

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

The meeting was called to order by Representative Don Crumbaker at
Chairperson

3:30 ~~am~~ p.m. on February 1, 1984 in room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Laird who was excused.

Committee staff present:

- Avis Swartzman, Revisor of Statutes' Office
- Ben Barrett, Legislative Research
- Carolyn Rampey, Legislative Research
- Judy Crapser, Secretary to the Committee

Conferees appearing before the committee:

- Jerry Schreiner, United School Administrators of Kansas
- Linda Edwards, Eugene Field Elementary School Principal, Manhattan
- Austin Vincent, Topeka parent
- Steve Iliff, Topeka parent
- Richard Mauk, Lawrence
- Betty Jones, Eagle Forum
- Terrie Bridgens, Lawrence mother
- Phillip Lucas, Wichita area parents spokesperson
- Kathleen Ostrowski, Topeka mother
- Teddrick Mohr, Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Seventh Day Adventist

The Chairman opened the meeting by recognizing Representative Lowther who drew the attention of the committee to a merit pay plan currently being used in USD #253, Emporia. He stated copies would be made available to interested committee members.

The Chairman opened the hearings for HB 2730 which would lower the compulsory attendance age of school children from the existing seven years of age to the proposed six years of age.

The committee was given a list of calls that had been taken by the secretary to the committee in opposition to HB 2730. The list comprised 268 names. (ATTACHMENT I)

Copies of a letter from Jean Colling opposing HB 2730 were distributed to the committee. (ATTACHMENT II)

Jerry Schreiner, Executive Director of United School Administrators of Kansas, offered testimony in support of HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT III)

Linda Edwards, Principal of Eugene Field Elementary School in Manhattan, testified in support of HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT IV)

Austin Vincent, Topeka, testified as a parent in opposition to HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT V)

Steve Iliff, Topeka, testified as a concerned parent opposing HB 2730. He stated his opinion that we need to allow individual freedom. He prefers being able to teach their children themselves, citing the examples of Thomas Edison and the Wright brothers. His interpretation of good law requirements are first to be constitutional and second, scriptural.

Richard Mauk, Lawrence minister, testified in opposition to HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT VI)

Betty Jones, Eagle Forum, testified in opposition to HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT VII)

Terrie Bridgens, a rural Lawrence mother, testified in opposition to HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT VIII)

Phillip Lucas, spokesperson for Wichita area parents, echoed the previous conferees opposition to HB 2730. He stated that when there is doubt, as is the case with the references stated in previous testimonies, the wise move is to leave the law as is until the matter is solved. His stand was that an early beginning in education is detrimental and that this bill should not be passed. (ATTACHMENT IX)

Unless specifically noted, the individual remarks recorded herein have not been transcribed verbatim. Individual remarks as reported herein have not been submitted to the individuals appearing before the committee for editing or corrections.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION,

room 313-S, Statehouse, at 3:30 ~~xxx~~/p.m. on February 1, 19 84

Kathleen Ostrowski, a Topeka mother, testified in opposition to HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT X)

Teddrick Mohr, Director of Public Affairs for the Kansas-Nebraska Conference of Seventh Day Adventist, testified in opposition to HB 2730. (ATTACHMENT XI) Mr. Mohr referenced School Can Wait, Raymond S. Moore, Brigham Young University Press, 1979. A copy of which he left with the committee secretary to be kept in the office for committee use. He restated each opposing conferees suggestion to leave the law as is, or even possibly to raise the compulsory attendance age.

This concluded the hearings on HB 2730.

Hearings were scheduled for HB 2732, relating to eligibility of children for attendance in kindergarten. However, considering the lateness of the day, the Chairman delayed that hearing until next week.

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman at 4:56 p.m.

The next meeting of the committee will be February 2, 1984 at 3:30 p.m.

DATE Feb. 1, 1984
page 1 of ~

GUEST REGISTER
HOUSE
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

NAME	ORGANIZATION	ADDRESS
W. Gubler	AP	
L. Lincenberg	AP 1	Topeka
Chris Graves	ASK	Topeka
Craig Grant	K-NFA	Lawrence
Bill Curtis	KASB	Topeka
Esther Vincent	Parent	Topeka
Dotty Jones	Lead Forum	S.M.Ks
Richard R. Mauk	self	Lawrence, Ks.
Steve Duff	self	Topeka KS
Jim Yansally	USD # 512	Shawnee Mission
Leslie G. Slaughter	TPA	Wichita, Ks
Phillip Lucas	TPA	Wichita Ks.
Joseph Paucard		Wichita, Kansas
Carolyn Jones		Manhattan, Ks.
Jedair [unclear]	Kan Tech Corp SDA	Topeka
BILLIE JEAN PECKHAM	Assoc. Supt. Ks-Ne Conf of SDA	Topeka
Shirley Tate	counsel parent	Topeka
Donald (Pisair)	T-PA	Wichita, Ks.
Sarah Swinton	TPA	Wichita Ks.
Parky G. Wilkinson	T-PA	Wichita Ks.
Jane Haak	abandon	Lawrence
Jennie Bridgens	SELF	Lawrence
Kathleen Ostrowski	self	Topeka
Bob [unclear]	Kappa DTA	Wichita

The following individuals have called the Committee secretary to express their opposition to HB 2730:

Suzanne Alongi - Prairie Village, KS
Jennie Schmidt (Mrs. Ralph) - White Water School District
Sarah Buxton - Wichita, KS
Judy Welfelt - Hesston, KS
Don Duncan - Wichita, KS
Rebecca Kahler, Overland Park, KS
Lila Taylor - Kansas City, KS
Joan Lyon - Topeka, KS
Kelley Freund - Olathe, KS
Pam Beacham - Newton, KS
Alice Gilmore - Kansas City, KS
Sharon Lopez - Kansas City, KS
Sharon Harmon - Shawnee, KS
Rhonda Speers - Kansas City, KS
Sally Chapin - Kansas City, KS
Shelby Frazee - Kansas City, KS
(A mother) - Olathe, KS
(Person from Southern Wyandotte Co.)
(Person from Kansas City, KS)
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Lieberbach - Prairie Village, KS
Theresa Williams - (No town given)
Elizabeth Swisher - (No town given)
Debbie Thompson - (No town given)
Carolyn Griswald - (No town given)
Diane Visese - Derby, KS
Dr. Mark Kahler - Overland Park, KS
John Mutrux - Mission, KS
Dale & Evelyn Case - Kansas City, KS
Thomas & Susan Miller - Leawood, KS
Jim & Ann Morris - Prairie Village, KS
Jim Kling - Olathe, KS
Martha Ahlman - Newton, KS
Sherri Williams - Shawnee, KS
Fred & Donna Pinaire - Derby, KS
Connie & Lou Gomez - Wichita, KS
Jerroll Martens - Newton, KS
Karen Brownly - Olathe, KS
Jeff Click - (No town given)
Mark Weber - Kansas City, KS
Sandra Mutrux - Shawnee, KS
Carolyn Timken - Newton, KS
Niki Gass - Wichita, KS
Mrs. David Wright - Kansas City Area
Rod & Carol Siegle - Prairie Village, KS
Joan McBeth - Wichita, KS
Debbie Bailey - Olathe, KS
Pat Tizzutelli - Kansas City, KS
Michael Spears - Kansas City, KS
Joyce Koller - Olathe, KS
Kathy Hansen - Wichita, KS
Terrie Ayers - Olathe, KS

Opposition to HB 2730 continued:

Jackie Johnston - Wellsville, KS
Freda Hrabe - Wellsville, KS
Delores Jeter - Prairie Village, KS
Judy Young - Gardner, KS
Dr. Chris & Jan Deister - Topeka, KS
David Payne - Overland Park, KS
Sherry Thompson - Topeka, KS
William Downing - Gardner - Ks
Patty Groff - Olathe, KS
Laureen & Roger Traver - Gardner, KS
Joy & Gary Kaiser - Gardner, KS
Carolyn & Harvey Miller - Gardner, KS
Judy Adams - Gardner, KS
Jennie & Darvin Winn - Gardner, KS
Jim & Ruth Kieffaber - Gardner, KS
Mr. & Mrs. Matthew Zimmerman - Olathe, KS
Leesa Boan - Spring Hill, KS
Janice Corbin - Hillsdale, KS
Kathy Kenney - Shawnee, KS
Mrs. Robert Wilson - Overland Park, KS
Kathy Wagner - Kansas City, KS
Marsha Nicholson - Gardner, KS
Liss Bouer - Olathe, KS
Sharon Moore - Gardner, KS
Mary Botteron - Paola, KS
Becky Glaze - Gardner, KS
Joan Smethers - Gardner, KS
Pastor & Mrs. Larry Fry - Olathe, KS
Mr. & Mrs. Otis Clemmons - Wellsville, KS
Debbie Boan - Spring Hill, KS
Anita Gardner - Paola, KS
Arlene Watros - Paola, KS
Isabel Bosworth - (No town given)
Ellen Bartsch - Kansas City, KS
Mr. & Mrs. Mark McCalmon - Overland Park, KS
Kathy Ostrowski - Topeka, KS
Kathi Clemets - Wichita, KS
Vickie Jones - Overland Park, KS
Karen Chadwick - Kansas City, KS
Dennis Gardner - Paola, KS
Carol Amos - Prairie Village, KS
Martha Barker - Overland Park, KS
Beverly Hamilton - Lenexa, KS
Nancy Katz - Mission, KS
Mark Cole - Topeka, KS
Rev. Allen Groft - Olathe, KS
Dorothy Hertell - Lenexa, KS
Larry Rink - Overland Park, KS
Marsha Cole - Topeka, KS
Marsha Grisier - Kansas City, KS
Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Watson - Olathe, KS
Wayne Boyer - Olathe, KS
Sandy Davis - Olathe, KS

Opposition to HB 2730 continued:

Mrs. Gullickson - Overland Park, KS
Paul & Charlotte Hampton - Arkansas City, KS
Dottie Spears - Kansas City, KS
Kathy Fasl - Olathe, KS
Sandy Ploetz - Shawnee, KS
Mrs. Darold Peters - Wichita, KS
Linda Swygard - Olathe, KS
Leslie Klick - Shawnee, KS
Nancy Filer - Spring Hill, KS
Mary Cauthon - Olathe, KS
Paula Heth - Overland Park, KS
Annette Thurlow - Prairie Village, KS
Charles Heath - Overland Park, KS
Marian Franklin - Olathe, KS
Doug & Diane Elder - Olathe, KS
Pat Faulds - Olathe, KS
Anne Hoskins - Shawnee, KS
Bruce Gass - Wichita, KS
Ellen Edwards - Olathe, KS
Sherry Rink - Overland Park, KS
Joan Martin - Olathe, KS
Mike & Carol Hastings - Halstead, KS
Richard & Terri Singers - Olathe, KS
Shirley Tate - Topeka, KS
Peggy Pharr - Olathe, KS
Pamela Grimes - Olathe, KS
Mike & Carol Hastings - Hesston, KS
Mrs. Michael Sisk - Olathe, KS
Diana Hood - Roeland Park, KS
Cheryl Petree - Overland Park, KS
Bob Tate - Topeka, KS
Carol Judson - Topeka, KS
Cathy & Mike Halpin - Topeka, KS
Robert C. Smith - Kansas City, KS
Mike Madved - Kansas City, KS
Ravenna Floyd - Topeka, KS
Helene Anderson - Topeka, KS
Kirk Towell - Topeka, KS
Kevin Hug - Topeka, KS
Lora Hug - Topeka, KS
Dottie Horner - Kansas City, KS
Virgil Corbin - Paola, KS
Patricia & James Troxel - Olathe, KS
Kathy Breen - Kansas City, KS
Delores J. Oakes - Olathe, KS
Rita Schleuder - Topeka, KS
Duane & Sandra Gallentine - Paola, KS
Charles & Dorothy Klick - Overland Park, KS
Marina Mainer - Topeka, KS
Gary & Pamela Johnson - Olathe, KS
Mary Medbed - Kansas City, KS

Opposition to HB 2730 continued:

