactile and kinesthetic sense, as well as his curiosity about the "why" of his environment. These senses will develop naturally to some extent; however, the benefits gained by a blind child whose understanding parents provide appropriate stimulation

for furthering this development are immeasurable.

Limitations

This is a creative thesis, and as such, represents the ideas of one individual. In this case, those ideas are based primarily upon a few years of experience with blind preschool and school-age children.

It is limited in that there are inevitably many preschool social workers possessing helpful and experiential ideas who were unable to be contacted. The writer was limited to three such interviews, two of which were worthwhile for the purpose at hand.

An apparent limiting factor is the inaccessibility of the pamphlet to parents. Unless the author finds some personal means of distribution, it may never reach the hands of those for whom it is written.

Suggestions for Further Study

Until the author has an opportunity to observe the reactions of parents who read and use suggestions from this pamphlet, it is difficult to say what should be done in future study of the preschool blind child. Ideally, the future will bring greater personal contact between preschool social workers and all parents needing their services. If and when that day arrives, the majority of written material will be unnecessary.

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