Virginia Jones - Lenexa, KS
Judy Tormer - Gardner, KS
Agnus Fredrickson - Lenexa, KS
Joe Winger - Lenexa, KS
Mrs. Pat Pearson - Fairway, KS
Marty Zide - Roeland Park, KS
Cathy Johnson - Lenexa, KS
Karen Rhim - Kansas City, KS
Cristie Vincent - Topeka, KS
Dannie Scott - Gardner, KS
Sally Iliff - Topeka, KS
Chris Bridgens - Baldwin, KS
Roy Wilson - Olathe, KS
Marsha Reasons - Kansas City, KS
Sue Marvine - Kansas City, KS
Dave Welfelt - Hesston, KS
Thomas Hobbs - Topeka, KS
Mrs. James Catron - Kansas City, KS
Kenna Daws - Olathe, KS
Anna Harvey - Topeka, KS
Don & Betty Bieker - Olathe, KS
Laura Vantrece - Paola, KS
Bonnie Ross - Paola, KS
Charles A. Ross - Paola, KS
Nancy Ross - Paola, KS
Thomas Pearson - Fairway, KS
Susan Block - Olathe, KS
Mrs. Harold G. Holden - Topeka, KS
Beth Oller - Newton, KS
Patty Johnson - Overland Park, KS
John & Linda Joyce Koszewski - Olathe, KS
Carol Piser - Junction City, KS
Leslie Burbank - Wellsville, KS
Frieda Rojas - Shawnee, KS
Greg Bridgens - Eudora, KS
Barbara Roberts - Milford, KS
Kathy Uhl - Mission, KS
Faye A. Wise - Overland Park, KS
Carol Diehm - Overland Park, KS
Mr. & Mrs. Thomas Bairow - Olathe, KS
Penny Trimble - Topeka, KS
Audrey Miller - Topeka, KS
Dorothy Bridgens - Overland Park, KS
Doug McFarland - Overland Park, KS
Chris Mason - Baldwin, KS
Pam Knaebel - Spring Hill, KS
Jan Sheafer - Olathe, KS
Mrs. Mary Reintjes - Prairie Village, KS
Terri Wright - Bonner Springs, KS
Patricia Dawson - Kansas City, KS
Linda Symes - Spring Hill, KS
Mary Kay Halstead - Shawnee, KS
Bill & JoAnn Hawes - Spring Hill, KS
Wanda Kimbell - Topeka, KS
Janet Eirint - Topeka, KS

Opposition ot HB 2730 continued:

Mack McEwen - Louisburg, KS
Annette Anderson - Olathe, KS
Mrs. Gary Zimbelman - Topeka, KS
Michelle Lenning - Olathe, KS
Mrs. Dean Galloway - Overland Park, KS
Doreen Morris - Olathe, KS
Larry & Mary Fry - Olathe, KS
Pam & Earl Martin - Olathe, KS
Jamie & Tom Hibbard - Olathe, KS
Lesa Seymour - Olathe, KS
Doris Hobbs - Topeka, KS
Phil Cook - Merriam, KS
Rhonda Blann - Stillwell, KS
Alisa Hornbacher - Spring Hill, KS
Edith M. Odell - Kansas City, KS
W.R. Bridgens - Overland Park, KS
Rhonda Carter - Overland Park, KS
Caroline Burnett - Olathe, KS
Jo St. Peter - Olathe, KS
Gary Grimes - Overland Park, KS
Sherry Taylor - Olathe, KS
Dorita Bejam - Kansas City, KS
Georgià Brown - Kansas City, KS

Honorable Committee Members:

This opinion is about HB 2730, which would lower the compulsory attendance age to 6 years old. I am against this bill.

For one thing, it is not necessary. The majority of parents who use the public schools enroll their children at age 5 or 6 anyway - the sooner, the better, for most of them. This bill would not affect them. The people this bill would affect are those parents who object to the curriculum offered by the public school system who are endeavoring to economically educate their children in accordance to their conscience. Some parents need time to get the money and, or find a school that's appropriate to their individual requirements. In the meantime, these parents teach their children the "basics" at home; thereby giving their child a greater sense of the own individuality, separate from the peer-pressure found in every level of group-education. This strengthens their family unit, which is what most "experts" say is needed in this modern society.

I also think that this age limit will be lowered in subsequent years. Placing all children in a group educational environment at ages below 7 years old has not been proven to be beneficial for all children. Certain authorities feel it could be harmful to some children.

Finally, It also would make a bigger case-load (and increase the cost) for those state investigators who would be assigned to examine the educational situations of these 6 year olds.

Hopefully, others will expound on these statements to the detriment of this bill.

Thank you, Sean Colling



UNITED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF KANSAS

1906 EAST 29TH

TOPEKA, KANSAS 66605

913-267-1471

JERRY O. SCHREINER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

M.D. "MAC" MCKENNEY
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: House Education Committee
FROM: Jerry O. Schreiner, Executive Director
DATE: February 1, 1984
SUBJECT: HB 2730 - Compulsory Attendance Age

United School Administrators supports the proposed change in HB 2730 that would lower the age of eligibility for school attendance from seven years to six years. You are well aware that all public schools are required to offer instruction beginning with the first grade. We have made this request in order to make the compulsory attendance law consistent with the requirement for first grade and truancy reporting statutes.

Administrators, especially elementary school principals, are concerned that some parents have waited until their children have attained the age of seven years before assuming the responsibility of keeping their children in school. In most instances of this kind, these youngsters need the experience provided in first grade and cannot afford to miss any part of the educational program.

For these reasons, we urge you to report HB 2730 favorably for passage.

dm

ATTACHMENT III HOUSE EDUCATION
(2-1-84)



UNITED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS OF KANSAS

1906 EAST 29TH

TOPEKA, KANSAS 66605

913-267-1471

JERRY O. SCHREINER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

M.D. "MAC" McKENNEY
ASSOCIATE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TO: House Education Committee

FROM: Linda J. Edwards, Principal

DATE: February 1, 1984

SUBJECT: HB 2730 - Compulsory Attendance Age

In addition to speaking in behalf of the United School Administrators, I am also representing a position adopted by the Kansas Association of Elementary School Principals which supports the proposed change in HB 2730. Kansas' elementary principals agree that there is a need for the age requirements for compulsory school attendance to be consistent with the statutes allowing kindergarten attendance to begin at age five on or before September 1 of an academic year. This means that first grade students are six by September 1 of the following academic year. The situation that is created by the current compulsory attendance statute beginning with age seven is that truancy regulations cannot effectively be enforced at the first grade level.

As an elementary administrator, I deal consistently with requests from parents to begin their children even prior to age five. The common practice tends to be that parents use the compulsory attendance laws to avoid responsibility for seeing that their children attend school on a daily basis. A first grade child showing high absenteeism consistently needs remediation in order to keep pace with curriculum and academic expectations. Special education programs prohibit classification of students with excessive absences and, therefore, specialized help is unavailable to the teacher and child.

An alternative in dealing with a child with numerous absences is to recommend retention at the end of the first grade year. Again, the choice as to whether or not a child is retained ultimately rests with the parent. Therefore, if such a child is promoted to second grade, the skills and learning necessary to achieve success are not there. Remediation is needed and the situation keeps recurring year after year.

It is in the best interest of any child once enrolled in school to attend on a daily basis no matter what the age. The gap created by allow-

ing kindergarten attendance at age five and compulsory first grade attendance being at age seven needs to be closed. The child entering formal education deserves the support of the home and school working together to ensure that child a successful beginning school experience. Therefore, I am requesting your passage of HB 2730 as a means of supporting the efforts of the school and home.

dm

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF AUSTIN K. VINCENT OF TOPEKA, KANSAS,
IN OPPOSITION TO HB 2730 AMENDING K.S.A. 72-1111 TO
COMPEL SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AT THE AGE OF SIX YEARS.
BEFORE THE HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE, FEBRUARY 1, 1984

- I. There is presently no conflict between K.S.A. 72-1111 and any Kansas statutes relating to truancy.
- A. K.S.A. 72-1113 simply says if a child is not enrolled as required by law, such child shall be considered to be not attending school as required by K.S.A. 72-1111.
 - B. K.S.A. 34-1502 (Kansas Code for Care of Children) lists as one of the definitions of "Child in need of care ... a person less than eighteen (18) years of age who:...(6) is not attending school as required by K.S.A. 72-977 (exceptional children) or 72-1111 and amendments thereto;"
 - C. K.S.A. 72-1107 grants eligibility to attend public schools at six years old.
 - D. K.S.A. 72-1111 is the only statute which lists compulsory attendance ages (seven through fifteen inclusive).
- II. There are compelling reasons to avoid any earlier compulsory attendance age. (Note: All page cites refer to the attached by Raymond S. Moore entitled "Research and Common Sense: Therapies for our Homes and Schools", reprinted from Columbia University's Teachers College Record, Volume 84, Number 2, Winter 1982.)
- A. State legislatures generally have ignored replicable research in setting early compulsory attendance ages. However, it has been found that, when provided concrete data, most courts and legislatures produce sound decisions and laws. (P. 357)
 - B. Some handicapped children may in fact require special therapeutic assistance in schools and some parents may require day-care or kindergarten facilities when the financial situation mandates; however, it is not logical to conclude that all children require such care. (P. 358) Research suggests quite the opposite. (P. 359)

- C. Cognitive Development - To read with understanding requires cognitive readiness- an ability to reason from cause to effect- which most children don't attain until seven or eight. Requiring too much, too soon can place great deal of unnecessary pressure upon a child. (Pages 359-360)
- D. Research in the areas of brain development (P 360), vision, hearing, intersensory perception (P 361) and social-emotional development (P 363) all indicate that later and not earlier mandatory attendance is preferable for the child and will result in greater learning ability and motivation over the long run.
- E. When all such research is interrelated, the findings betray a remarkable similarity respecting age of readiness to start structured and classroom-type schooling--seven or eight and up in some cases.

CONCLUSION:

There is no legal requirement or need to adjust downward the present compulsory attendance age and available research suggests going the other way would be the wiser course for the sake of the child.

Research and Common Sense: Therapies for Our Homes and Schools

RAYMOND S. MOORE

Hewitt Research Foundation, Berrien Springs, Michigan

Americans have long been proud of their high technology and elementary wisdom—a determination to document what they do with sound research and to follow through with common sense, even if it means sacrifice. Our schools benefited early from this pride. Yet, in recent issues of the *Teachers College Record* there have been at least two stimulating discussions of danger signs—on school effectiveness and teacher burnout—that lead us to wonder if we have not lost our former grasp of our cherished ideals.¹ These articles focused on making *teachers* more alert, comfortable, and secure, that is, they must be helped to a sense of “community” and to an understanding of their resources. I suggest now some critical needs that must also center on our *students* if American education is to keep our society strong.

Teachers feel worthy and secure only when they produce well-socialized students who achieve and behave. So achievement and behavior of children become keys to teachers' happiness. Yet, with literacy rates falling and behavioral problems on the rise, questions logically arise: Are these old-fashioned goals of teacher happiness and satisfaction achievable anymore? Is there some boat that we as educators have missed? Are there some tools we are not using? Have we ignored lessons of the past—a particular hazard in teaching where we always like to think of ourselves as looking ahead? I believe the answer to each of these four questions is yes, and suggest that we select a central issue or two and look carefully at the evidence.

Many of us prefer to blame our school problems on “the times.” More specifically, we point to “factors that break up the family,” such as war, television, indifferent parents, macho-feminist movements, and general amoral behavior. These we cannot change, but there are two specific professional digressions for which there is no excuse: First, we do our research in bits and pieces, each researcher in his own narrow sphere. Even this might somehow be justified if we did not commit the unpardonable act of failing to bring the bits and pieces together—an omission as flagrant as the thoughtless mechanic who leaves car parts scattered all over his garage and fails to understand why the car will not run. Second, we ignore the perspective of history—and how we invented and ran the “car” in the first place. The result is “tunnel vision.”

Should educators shrug responsibility in developing the most complex instrument of all—the child—and ride on for generations with little attention to cause-and-effect relationships? Are we naive or reckless if we simply careen ahead on provincial research projects without any sense of their interrelation while the child, and basically the school, is torn to pieces? To ignore the importance and need of research cross-pollination and to fail to place its findings in historical perspective signals the possible death of truly creative education.

EDUCATIONAL FAUX PAS

Accommodating Change

As Americans shifted from a rural to an urban format, we failed to bring with us the work ethic. Instead of providing our students with chores, we have delivered sports and amusements and created a narcissistic climate that is still compounding its contagion. Nor did we share the old golden rule of service to others. The care by neighbors and church was delegated (or abrogated) to the state—which accepted it. So today the United States suffers from productivity comparisons—with such nations as Japan—and from high government control.

Bigness

To compound this dereliction we called for bigness in our schools. A dramatic idea, *bigness* came to mean *goodness*, until we found that big student crowds defied earlier controls, rich academic smorgasbords confused more than they nutrified, and the phenomenon of buses became abuses—of the child. There was no serious effort to learn from either history or research. Even noneducators like Charles Evers (Jackson, Mississippi's black mayor) saw clearly that we had made a mistake in moving away from neighborhood schools with their smallness and closeness to the family.²

“Reforms”

During the 1960s, a parade of educational “reforms” and titled federal programs was launched by the U.S. Office of Education. Few were thought through on the basis of either history or research. When a program did meet these criteria (e.g., Home Start), it was terminated as not “politically viable.” Sound state-instituted projects dealing with teacher-student work-study curricula (e.g., California's Regional Occupational Programs) have often been among the first to know uncertainty or to feel the financial axe when the economy fluctuates or falls. So instead of education by experience, research, and common sense—considered vital to survival in industry—we seem to have education from the top of the head and from the seat of the pants.

Has such tunnel vision become pervasive? It seems so. Cross-disciplinary research on students compares researchers' replicated—and therefore consistent—findings with conventional practice to test the following assumptions: (1) that since little children learn fast we should ram formal facts and skills into their brains earlier and faster; (2) that teachers can do this better than parents; (3) that peers and schools socialize better than do parents and the home; (4) that schools produce better-behaved children than does the home; and (5) that, therefore, children whose schooling is delayed will suffer academically, socially, and psychologically. What is the truth about readiness for learning and where does learning best take place?

INSTITUTIONALIZING YOUNG CHILDREN

Observations and Generalizations

Throughout history man has had spells of separating young children from home and family. Usually this happened just before social collapse. In our society we call such a practice early childhood education (ECE). But the present cycle is different from those of the past. We are living in an unprecedented era of research and development. Federal dollars and computers have supplied many facts, yet with all the resources and speed at their command, legislators and educational planners have made little systematic use of this scientific data.

The Stanford ECE public policy research team, which worked in this field for a number of years, could not find a single state that had early school mandates based on replicable research.³ Children are the victims. However sad and unnecessary this is, the guilt is not all to be laid at the door of those who plan, and who make the laws. The Stanford group found that most courts and legislatures, when provided sound data, produce sound decisions and laws. For at least two reasons, those who supply and interpret the evidence must share much of the blame.

First, researchers tend by nature to be provincial. Thus begins tunnel vision. So there is a failure to develop a systematic approach—to see, to share, and to present the larger picture. When in the 1970s the work of neurophysiologists, ophthalmologists, psychologists, research psychiatrists, maternal attachment analysts, and others was drawn together, a remarkable contrast emerged between ECE research and practice.

Second, when facts are known, researchers tend to speak in unknown tongues familiar only to current professional colleagues, and sometimes they themselves are confused by the lingo. At a meeting of curriculum specialists at the American Educational Research Association in New Orleans a few years ago, I sensed some confusion. There was a conversational breakdown. Finally, a secure Teachers College, Columbia University, scholar (Bruce Joyce) admitted that he simply did not understand some of the papers with their new

words and unclear organization. He was immediately joined in a laugh by a host of others in the assembly who had listened quietly and dumbly, afraid to admit their ignorance. Yet they were supposed to be educational leaders!

Many educators and parents simply give up trying to comprehend the research results and proceed on the basis of intuition or expediency—much like the unready child who does not perform well because he fails to understand what the teacher is trying to ask.

Educational Malpractice?

It is commonly inferred today that a parent who does not send his child to nursery school is depriving him, or that if the child does not have the option of a day care center or a preschool he cannot be normally fulfilled or well developed. In many cases of disability or handicap such institutional care may be reasonable, but to attempt to institutionalize all young children because a few are disadvantaged—as many have urged in recent years—is like trying to hospitalize all because a few are sick. Most children, according to replicated research, should not be in preschool or day care. As I shall show, the best all-around development occurs in a wholesome home environment.

Yet in America some states have plunged into legislation mandating earlier and earlier schooling. Ten years or so ago Houston began providing regular preschool programs down to age three, and at the December 1981 Missouri Governor's Conference some urged supervision by "professionals" from birth, with custodial care allowed the parents. California's Wilson Riles made a strong attempt to provide schooling for all children aged seven down to age two and a half.⁴ Is there some research evidence to justify this? If not, do we risk charges of educational malpractice?

Many states—for example, California, Florida, Missouri, North Carolina—are being urged to provide schooling or other public care for all young children; heretofore such care has been reserved for the handicapped or the deprived. These are bold moves toward substitution of public institutions for the home. Where is the record of a public performance that justifies this? Again there is a risk, this time involving civil rights.

It is clear that special therapeutic help in schools or other environments is often needed. Many children are handicapped beyond the ability of the parents to provide adequate care, but the home in most cases should be central in therapy. Children should be screened to identify learning disabilities, with parents involved at every step. There is a much larger parent responsibility for education than many yet envision. There is a place for the institution and a place for the home.

It is also clear that day care or kindergarten must be provided for youngsters whose parents are physically, emotionally, or financially unable to care for them. Yet where is the research evidence that dictates formal readiness programs for reading, writing, arithmetic, and language arts at this level?

Rather, research suggests an unpressured environment in which the young child can be free, much like a lamb, under gentle control, consistent with his developmental needs.

What, then, are these needs—which, judging from conventional wisdom and widespread practice, educators should look at more fully? A few areas that should be of immediate concern to all are cognitive development, neurophysiology, social-emotional development (including maternal attachment), school-entrance age, parent attitudes and potential, and the home as “school.”

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Much of the idea of early stimulation emerged from Benjamin Bloom's famed research. He concluded that “in terms of intelligence measured at age 17, from conception to age 4 the individual develops 50% of his mature intelligence.”⁵ Fortunately, he has now largely set aside his opinion that this justifies early schooling.

Although the Bloom paper was plagued with problems, psychologists, educators, and the general public eagerly embraced it.⁶ Among other things his review fit into the “need” for parent “freedom” and teacher jobs. A number of researchers whose data he used insist that he misinterpreted their findings.⁷ For example, Arthur Jensen, after carefully checking the Bloom report and applauding its more reliable aspects, specifically warned that

this fact that half the variance in adult intelligence can be accounted for by age 4 has led to the amazing and widespread, but unwarranted and fallacious, conclusion that persons develop 50% of their mature intelligence by age 4!⁸

Many researchers have demonstrated that the child needs a simple environment with few distractions, involving a relatively few people, adults or children. Urie Bronfenbrenner observes that the more people there are around the child, the fewer the opportunities he has “for meaningful human contact.”⁹

The early stimulation theory is much like demanding that we force a tight new rosebud to bloom—beautiful in its potential and perfect in its immaturity, but not yet fully ready to bloom. No matter how delicately it is forced to a premature bloom, the result is a damaged rose. Common sense tells us that percentage-wise the newborn learns faster than he ever will again. His second learning, his mother's touch, is a 100 percent increase over the shocking awareness of his first “fact”—the noise and coldness and fresh air of his new world. But that is only percentage-wise. The child of eight or ten with thousands of such “learning hooks”—sensory and cognitive experiences—will learn much more in quantity in a given time than will a child half his age.

Risks of Speeding Up

Research psychologists suggest the age span of late sevens to middle eights as the time when a child becomes able to reason abstractly—as required, for example, in thoughtful reading. This conclusion is underscored variously by such research analysts as Piaget, Rohwer, Almy, Elkind, and Furth.¹⁰ Here we have a serious discrepancy between research and present preschool trends and practices. Rohwer warns that

young children find concept-learning and tasks that require combination and manipulation of concepts to be extraordinarily demanding. Research studies have shown that reading and arithmetic require conceptual abilities that many youngsters do not achieve with ease until they are close to 9 years.¹¹

Reading at early ages often becomes a rote exercise marked by boredom and frustration rather than a true process of thinking. Children should be taught to read with understanding, not simply to repeat words. This requires cognitive readiness—an ability to reason from cause to effect that does not come readily and consistently to the child until he is at least seven or eight or older. David Elkind would avoid all unnecessary pressures—“intellectual burning” he calls it—on young children during periods of rapid mental or physical growth.¹²

Helen Heffernan hints that many are “warping children to satisfy adult demands.”¹³ Jean Piaget, author of the seven-to-eleven age frame above, seems to agree: “The problem of learning is not to be confused with that of spontaneous development even though spontaneous development always comprises learning.”¹⁴ He calls the speeding up of the development of the child's brain the “American question.” And his answer to this question is that “it probably can but probably should not be speeded up. . . . the optimal time is not minimal time.”¹⁵ Yet many American planners seem intent on hurrying the cognitive process, and unfortunately many countries are looking to America as an example.

NEUROPHYSIOLOGY

A study of the brain is also essential to any study of educational readiness. This means an examination of the operating characteristics of the brain itself, the visual process, hearing and intersensory perception, among other facets. Much more research is needed, yet there is sufficient evidence to give us pause.

Brain Development

Neurophysiologists have noted for many years that there are interesting changes in brain rhythms relating to chronological age. According to such researchers as Corbin, Metcalf, and Walter, the young child is largely

dominated by his emotions, connected with the hypothalamus and other "lower" centers.¹⁶ This dominance appears to linger until approximately age eight or nine when the higher reasoning centers of the cerebral cortex can normally be expected to become dominant. This has been demonstrated by other researchers as well.¹⁷

Direct implications of overall central nervous system maturity for learning are obvious. Virtually all brain researchers agree that as the brain grows in *structure* it becomes more adequate in *function*. Luria and Birch and Lefford, among others, have found that the intersensory processes involved in learning are a function of *many* parts of the brain.¹⁸ The processes should not be rushed.

Reading, once thought by many to be a simple task, actually involves a number of complex mental processes—functions that depend on a certain maturity of brain structure. These are, among others, (1) word recognition, (2) decoding (i.e., reading letters that stand for sounds), (3) sound articulation (i.e., differentiating between various sounds of a given vowel), (4) sequential analysis (i.e., sequence of letters and sounds), and (5) perception of various thoughts and ideas. Each process or function is not only neurophysiologically complex in itself but also demands that simultaneous integration be made of all these functions. This is relatively easy for a child of eight to ten, but may be formidable for a five- or six-year-old. He may become frustrated and give up reading, with resulting anxiety and motivational loss.

This young emotional animal needs freedom from such demands as reading and writing to the extent that they require abstract reasoning abilities. Elkind warns that

it must be remembered that while young children do learn easily, they learn by rote and imitation rather than by rule and reason. Their learning is capricious, non-selective and arbitrary; it is not the kind upon which formal learning should be based.¹⁹

A small child might be able to recognize simple words now and then, perhaps even at two years of age or younger. Yet if he is required to read or write or use numbers consistently and is not ready to follow through on a rational basis—with cognitive maturity—he will often become frustrated and may turn aside altogether from skills requiring such reasoning. Primary school teachers observe this behavior daily as children develop a motivational plateau around grades three or four. They unnecessarily experience the anxiety of failure, their records follow them, and many of them, while yet very bright, are never motivationally renewed. So by schooling early, we often create learning disability.

Vision, Hearing, and Intersensory Perception

Coinciding with these findings of neurophysiologists and learning psychologists are those of ophthalmologists and optometrists. There are many

conflicting beliefs respecting the maturity of the young child's eyes. Yet the work of many researchers and much clinical experience suggests that young children are not ready for visual-perceptive aspects of reading until they are at least eight years of age, and for some children it may be as late as ten. Although the eyes may seem mature and the child is apparently reading well, young eyes are not yet able normally to accommodate near objects in a consistent way nor ready for the concentration of formal reading required by regular schooling.

In 1963, Henry Hilgartner, an ophthalmologist, reported to the Texas Medical Society from his and his father's fifty-year study of incidence of myopia in children that "the earlier children start to school the more frequently nearsightedness is discovered between the ages of 8 and 12."²⁰ Where usually about one child in seven or eight could be expected to be nearsighted, this ratio changed to one in two about 1930 when Texas dropped its school entrance age to six. By 1940 the ratio was one to one. And with television and ever earlier schooling, the ratio in 1963 was five abnormal children for every normal child, or almost the opposite from 1910. Frank Newton, a Dallas ophthalmologist, found in checking his records that Hilgartner's research was conservative. Hilgartner makes specific application to the modern school: "During the 3 or 4 hours that the beginner, age 6, is in school he is using all the ocular muscles for accommodation and convergence, in order to see the pictures, drawings, etc. If he were outdoors, playing . . . games, he would not be using his eyes excessively for close work."²¹

This is supported by Strang²² and by Carter and McGinnis, among others. In voicing agreement that young children are basically distant-visioned people. Carter and McGinnis suggest that

the visual mechanism at six years of age is unstable and many children have difficulty in fixating at definite points and in keeping their place in reading. Children at this age make many regressive movements and are inaccurate in moving from one line of print to the next. . . . Some children who cannot adjust to the difficulties of near vision find reading so uncomfortable that they give up trying to learn.²³

Similar findings have been made in auditory perception by Rosner and by Joseph Wepman. Jerome Rosner explored the correlates between auditory and visual skills as related to primary grade reading and arithmetic achievement. He found that learning to read appears to depend heavily on auditory skills.²⁴ Wepman says that in some children auditory discrimination and auditory memory, that is, the "ability to retain and recall speech sounds," are not well developed until the age of nine. He suggested that if we in America would hold off formal schooling until age eight or nine we could reduce reading failure to 2 percent (in lieu of the present 25 percent or more).

Similar findings have emerged from research on intersensory perception. Birch and Lefford found that the ability to make various intersensory

judgments—taste, touch, and smell as well as vision and hearing—follows a general law of growth and improves with age.²⁶ They found that integration of vision, touch, and muscle coordination is not normally possible until the child is seven or eight. Anne McCabe et al. confirmed this as recently as 1982.²⁷ And Sonnenschein noted that verbal redundancy, which facilitates children's performance at the fourth-grade level, becomes an inquisition to children of kindergarten and first-grade ages. The younger children are agitated and debilitated by such repetition.²⁸

There is the further probability that if the child can have the benefit of a relatively free and happy home environment, his psychological and physiological development will be sounder. Harold Skeels's famed orphan babies blossomed mentally and socially from the warmth and "teaching" of retarded teenagers when given one-to-one care. Yet those who had the sterile care of the orphanage without such warmth became retarded, weaker physically, and in some cases died.²⁹

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Socioemotional development of the child is closely related to cognitive, neurophysiological, and sensory development. Perhaps first here is maternal attachment and deprivation.

Value of Mothering

World Health Organization ECE head John Bowlby suggests that dangers from lack of close mothering may exist until eight years of age or older.³⁰ He is joined in his conclusions by many research psychologists and psychiatrists. L. J. Yarrow concluded that besides the retardation of development caused through emotional factors, maturation and adjustment are markedly slowed by deprivation of sensory, social, and affective stimulation when a child cannot be with his mother.³¹

Bowlby explains why this is true.

The ill-effects of deprivation vary with its degree. Partial deprivation brings in its train acute anxiety, excessive need for love, powerful feelings of revenge, and arising from these last, guilt and depression. These emotions and drives are too great for the immature means of control and organization available to the young child (immature physiologically as well as psychologically). The consequent disturbance of psychic organization then leads to a variety of responses, often repetitive and cumulative, the end products of which are symptoms of neurosis and instability of character.³²

Rene Spitz admonishes that "a child's welfare does require frustration . . . reality testing is one of the vitally important functions of the ego."³³

During this testing period, the warm, continuous presence of the mother, a one-to-one relationship, provides a track on which the child can develop optimum security. Any delegation of this process endangers the security of the child.

Thus, says Bowlby, numerous direct studies "make it plain that, when deprived of maternal care, the child's development is almost always retarded—physically, intellectually and socially and the symptoms of physical and mental illness may appear . . . and that some children are gravely damaged for life."³⁴ He states that "there can be no reasonable doubt that a fair proportion of children between the ages of five and seven or eight are unable to adjust satisfactorily to separations,"³⁵ and that many children are vulnerable to maternal deprivation until as late as ten years of age.³⁶

Socioeconomic Status (SES) Influences

It is commonly assumed that children who come from relatively low SES homes are bound to be handicapped if they are not placed in nurseries or other day care. This is not necessarily so. Marcelle Geber carefully tested more than three hundred Ugandan babies during their first year. She used Gesell standardized measurements and found that these infants were in general superior to Western children in physiological maturation and coordination, adaptability, sociability, and language skills. The interesting fact is that these were low SES, tribal-oriented families. Also interesting: The mothers were uneducated, but child-centered, always available, and often caressing and otherwise responding to their little ones.³⁷

At first I questioned these findings, observing that African children from tribal climates often mature earlier than Westerners. But on looking further I discovered that in a related study of the same qualities Geber took a sampling from a like number of relatively well-to-do Ugandan families. In these families the children were involved less with their mothers—often given day care by others. Dr. Geber found that these children—of educated mothers—were much less mature than the babies from the low-SES mothers.³⁸ Rene Spitz notes that young Western children do not have adequate close contact with parents. He states that "throughout the western world skin contact between mother and child has been progressively and artificially reduced in an attempted denial of mother-child relations."³⁹

As a result of these and other findings, Bowlby has concluded that even a relatively bad home with relatively bad parents is generally better than a good institution. He points out that except in the worst cases, the mother "is giving him food and shelter, comforting him in distress, teaching him simple skills, and above all is providing him with that continuity of human care on which his sense of security rests." Martin Engel, while director of the U.S. National Day Care Demonstration Center, elaborated further:

The motive to rid ourselves of our children, even if it is partial, is trans-

mitted more vividly to the child than all our rationalizations about how good it is for that child to have good interpersonal peer group activities, a good learning experience, a good foundation for school life, etc., etc. And even the best, most humane and personalized day-care environment cannot compensate for the feeling of rejection which the young child unconsciously senses.⁴⁰

Bowlby does not by any means suggest limiting the child's attachments to his mother and father. In fact, he emphasizes the desirability of a broader attachment grouping—siblings, cousins, grandparents, neighborhood children, and so forth. But he underscores the crucial factor of the mother as the child's central attachment figure on whom he most often relies while he builds self-reliance, and from whom he should gradually extend his attachments without being thrust into a sink-or-swim situation. Nor does he demean the father's role. He offers a stern warning:

The criticizing of parents and taking the children out of the home and putting them into the schools as is being commonly suggested these days actually undermines the parental confidence in the parents' own role, and in their potential role. There is entirely too much criticism. The educators are guilty of undermining the home rather than building it up.⁴¹

Bronfenbrenner is also specific in his warnings to our schools. Note carefully his reasons:

As for the school—in which the child spends most of his time—it is debarred by tradition, lack of experience, and preoccupation with subject matter from concerning itself in any major way with the child's development as a person. . . . If the institutions of our society continue to remove parents, other adults, and older youth from active participation in the lives of children, and if the resulting vacuum is filled by the age-segregated peer group, we can anticipate increased alienation, indifference, antagonism and violence on the part of the younger generation in all segments of our society—middle-class children as well as the disadvantaged. . . .

It is not primarily the family, but other institutions in our society that determine how and with whom children spend their time, and it is these institutions that have created and perpetuated the age-segregated, and thereby often amoral or antisocial, world in which our children live and grow. Central among the institutions which, by their structure and limited concern, have encouraged these socially disruptive developments have been our schools.⁴²

Research psychiatrist D. Meers supports Bowlby and Bronfenbrenner in noting that, in a typical preschool or day care center or other institution, the child care-giver is an employee, and there are prerogatives that

derive from that status that are denied to most biological mothers, such as, coffee breaks, sick leave, holidays and the option to leave one's charges if the conditions at work are not sufficiently gratifying.⁴³

When Meers and his colleagues made an intensive and optimistic study of child care programs in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, they unexpectedly found that many indigenous leaders were disenchanted with the communal-type care. The director of the Hungarian Bureau of Child Care asked why such an affluent nation as the United States would want to move backward to universal child care, a situation from which Hungary was trying to rid itself.

Which Kind of Socialization?

Parents and educators usually talk about sociability, but neglect to differentiate the kind of sociability they prefer. The child who feels needed, wanted, and depended on at home, sharing responsibilities and chores, is much more likely to develop a sense of self-worth and a stable value system—which is the basic ingredient for a *positive* sociability. In contrast is the *negative* sociability that develops when a child surrenders to his peers.

Bronfenbrenner, among others, found that youngsters at least through the fifth and sixth grades (about ages eleven or twelve) who spend more of their elective time with their peers than with their parents generally became dependent on those peers.⁴⁴ He noted that this brought a pervasive pessimism—about themselves, their future, their parents, and even their peers. Here we hardly have the quality of sociability many parents and educators impute to association with many children. Rather there is a loss of self-direction and self-worth and a dependency that breeds learning failure and delinquency. Bronfenbrenner refers to the peer climate these days as “social contagion”—doubtful habits, manners, and morals; ridicule; rivalry; and so forth—which he and Bandura and others find is now pervasive even down to preschool level.

Building Values

Both the home and the school have a responsibility in building the child's value system, and in the development of a sound social-emotional creature. On the basis of his analysis and experimentation, Carl Bereiter maintains (1) that “skill training and custodial care” are legitimate functions of the elementary schools, and (2) that that “education” which he identifies with the explicit teaching of values and appropriate modes of conduct is not so well performed by the schools. He believes it more fully or rightfully takes place in the context of the family.⁴⁵ Otto Weininger points out from his studies of children who remain at home longer are more likely to demonstrate emotional “well-being.”⁴⁶

It is easy for a parent or teacher to forget that the child should feel needed, wanted, and depended on, that he is carrying his share of the family load, and that people can count on him. This principle is needed in schools as well as in homes. In 1959-1960 and in 1972-1973 I carried out a study with young children from about ages six to twelve that involved them in systematic daily chores in the home or school.⁴⁷ In each experimental schoolroom *all* participated. Parents reported weekly on each child's work performance and attitudes. Measured against control groups, the working children in general not only demonstrated better attitudes and occasioned fewer discipline problems, but also became higher achievers. They tended to be more responsible, dependable, neat, prompt, orderly, and industrious. They would not tolerate littering or vandalism around home or school because they were the caretakers of their rooms. A better self-concept and a sense of responsibility moved along with an improvement in motivation.

SCHOOL ENTRANCE AGE

From still another area of experimentation, a review of more than twenty comparative studies of early and late school entrants suggests that children who enter later excel in achievement, adjustment, leadership in general, social-emotional development, and motivation. These studies have been made of high-, middle-, and low-SES youngsters, and measurements have been taken at virtually all grade levels with substantially the same results.

As late as 1980, Glenn DiPasquale supported earlier findings that children born late in the year—who therefore generally enter school at earlier ages—are significantly more likely to be referred for academic problems than are children born early in the year.⁴⁸ Cleborne Maddux reported in the same year that children who enter the first grade early are more often labeled "learning disabled" (LD) than are later entrants.⁴⁹ William Hedges likewise pointed to the higher incidence of social, emotional, and scholastic problems among younger children than among comparable children a year older.⁵⁰ He specifically noted the ineffectiveness of early intensive drill in learning to read—a common practice today and one that is being moved down into kindergarten or earlier in some school districts.

These conclusions are buttressed also by many studies that have repeatedly found that three or four little boys are learning-failed, delinquent, or acutely hyperactive for every little girl. The delayed maturity of little boys would suggest later entrance ages for them, yet no state gives this key factor consideration in its laws. In fact, the Stanford-based ECE public policy research team found no state with early entrance laws that based them on developmental research. Usually the legislation was derived and justified from conventional practices that contradict research. Yet efforts in the last ten years or so have been made to open school—or mandate it—for children as young as three or four, as, for example, in such organizations at the National

Education Association, and Mortimer Adler's Aspen group, as well as such cities and states as Houston (age 3½) and California (age 2½).

Joseph Halliwell, in his "Reviewing of Reviews on School Entrance Age and School Success," wrote that

the analysis of the reviews on entrance age and school success in the elementary school indicates conclusively that . . . early entrance to first grade does result in lower achievement . . . the advantages of postponing early entrance to first grade programs as they are presently conducted are very real.⁵¹

Jerome Kagan believes that his work also shows how we may further handicap children who are already disadvantaged. His experiments suggest that

we've got to stop the very early . . . premature rank-ordering of children in grades one, two and three. We decide too soon. Poor children enter the school system, (a) with less motivation, because they see less value in intellectual activity, and (b) one or two years behind the emergence of what I call executive-cognitive functions (what Piaget would call concrete operational thinking). They are going to get there, but they are a year or two behind. We arbitrarily decide that age seven is when the race starts, so you have a larger proportion of poor than of privileged children who are not yet ready for school instruction. And then we classify them, prematurely. Let's use the example of puberty. Suppose we decided that fertility was important in our society and that fertility should occur at age 13. Then if you're not fertile at 13, we conclude that you are never going to be fertile, and we give you a different kind of life. It's illogical, because that 13-year-old who is not fertile now will be next year.⁵²

This is apparently true internationally. Torsten Husén reported his study of mathematics (and later of language) teaching in thirteen countries.⁵³ His correlations were analyzed by William Rohwer, who found essentially that the earlier children went to school the more negative their attitudes toward schooling.⁵⁴ Husén subsequently expressed agreement with Rohwer's analysis. If this is a true picture—and I have been unable to find any replicable evidence to the contrary—one is tempted to wonder why schooling is suggested at even earlier ages, instead of using our resources primarily to strengthen the home.

Note that when the research in these areas—neurophysiology, vision, hearing, intersensory perception, parental deprivation, cognition, and so forth—is interrelated, there is a remarkable similarity of findings respecting age of readiness to leave home and go to school—seven or eight to eleven or twelve. This *integration of maturity levels* (IML) suggests that until the child has reached a chronological age of at least eight to ten, parents and educators should question the desirability of formal schooling. As often

happens when research is interrelated, the findings become much more powerful and useful when brought together than when examined in each of the areas separately.

PARENT ATTITUDES AND POTENTIAL

Some say that parents want their freedom too much to be concerned about their children—too much to respond to their children's developmental needs. On the surface this may appear to be so. Research suggests, however, that usually parents are deeply concerned about their children's welfare. Hylan Lewis points out that this includes parents who are poor.⁵⁵

There is some reason to believe that parents have been brainwashed into thinking that teachers are adequate, but that they as parents are not. Robert Hess and Virginia Shipman, among others, acknowledge that many working-class mothers have inferiority feelings about their relationship with the educational process. Yet in their study of mothers, they found that "the majority of mothers in all social class groups (including more than 70% of those on public assistance) said they would like their children to finish college."⁵⁶ Hess and Shipman stressed the need for parent education.

Joan Grusec and Rona Abramovitch underscore the crucial importance of continuity of adult-child contact. It appears that a future positive relation with adults depends on adult imitation through the first five years.⁵⁷

Studies by Mildred Smith, Louise Daugherty, and Burton Blatt and Frank Garfunkel also suggest that parents are eager to respond when they come to understand what is best for their children and how to meet these needs in uncomplicated ways.⁵⁸ There is ample evidence that a society that faces the challenge of the environment—polluted streams and air—will also respond to the concerns of *human* ecology, especially those of their own children. Thus home schooling has become a formidable educational movement.

Parents and Home Projects

A number of researchers, scholars, and planners have been experimenting with ECE growth programs centered in the home. Robert Strom, experimenting with low-SES mothers in a program involving parent and child conversations centering around toys, found that the home can provide a far better climate for learning than normally realized.⁵⁹

For some, such as Nimnicht, Blatt and Garfunkel, and Meers and Schaefer, this represents a modification or reversal of their thinking. Glen Nimnicht, a chief psychologist for Head Start, now suggests that "the early years are crucial in the development of a child's potential. . . . But there's no evidence that a young child needs to go to nursery school. It's my hunch that twenty minutes a day playing with his mother does a preschooler as much good as three hours in a classroom."⁶⁰

Blatt and Garfunkel, who originally postulated that preschool would indeed be helpful in the development of young children, studied low-SES children who were at least two years away from entering the first grade. They found it necessary to reverse their hypothesis and to conclude that (a) the home is more influential than the school, (b) the school can do little without home support, (c) disadvantaged parents are often anxious to cooperate, and (d) school organization is foreign to these parents who are then blamed by the school for not cooperating with it.⁶¹ Benjamin Bloom, once a pioneer in the early schooling movement, now concludes that the home is the best educational nest, that parents are the best teachers, and that parents are educable!⁶² The obvious suggestion here is that parent education is usually a far more profitable investment than institutionalizing young children. The actual financial savings that can be involved have also been verified by a number of researchers.⁶³

Where necessary, the skillful intervention in behalf of even one child in the home can work as a yeast throughout the entire family, benefiting the remaining children. Instead of being encouraged to give up their authority and responsibility to the state and its institutions, parents should be helped to understand their children's developmental needs and to meet them constructively. They should be taught to involve their children gradually from infancy in chores and other responsibilities in the home that help mold attitudes and values. Parents quickly find that working with their children provides their youngsters their highest level of play.

Mothers and "Teaching"

Mothers and fathers need not worry about "teaching" as such. The evidence suggests that they simply should be good parents—warm, responsive, and as consistent as possible, providing a happy climate as the bud continues to bloom: Share the work of the home with the children, giving them the experience of feeling wanted and depended on and the altruistic experience of doing something for others. This will usually bring to the school youngsters who are more stable, optimistic, self-directed, better disciplined, and more highly motivated. Such a program is integrative instead of divisive from the family point of view and normally should provide for the child the warm, unbroken environment and self-worth he needs.

More often than not, such parent-home education will also gain parental understanding and support for the school. Many who now urge parental participation in schools center their efforts on the school rather than the home. Home should be the center until the child is at least eight to ten or twelve. Elkind and Rohwer would prefer waiting until later for formal education for some children.

Some mothers, of course, rebel at caring for their own children through the day. They want their "freedom." Neurophysiologist and child psychiatrist

Humberto Nagera wonders at such mothers, who place their own desires ahead of the child's welfare.

It is most unfortunate that many spurious issues have attached themselves to the question of Day Care Centers. For example, women liberation movements, that in their legitimate search for equality of rights and opportunities make blind demands for Day Care facilities without considering the equal rights of the child to develop intellectually and emotionally as fully as possible. . . . I want to make it quite clear that I have no objection whatsoever to women's legitimate rights for equality of opportunities, education and the like. But I do have, as I state elsewhere (. . .), the strongest objection to neglecting the similarly legitimate rights of [children].⁶⁴

None of these researchers suggests that we should ignore the special educational—even institutional—needs of the acutely disadvantaged and the handicapped. There is a crucial need for better and more homelike child care facilities for children whose parents are disabled or are forced to work. Yet even in these cases, wherever practicable, the therapy and care should be centered in the home or in an environment simulating or identified as closely as possible with the home. Conventional practice that is incompatible with very clear research evidence places our children and families at risk. Several points should be specifically noted:

1. Little if any reproducible research evidence exists in favor of generalized early schooling for normal children or places the home in a subordinate position until the child is at least eight to ten years old. No long-term studies have yet shown that elective day care or preschool develops the larger potential through a normal child's life that is provided by a reasonably good home. Even the widely heralded High-Scope studies provide no evidence favoring institutional care for *normal* children, and not only did their work with disadvantaged children involve weekly visits to parents and children, but their "later work with infants focused exclusively on home visits and parent training."⁶⁵ Furthermore, this apparently effective experiment was operated by "highly motivated teachers with a staff-child ratio of 1 to 6"—a much lower ratio than the public sector has yet been able to generate. If there is any evidence that care outside of the home makes a normal child a more stable, sociable, responsible, and higher-achieving citizen, it should be published. To date there is no such sound evidence in educational literature.

2. All responsible citizens should be deeply concerned with the widespread indifference of educational planners to the findings of research.

3. A number of leading ECE authorities are modifying or reversing their positions, or have reported that they have been forced to deny their research hypotheses that favored general early intervention in the lives of normal children.

THE HOME AS SCHOOL

In view of these conclusions, the present nationwide move back to home schools deserves more than casual attention. We say "back to," for the home's status as the basic school is one of the great lessons of recorded history. For basic learning, the tutorial system has never been excelled by institutions. Students of genius point to the home school as a developer of great leaders, including John Quincy Adams, William Penn, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Edison, Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Konrad Adenauer, George Patton, Douglas MacArthur, Agatha Christie, and Pearl Buck, among others.

A recent national study of home schools confirmed among its other findings that youngsters educated at home achieve higher than national averages in standardized measures.⁶⁶ The Hewitt Research team's clinical experience with several thousand home schools verifies this. Rural and urban children from New York to California and Hawaii and from Alaska and North Dakota to Nebraska and Louisiana have often been performing in the seventy-fifth to ninety-ninth percentiles on Stanford and Iowa Achievement tests. Frequently they are taught by high school-educated parents no more than an hour or two a day, usually utilizing readily available home-school or correspondence curricula.

This success should not be surprising in view of several factors that any objective observer can readily understand:

1. Home schools are characterized by parents who have enough concern for their children to take on the task of systematically teaching them.
2. Parents provide a partiality that young children need, but schools cannot allow.
3. Children thrive on routines that involve a few children who share the same family values.
4. The child in the home school daily experiences from ten to a hundred times as many personal adult-to-child responses as he would in a formal school; such responses—along with adult example—mean educational power far more than do books.
5. Without the all-day regimentation of the classroom the child becomes more of a free explorer and thinker than a restricted regurgitator of books, which to him are often more barriers than facilitators of learning.
6. Parents who bring their children with them into the responsibilities of the home turn out independent, self-directed children.

In western New York State, five unrelated families submitted their children to testing by school officials when challenged for truancy. The seven children tested averaged 90 to 99 percent on Stanford Achievement tests. Wallace, Nebraska, school officials arrested Leslie and Vickie Rice for criminal child neglect for taking twelve-year-old Leslie Sue out of the sixth grade where "had been going downhill" for a year or two. Judge Keith Windrum, a strong advocate of public education, was surprised as he listened to the research

evidence, and when University of Nebraska psychometrists verified that Vickie Rice had upgraded her daughter nearly three grades in nine months—formally teaching an hour and a half a day—he acquitted the Rices. The Rices also won at the State Supreme Court level when the state appealed Windrum's decision.

In San Bernardino County, California, the Dick Schaefers withdrew their sons from parochial school. Jonathan, aged eight, was acutely hyperactive. Mark, eleven, was withdrawn. The principal threatened to report them to the state. But they knew their constitutional rights as guaranteed by the first Amendment to the Constitution—as interpreted by the U.S. Supreme Court through a series of decisions. Instead, they reported themselves and established a home school with the warm cooperation of the local public schools. Soon the boys settled in and became high achievers and admired neighborhood leaders.⁶⁷

In reviews of more than 8,000 related studies—no matter which discipline—I have not been able to find a single replicated experiment that has clearly demonstrated the desirability of early schooling or day care for the normal child who by some extra effort can have the security of a reasonably good home. Nor have I found any evidence suggesting that the school is superior to the home through the elementary years. In fact, the evidence is clearly to the contrary. Why then are we as teachers impelled toward state control? What is the record of the public school to justify such a direction? Is it possible that this emphasis on institutions is the wrong direction? Or are we more interested in jobs than in the needs of children? If so, we are no longer professionals but mere rank-and-file union help.

There is reason to believe that employing teachers to help parents to better understand their roles and their children is in most cases much more productive and involves far less risk than to attempt to become substitutes for those parents. It also might provide employment for outstanding people. Teacher education would do well to take note.

The educational planner in general must be more faithful in developing the facts of research and organizing them for legislators and administrators. And researchers themselves would do well to interrelate their findings with connected research and thus develop their synergic potential if they are to have full and accurate impact on planning. This means that their language must be kept simple enough for the planner, and their findings expressed in commonsense terms.

Americans are rising in anger and despair at the course the schools are traveling. Legislators, boards of education, and school faculties need to see what happens when they make bad laws or have good parents arrested or offer services that contradict good educational practice.

A few years ago the well-known Finnish home economist Annikki Suviranta wrapped this all up with a few words of admonition at the International Conference on Home Economics:

In primitive countries, children are brought up and educated entirely at home. . . . In the industrialized State, education is being shifted more and more to the community, starting from increasingly younger ages. Nowadays parents have very little say in what their children are taught. In other words, education is becoming totalitarian—something imposed from the top downwards.

To give their children the confidence and security they need to grow into balanced individuals, parents should look after them themselves and keep them company as much as possible in early childhood. This means that parents must alter their order of priorities in deciding how to spend their free time.

Industrialized society often alienates parents and children—especially as the children grow older. Young people at school learn other values and a different culture from that of their parents. To satisfy the economic demands of the young, parents have to spend more and more time just making money. This leaves them very little time to follow changes in Society and bring their children up accordingly. Young people alienated from their families are insecure and unhappy. They seek a meaning to their lives, but they do it in ways that are not always best for Society.

But the main problems of industrialized society are moral and ethical, not material. Their solution has posed a serious challenge to the family and home. . . . If it fails, the result may well be a form of human pollution that will destroy Mankind.

The economic valuation of housework is rising—along with women's wages on the labour market. It has been found that services supplied within the home are quite as valuable as the same services purchased from outside. In just the same way I think people will before long come to realize that the "psychological and emotional services" provided at home—mental health, equilibrium and comfort—are the most important things in life. In the abundance of commodities supplied by industrialization, we must learn how to set up orders of priority and make sensible choices. Priority must go to spiritual values. . . . We are learning to recognize our rights. We must also recognize our duties and responsibilities—and do so on a world scale.⁶⁸

There is no need to fear the future except as research truth and the lessons of the past are ignored—the family-centered home, the child-centered school, and the results of any departures from either.

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Teachers College RECORD

*Research and Common Sense:
Therapies for our Homes and Schools*

RAYMOND S. MOORE

REPRINT

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Mr. Chairman and commiteemen:

We would like to state our opposition to H.B. 2730 concerning the lowering of the compulsory school attendance age. My wife Jan and I are the happy parents of four active children- a girl, age 8, and three boys, ages 5, 3, and 1. We enjoy our children very much and are concerned for their welfare and growth, especially in their younger, more formative years. Jan and I love to have them around the house and we both enjoy teaching them things. Silas, our 5 year old, has an inquisitive mind and shares a keen interest in my hobbies of beekeeping, woodworking, and silk screen printing. Jan has been teaching him basic things in reading, writing, math, nature study, and other subjects. I help Silas practice what he's learning by having him involved with me in my various activities. If the compulsory age were lowered, Jan and I would miss out on a lot of wonderful opportunities to be involved in our children's early learning experiences. While it may be the desire for many parents to send their children to school earlier (which, by the way, is an option a large number of folks already take advantage of) we feel that H.B. 2730 would change that option into a mandate thus eliminating a cherished freedom that some of us have enjoyed for a long time and have found to be of benefit in preparing our children to really enjoy and excel in their educational experiences.

Another reason Jan and I are opposed to H.B. 2730 is that we are concerned that our children not be thrust into a larger group situation before they are ready. First, because the number of meaningful interactions with an adult instructor drops dramatically from those found in the home. This hinders learning and application of learning. Second, if a child is put into a larger group such as a classroom, peer dependence is a greater danger if the child is not secure and confident. The home environment is the best place, generally, for a child to develop the security, confidence, and basic skills needed to function positively with his peers. Third, Jan and I feel that our children need to have a basic understanding of our values and expectations for them before they leave the home in order to know how best to handle the situations that do come up in classroom and playground situations.

To sum up, Jan and I feel that lowering the compulsory age any lower than it already is will not only rob many parents of a freedom they enjoy, but will also have an adverse affect on the quality of education in many cases. Whatever the motivation for lowering the compulsory age may be, we have never seen or heard of a single scientific study that proves that early compulsory education is beneficial to the quality of education. What purpose could possibly be served by taking fragile young minds and hearts from their God given nest years before they're ready. We ask the committee to receive our appeal to table this bill. Thank you.

Please examine the other submitted documentation.



ANOTHER BULLETIN FROM HEWITT RESEARCH. . .HOME-GROWN KIDS,
A Synopsis, Hewitt Research Foundation, 36211 S. E. Sunset View,
Washougal, WA 98671.

For more than 40 years some of us have been concerned that most children are being surrendered by homes to institutional life before they are ready—with serious implications for the children, the family, society, nation and world. In the late 1960's following a stint at the U.S. Office of Education, we became convinced that our children were victims of dangerous trends toward "early schooling for all". We had reasons to be skeptical of claims of schools for early academic achievement and socialization simply because young children learned so fast. Although challenging conventional wisdom and practice was not at first a pleasant task, colleagues around the world have more and more given support to our research, many reversing historic positions to do so. This is a synopsis of our books (the last: HOME GROWN KIDS, Word, Waco TX, 1981), and chapters in more than 30 college textbooks in various languages. By giving our schools "green grain" for their mills, we make their task impossible.

Our conclusions are actually quite old-fashioned. They seem new to some because they differ largely from, and often challenge, conventional practice. Our early childhood research grew out of experiences in the classroom with children who were misbehaving or not learning because they were not ready for the sanctions of formal schooling. We set out to determine the best ages for school entrance, concerned first with academic achievement. Yet more important has been the socialization of young children—which also address senses, coordination, brain development, reason, and social-emotional aspects of child development. These conclusions come from our Stanford, University of Colorado Medical School and Michigan State and Hewitt investigative teams who did basic research and analyzed more than 7,000 early childhood studies. We offer briefly here our conclusions which we would like to have you check against any sound research that you know:

Readiness for Learning. Despite early excitement for school, most early entrants (ages 4, 5, 6, etc.) are tired of school before they are out of the third or fourth grades—at about the ages and levels we found that they should be starting. Psychologist David Elkind calls these pressured youngsters "burned out." They would have been far better off wherever possible waiting until ages 8 to 10 to start formal studies (at home or school) in the second, third, fourth or fifth grade. They would then quickly pass early entrants in learning, behavior and sociability. Their vision, hearing and other senses are not ready for continuing formal programs of learning until at least age 8 or 9. When earlier care is absolutely necessary, it should be informal, warm and responsive like a good home, with a low adult-to-child ratio.

The eyes of most children are permanently damaged before age 12. Neither the maturity of their delicate central nervous systems nor the "balancing" of the hemispheres of their brains, nor yet the insulation of their nerve pathways provide a basis for thoughtful learning before 8 or 9. The integration of these maturity levels (IML) comes for most between 8 and 10.

This coincided with the well-established findings of Jean Piaget and others that children cannot handle cause-and-effect reasoning in any consistent way before late 7's to middle 11's. And the bright child is no exception. So the 5's and 6's are subjected to dull Dick and Jane rote learning which tires, frustrates and ruins motivation, requires little thought, stimulates few "hows" and "whys." Net results: frequent learning failure, delinquency. For example, little boys trail little girls

about a year in maturity, yet are under the same school entrance laws. HEW figures show that boys are 3 to 1 more often learning disabled, 3 to 1 delinquent and 4 to 1 acutely hyperactive. So unknowing teachers far more often tag little boys as "naughty" or "dumb." And the labels frequently follow them through school.

Socialization. We later became convinced that little children are not only better taught at home than at school, but also better socialized by parental example and sharing than by other little children. This idea was fed by many researchers. Among the more prominent were (1) Cornell's Urie Bronfenbrenner who found that up to the sixth grade at least, children who spend less of their elective time with their parents than their peers tend to become peer-dependent; and (2) Stanford's Albert Bandura who noted that this tendency has in recent years moved down to preschool levels--which should be avoided whenever good parenting is possible. Contrary to common beliefs, little children are not best socialized by other kids. We found that socialization is not neutral. It tends to be either positive or negative:

(1) Positive or altruistic and principled sociability is firmly linked with the family--with the quantity and quality of self-worth. This is in turn dependent largely on the track of values and experience provided by the family at least until the child can reason consistently. In other words the child who works and eats and plays and has his rest and is read to daily, more with his parents than with his peers, senses that he is part of the family corporation--needed, wanted, depended upon. He is the one who has a sense of self-worth. And when he does enter school, preferably not before 8 to 10, he usually becomes a social leader. He knows where he is going, is self-directed and independent in values and skills. He largely avoids the dismal pitfalls and social cancer of peer dependency. He is the productive citizen our nation badly needs.

(2) Negative, me-first, sociability is born from more peer group association and fewer meaningful parental contacts and responsibility experiences in the home during the first 8 to 12 years. The early peer influence generally brings an indifference to family values which defy parent correction. The child does not yet consistently understand the "why" of parental demands when his peers replace his parents as his models because he is with them more. So he does what comes naturally: He adapts to the ways of his agemates because "everybody's doing it," and gives parent values the back of his little hand. And . . . he has few sound values to pass on to the next generation.

So home, wherever possible, is by far the best nest until at least 8 to 10. Where there is any reasonable doubt about the influence of schools on our children (morality, ridicule, rivalry, denial of religious values, etc.) home schools are usually a highly desirable alternative. Some 34 states permit them by law under various conditions. Other states permit them through court decisions. Home schools nearly always excel regular schools in achievement. Although most of them don't know it, parents are the best teachers for most children at least through ages 10 or 12. For further information write us at 36211 S.E. Sunset View, Washougal, WA 98671, or for legal problems. Send self-addressed stamped envelope!

If we are to believe sociologists Frederick Le Play, J.D. Unwin or Carle Zimmerman, we must spend more time with our children in the home, lest our society like Greece and Rome, is lost. The conditions are now identical to theirs. Let's have more loving firmness, less indulgence; more work with you, fewer toys; more service for others--the old, poor, infirm--and less sports and amusements; more self-control, patriotism, productiveness and responsibility--which lead to, and follow, self-worth as children of God. Parents and home, undiluted, usually do this best. Home Spun Schools (Word, Oct. 1982) will tell how others did it.

--Raymond Moore

TESTIMONY OF BETTY L. JONES TO THE
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
CONCERNING HOUSE BILL NO. 2730

Mr. Chairman and members of this Committee:

I am Betty Jones, State Lobbyist for the Eagle Forum.

In the event that you have read the NEA Manual, "Combatting the New Right" or the PTA program from February 3, 1983 on "Extremist Groups - Who are they and how to cope with them" you will find our organization listed along with Young Americans for Freedom - which certainly sounds like a refreshing group to me - and the Ku Klux Klan, I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that I have no white robe in my closet, nor do I own a gun. Our primary concerns relate to education, parent's rights, and individual freedom, all of which seem to have become very controversial issues.

I am here to oppose the passage of House Bill No. 2730 because we feel it does infringe upon the rights of parents who have chosen an alternative method of education for their young children.

To my knowledge, no scientific data has ever been considered in establishing compulsory school age attendance. It has simply been an arbitrary age. I am amazed that educators would seek to lower the compulsory school age attendance since the Head Start Program has proven to be such a dismal failure. There are those who now think that because getting the children at four years of age failed they need to have control of the children at age "0". I believe it was Dr. Raymond Moore's involvement in the Head Start Program when he was at the Department of Education that caused him to research in great depth early childhood education.

Pressures to read too early lead to learning disabilities later, especially among boys because they lag behind girls in their development by at least one year. Their eyes, ears and neurological makeup are not necessarily ready to take on academic skills as early as the state prescribes. Evidence continues to mount that school for a child younger than eight years of age is counterproductive. We are spending a lot of money putting children in school where they are being damaged, then we pay more money to try to correct the

damage that has been caused. Many go through life permanently handicapped due to damage from too early schooling. Those children who have the good fortune to have parents who understand childhood development and care enough to provide the best possible environment for their individual growth and development would be deprived of their right if this bill is passed.

The education establishment has made great efforts to blame the parents for the failure of educators to educate over the past twenty years. On the other hand they have made every effort to undermine the authority of the parents and deprive parents of their rights. I have heard everything from the parents letting their children watch too much TV, as though this is the reason they have failed to teach our children to read while they are at school, to working mothers. It is inconsistent to blame parents, yet strip them of their rights. Without rights how can there be responsibility?

In my school district we have had total academic freedom flouted at us. With total academic freedom goes total responsibility.

In the interest of our children, I respectfully ask this committee to kill House Bill No. 2730.

Attached: Teachers College Record (Winter 1982)
Olathe Daily News Article January 18, 1984

Dated February 1, 1984

Betty Jones
5800 Renner Rd.
Shawnee, Kansas 66217

Phone: (913) 631-3952

County offers site for church schools

IMPERIAL, Neb. (UPI) — Saying Nebraska's law requiring state-certified teachers violates the Constitution, Chase County Attorney Guy Curtis Tuesday invited the unaccredited schools to move to his county.

"The state has no right to dictate what should be taught and by whom," said Curtis, who has been the prosecutor for the southwestern Nebraska county for more than 20 years. "One of the planks of the Communist Manifesto is the state control of education.

"I'm almost ashamed to call myself a native Nebraskan," he said.

Representatives from two unaccredited schools praised Curtis for his announcement but did not say they would move.

"From a philosophical point of view, yes, that is a distinct possibility," the Rev. Clay Nuttall of Faith Christian School in Louisville said. "We strongly welcome the statement by Guy Curtis because it points out what we have said all along."

Faith Christian School has been the focus of a church-state controversy since it was ordered closed by court order in 1979 for failing to use teachers certified by the state. The school, in some form, has been in operation almost continuously since the order was issued.

School supporters say state regulation violates constitutional guarantees of

religious freedom while the state says it must see that the children are educated properly.

Clarence Pendleton, chairman of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, traveled to the state to look into alleged religious rights violations last week, but said he saw no reason for federal intervention.

There was no immediate comment from state Education Department officials on Curtis' statements.

Curtis said he is a Christian, but his decision stemmed from a legal rather than religious belief.

"It finally got to the point of idiocy with the violation of human rights," the attorney said.

"As an attorney I've sworn an oath to uphold the laws ... principally the Constitution, which is supreme over the certification law, which is absolutely void," he said.

The Rev. Agnes Rich of Grand Island, who said a \$150 fine is being levied against her Calvary Academy each day it is in operation, said she was glad someone was speaking out on the issue, but she would not move.

"I have said all the time the church is the school and the school is the church and God called me to Grand Island," she said. "I think it's a great gesture, but you're called to a town."



Photo by U

Theater of the Sea curator Marlin Sim the sea turtle's operation to implant a

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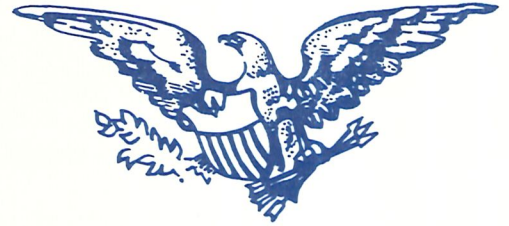
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The Phyllis Schlafly Report

VOL. 15, NO. 3, SECTION 1

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OCTOBER, 1981

The Law Is On Your Side

Parents' and Pupils' Rights in Education

The American educational system used to be the finest in the world. It trained young people to become useful and productive citizens, and it transmitted the values and standards of our forefathers to the younger generation.

In recent years, the American people have poured an incredible sum of tax monies into the public schools. Yet it seems that the more billions we spend, the poorer the results. Scholastic aptitude tests have declined every year for the last eighteen years. Students are graduated from high school who cannot read, write, spell, or do simple arithmetic. Thousands of children have been defrauded of the basic tools of learning for which their parents have paid.

In many schools, pupils are not taught to respect and appreciate the great American constitutional republic and private enterprise system. They are taught only what is wrong with America, instead of the truth that our system has provided more political freedom and economic abundance to more people than any nation in the history of the world.

In addition to a failure to teach the basic skills and fundamental historical truths, many schools have deliberately utilized the schools to change the values of the students rather than to impart knowledge and skills. Most of this is done without the knowledge or consent of the parents or of the pupils.

The use of the schools for such purposes is often called "values clarification" - a system of probing and changing the child's values by techniques such as violent and disturbing books and films; materials dealing with parental conflict, death, drugs, murder, suicide, mental illness, poverty, despair, running away, and anger; literature which is mostly negative, rarely positive; requiring the child to engage in role-playing of death, pregnancy, abortion, anger, suicide, and hate; personal attitude surveys and evaluations which invade the private thoughts and acts of the child and his family; explicit and pornographic instruction in sex acts (legal and illegal, moral and immoral); and a deliberate attempt to

make the child question his parents' values. Such techniques drive a psychological wedge between the children and their parents.

Parents and pupils should know that they do not have to become guinea pigs for the fads and experiments which are often substituted for real learning. Parents have the primary responsibility for the teaching of their own children, and the taxpayers have the final power of the purse.

This report is designed to show parents and pupils that the law of the United States is on your side. This report is a tool by which parents and taxpayers can reassert their authority, find out what is being taught in the name of "education," and stop any assault on traditional and family values.

Legislation Protecting Parents' Rights

Two provisions in the United States Code specifically deal with the protection of parents' and pupils' rights in relation to public school programs and policies. The first provision allows parents or guardians to inspect all instructional material to be used in connection with any research or experimentation program. The second provision prohibits requiring a student to submit to psychiatric or psychological examination, testing, or treatment in which the primary purpose is to reveal certain information concerning specified subjects. These two provisions represent an extremely important advance in Federal protection of parental and pupil rights.

Protection of Pupil Rights 20 U. S. Code 1232h

Inspection by parents or guardians
of instructional material.

(a) All instructional material, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary instructional material which will be used in connection with any research or experimentation program or project shall be available for inspection by the parents or guardians of

the children engaged in such program or project. For the purpose of this section "research or experimentation program or project" means any program or project in any applicable program designed to explore or develop new or unproven teaching methods or techniques.

Psychiatric or psychological examinations, testing, or treatment.

(b) No student shall be required, as part of any applicable program, to submit to psychiatric examination, testing, or treatment, or psychological examination, testing, or treatment, in which the primary purpose is to reveal information concerning:

- (1) political affiliations;
- (2) mental and psychological problems potentially embarrassing to the student or his family;
- (3) sex behavior and attitudes;
- (4) illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating and demeaning behavior;
- (5) critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- (6) legally recognized privileged and analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers; or
- (7) income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program), without the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of unemancipated minor, without the prior written consent of the parent.

Court Decisions Protecting Parents' Rights

Many decisions of the U.S. Supreme Court, lower Federal courts, and State courts uphold parents' rights and pupils' rights in education.

These decisions constitute impressive evidence that, under U.S. law, *parents* have the primary responsibility for their children's education, and *pupils* have certain rights which the schools may not take away.

Parents have the right to make sure that their children's religious faith and moral values are not undermined by the schools. Pupils have the right to have and to hold their religious faith and moral standards without direct or indirect attack by the schools, by the curriculum, by the textbooks, or by the assigned supplementary materials.

1. Parents have the right to determine the subject matter taught to their children in school. (The Court struck down a Nebraska law which forbade the teaching of the German language.)

Meyer v. State of Nebraska, 262 U.S. 390 (1923)

U. S. Supreme Court

"The Fourteenth Amendment . . . guarantee[s] . . . the right of the individual . . . to marry, establish a home and bring up children . . ." (p. 399)

"The right of parents to engage him [the teacher] so to instruct their children, we think, are within the liberty of the [Fourteenth] Amendment." (p. 400)

The Court protected "the power of parents to control the education of their own." (p. 401)

2. Parents have the right to send their children to private schools. (The Court struck down the Oregon Compulsory Education Act which attempted to force all children to attend public schools.)

Pierce v. Society of Sisters, 268 U.S. 510 (1925)

U. S. Supreme Court

"We think it entirely plain that the Act of 1922 unreasonably interferes with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control." (p. 534)

"The fundamental theory of liberty upon which all governments in this Union repose excludes any general power of the State to standardize its children by forcing them to accept instruction from public teachers only. The child is not the mere creature of the State; those who nurture him and direct his destiny have the right, coupled with the high duty, to recognize and prepare him for additional obligations." (p. 535)

3. The parents have the primary responsibility for the care of their children.

Prince v. Massachusetts, 321 U.S. 158 (1943)

U. S. Supreme Court

"It is cardinal with us that the custody, care and nurture of the child reside first in the parents, whose primary function and freedom include preparation for obligations the state can neither supply nor hinder." (p. 166)

4. Parents may withdraw their children from public schools, during school hours, in order to go to church for religious instructions or services.

Zorach v. Clauson, 343 U.S. 306 (1952)

U. S. Supreme Court

"We are a religious people whose institutions presuppose a Supreme Being. We guarantee the freedom to worship as one chooses. We make room for as wide a variety of beliefs and creeds as the spiritual needs of man deem necessary. We sponsor an attitude on the part of government that shows no partiality to any one group and that lets each flourish according to the zeal of its adherents and the appeal of its dogma. When the state encourages religious instruction or cooperates with religious authorities by adjusting the schedule of public events to sectarian needs, it follows the best of our

traditions. For it then respects the religious nature of our people and accommodates the public service to their spiritual needs. To hold that it may not would be to find in the Constitution a requirement that the government show a callous indifference to religious groups. That would be preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe." (pp. 313-314)

5. Secular Humanism is recognized (in a footnote) as a "religion" which does not teach "a belief in the existence of God."

Torasco v. Watkins, 367 U.S. 488 (1961)

U. S. Supreme Court

"Among religions in this country which do not teach what would generally be considered a belief in the existence of God are Buddhism, Taoism, Ethical Culture, Secular Humanism and others." (p. 495, note 11)

6. The state may *not* require that an official state prayer be recited in the public schools, *however*, this decision does *not* indicate a hostility toward religion or toward prayer.

Engel v. Vitale, 370 U.S. 421 (1962)

U. S. Supreme Court

"The history of man is inseparable from the history of religion. And perhaps it is not too much to say that since the beginning of that history many people have devoutly believed that 'More things are wrought by prayer than this world ever dreams of.'" (p. 434)

"School children and others are officially encouraged to express love for our country by reciting historical documents such as the Declaration of Independence which contain references to the Deity or by singing officially espoused anthems which include the composer's professions of faith in a Supreme Being, or with the fact that there are many manifestations in our public life of belief in God." (p. 435, note 21)

7. Pupils had the right to express their opinion by wearing black armbands to protest U.S. policy in Vietnam, so long as the pupils were not disruptive.

Tinker v. Des Moines School District,

393 U.S. 503 (1969)

U. S. Supreme Court

"School officials do not possess absolute authority over their students. Students in school as well as out of school are 'persons' under our Constitution. They are possessed of fundamental rights which the State must respect, just as they themselves must respect

their obligations to the State. In our system, students may not be regarded as closed-circuit recipients of only that which the State chooses to communicate. They may not be confined to the expression of those sentiments that are officially approved." (p. 511)

8. Parents have the right to keep their children out of all high schools when they believe that school attendance would endanger their children's religious faith and salvation. (The Court upheld the rights of the Amish against the Wisconsin Compulsory School Attendance Law.)

Wisconsin v. Yoder, 406 U.S. 205 (1972)

U. S. Supreme Court

"The values of parental direction of the religious upbringing and education of their children in their early and formative years have a high place in our society. . . . Thus, a State's interest in universal education, however highly we rank it, is not totally free from a balancing process when it impinges on fundamental rights and interests, such as those specifically protected by the Free Exercise Clause of the First Amendment, and the traditional interest of parents with respect to the religious upbringing of their children so long as they, in the words of *Pierce*, 'prepare [them] for additional obligations.'" (pp. 213-214)

"The history and culture of Western civilization reflect a strong tradition of parental concern for the nurture and upbringing of their children. This primary role of the parents in the upbringing of their children is now established beyond debate as an enduring American tradition." (p. 232)

9. Although the state may not require Bible reading or the recitation of the Lord's Prayer in public schools, the state also may not establish a religion of secularism.

Abington School District v. Schempp,

374 U.S. 203 (1963)

U. S. Supreme Court

"The State may not establish a 'religion of secularism' in the sense of affirmatively opposing or showing hostility to religion, thus 'preferring those who believe in no religion over those who do believe' . . . It might well be said that one's education is not complete without a study of comparative religion or the history of religion and its relationship to the advancement of civilization. It certainly may be said that the Bible is worthy of study for its literary and historic qualities. Nothing we have said here indicates that such study of the Bible or of religion, when presented objectively as part of a secular program of education, may not be effected consistently with the First Amendment." (p. 225)

"The place of religion in our society is an exalted one, achieved through a long tradition of reliance on the home, the church and the inviolable citadel of the individual heart and mind." (p. 226)

10. Teachers do not have a right to unlimited free speech in the classroom; they are subject to regulations depending on the age and sophistication of the pupils and the context and manner of presentation of the subject.

Mailloux v. Kiley, 448 F.2d 1242 (1st Cir. 1971)
U. S. Court of Appeals

"Free speech does not grant teachers a license to say or write in class whatever they may feel like, and . . . the propriety of regulations or sanctions must depend on such circumstances as the age and sophistication of the students, the closeness of the relation between the specific technique used and some concededly valid educational objective, and the context and manner of presentation." (p. 1243)

11. School books can be removed by the same authority that selected them.

Presidents Council, Dist. 25 v. Community School Board No. 25,
457 F.2d 289 (2d Cir.)
cert. denied, 408 U.S. 998 (1972)
U. S. Court of Appeals

"It would seem clear to us that books which become obsolete or irrelevant or where improperly selected initially, for whatever reason, can be removed by the same authority which was empowered to make the selection in the first place." (p. 293)

12. A public school may require a period of silence for prayer or meditation at the beginning of the school day, so long as students are not compelled to participate in any religious exercise.

Gaines v. Anderson, 421 F. Supp. 337 (Mass. 1976)
U. S. District Court

"The statute and guidelines do not compel participation by any student in a religious activity which violates his liberty of conscience. . . . The statute and guidelines here do not operate to confront any student with the cruel dilemma of either participating in a repugnant religious exercise or requesting to be excused therefrom." (p. 345)

"Because the statute and the guidelines compel no participation in any religious exercise by the students, the state infringes no parental liberty protected by the Due Process Clause." (p. 346)

13. The public school may not compel pupils to stand during the singing of the National Anthem where this interferes with their religious beliefs. (The case involved the Jehovah's Witnesses.)

Sheldon v. Fannin, 221 F. Supp. 766 (Ariz. 1963)
U. S. District Court

"Where, however, a particular application of a general law not protective of some fundamental State concern materially abridges free expression or practice of religious belief, then the law must give way to the exercise of religion." (p. 774)

14. School boards may remove books from the school library which the school board finds inconsistent with the basic values of the community.

Pico v. Board of Education, Island Trees Union Free School,
474 F.Supp. 387 (E.D.N.Y. 1979)
U. S. District Court

"One of the principal functions of public education is indoctrinative, to transmit the basic values of the community." (p. 396)

"Here, the issue is whether the first amendment requires a federal court to forbid a school board from removing library books which its members find to be inconsistent with the basic values of the community that elected them. . . . Respect for the traditional values of the community and deference to the school board's substantial control over educational content . . . preclude any finding of a first amendment violation arising out of removal of any of the books from use in the curriculum." (p. 396-397)

15. The courts should not interfere with the schools' policy on corporal punishment.

Ware v. Estes, 328 F. Supp. 657 (N.D. Tex. 1971), *aff'd*,
458 F.2d 1360, *cert. denied*, 409 U.S. 1027 (1972)
U. S. District Court

"The state cannot unreasonably interfere with the liberty of parents and guardians to direct the upbringing and education of children under their control." (p. 658)

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Terrie Bridgens
Route 1, Box 180A
Eudora, Kansas 66025

Testimony before the House Education Committee
in opposition to HB 2730
February 1, 1984

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am the mother of three children, the eldest being nearly six. This is my primary reason for appearing before you today in opposition to HB 2730.

As a parent, I know my children better than anyone else, including the "experts." My five year old son is very immature emotionally and has an overwhelming amount of nervous energy to burn. This could cause him to become a discipline problem in no time if made to sit in a classroom all day long. (Attachment #1)

In the article, "Home-Spun vs. School-Burned Kids," Dr. and Mrs. Raymond Moore explain: "We found from our own experience and surveys of primary school teachers that children who enter at later ages do much better in a given period of time with much less anxiety and frustration. For example, HEW compares little boys with little girls. Boys trail little girls about a year in maturity, yet are under the same school entrance laws. Boys are 3 to 1 more often learning disabled, 3 to 1 delinquent and 4 to 1 acutely hyperactive. Teachers far more often tag little boys as 'naughty' or 'dumb.' And the labels frequently follow them through school."

This article is significant because it reports on the findings of four early childhood research teams, including a national study of 80,000 children and 3500 teachers with the National Center for Educational Statistics. From the research, Dr. and Mrs. Moore conclude that: "Despite early excitement for school, most early entrants (ages 4,5,6, etc.) are tired of school before they are out of the third or fourth grades--at about the ages and levels we later concluded that they

should be starting. Psychologist David Elkind calls them 'burned out.' Their vision, hearing and other senses were not ready for continuing formal programs of learning until at least age 8 or 9. The eyes of most of them were permanently damaged before age 12. Neither the maturity of their delicate central nervous systems nor the lateralizing or balancing of the hemispheres of their brains, nor yet the insulation of their nerve pathways provided a basis for thoughtful learning before 8 or 9."

Dr. Moore's concern for the emotional readiness is an important factor which many parents, such as myself, must consider. A child who is not ready to conform to the confines of the classroom will not learn as much as he would if he were allowed to mature normally.

The entire class will also suffer from the entrance of an emotionally unprepared child. Children are easily distracted and even one disruptive student will inhibit the learning atmosphere in the classroom.

As Dr. Moore points out (Attachment #2), the immature child is more likely to be influenced by his peers in a negative, rather than a positive manner. I feel this would be the case with my child, as well as many other children who are also late to mature.

Along with this committee, I am here today seeking the best possible education for Kansas children. Kansas already provides an opportunity for those who are ready to begin school at age five. We have also seen the need to offer an alternative for those who are not prepared until age 6 or 7, whatever the reason. We have the best of both worlds.

I urge you to maintain these alternatives for the good of all Kansas students. Please vote "NO" on HB 2730.

Att. #1

" HOME-SPUN VS. SCHOOL-BURNED KIDS "

We prefer not to shock or to cause trouble, but offer an urgent message. X We found from our own experience and surveys of primary school teachers that children who enter at later ages do much better in a given period of time with much less anxiety and frustration. For example, HEW compares little boys with little girls. Boys trail little girls about a year in maturity, yet are under the same school entrance laws. Boys are 3 to 1 more often learning disabled, 3 to 1 delinquent and 4 to 1 acutely hyperactive. Teachers far more often tag little boys as "naughty" or "dumb." And the labels frequently follow them through school. X

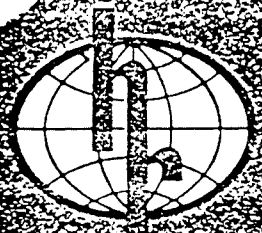
But all of this contradicts a common idea that little kids learn so fast that we should ram it in, jam it in faster. So with the advice of specialists from the National Institutes of Health we set up four early childhood (EC) research teams. They included Stanford (public policy), University of Colorado (brain studies) and Andrews and Michigan State (analyses of more than 7000 EC studies from a variety of disciplines:—vision, hearing, cognition, etc.,—and including a national study of 80,000 children and 3500 teachers with the National Center for Educational Statistics).

We later became suspicious that little children are not only better taught but also socialized by parental example than by other little children, contrary to conventional wisdom. This idea was fed by many researchers. Among the more prominent were (1) Cornell's Urie Bronfenbrenner who found that up to the sixth grade at least, children who spend less of their elective time with their parents than their peers tend to become peer-dependent; and (2) Stanford's Albert Bandura who noted that this tendency has in recent years moved down to preschool levels—which should be avoided whenever good parenting is possible.

This peer dependency results in dim views of themselves, of their futures, of their peers, and disappointment or disrespect for their parents, who they often feel do not really love them. Martin Engel, former head of Washington D.C.'s National Day Care Demonstration Center observes that no matter how we rationalize, children we put out of home at early ages feel rejected. Such rejection is a pervasive emotional form of child abuse today which in some ways is worse than a physical beating.

Much EC research had been done over the last 50 years, yet results had not been brought together from the various disciplines to present a complete picture. As our conclusions veered from commonly accepted theories and contrasted with state entrance age laws, we rechecked our already rigid evaluation standards. We also asked respected professionals from the several disciplines to critique our findings. Yet it became increasingly clear that earlier institutionalizing of little children is academically, socially and behaviorally damaging.

Readiness for Learning. X Despite early excitement for school, most early entrants (ages 4,5,6, etc.) are tired of school before they are out of the third or fourth grades—at about the ages and levels we later concluded that they should be starting. Psychologist David Elkind calls them "burned out." Their vision, hearing and other senses were not ready for continuing formal programs of learning until at least age 8 or 9.



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The eyes of most of them were permanently damaged before age 12. Neither the maturity of their delicate central nervous systems nor the lateralizing or balancing of the hemispheres of their brains, nor yet the insulation of their nerve pathways provided a basis for thoughtful learning before 8 or 9. X The integration of these maturity levels (IML) comes between 8 and 10.

This coincided almost precisely with the well-established findings that children cannot handle cause-and-effect reasoning in any consistent way before late 7's to middle 11's. And the bright child is no exception. So younger children are subject to a dull Dick and Jane kind of rote learning which is tiring, frustrating and ruins motivation. Net results: often learning failure, delinquency.

Peer Pressure. Their chances for sound character development were largely wiped out by peer influence. Whatever remained of their self-worth was often buried under the cruelty, ridicule and competition of agemates and older children on buses and playgrounds and in classrooms and neighborhoods. The habits, manners, speech, finger signs, morals, etc. of their peers brought pressures and "social contagion" which most children cannot bear without serious loss to their value systems and their self-respect,—an ingredient of the rebellious 1960s and drug-cultured 1970s.

Socializing. Contrary to common beliefs, little children are not best socialized by other kids. Socialization tends to be either positive or negative:

(1) Positive or altruistic and principled sociability is firmly linked with the quantity and quality of self-worth. This is in turn dependent largely on the track of values and experience provided by parents or surrogates, preferably on a one-to-one basis at least until the child can reason consistently. In other words the child who works and eats and plays and has his rest and is read to daily, more with his parents than with his peers, senses that he is part of the family corporation—needed, wanted, depended upon. He is the one who has a sense of self-worth. And when he does enter school not before 8 to 10 he usually becomes a social leader. He knows where he is going, is self-directed and independent in values and skills. He has largely avoided the dismal pitfalls and social cancer of peer dependency. He is the productive citizen our nation badly needs.

(2) Negative, me-first, sociability is born from more peer group association and fewer meaningful parental contacts and responsibility experiences in the home during the first 8-12 years. The early peer influence generally brings an indifference to family values which defy parent correction because the child cannot yet consistently understand the "why" of parental values. His peers have replaced his parents as his models. So he does what comes naturally: He adapts to the ways of his peers because "Everybody's doing it," and gives parent values the back of his little hand. And he has few sound values to pass on to the next generation.

Clinical results. We have worked with more than a thousand families who have managed to have one parent at home and who have followed our simple suggestions with warmth, responsiveness and consistency. We have not suggested formal teaching at home, but rather close, responsive working and living with children mostly at home. All have been pleased with the social, behavioral and academic results. This has been even more notably true with the gifted, regardless of the parent's educational level. For those who must have schools before 8, it should be unstructured, like a good home.

Although we are not members of their communion, the Mormon's fine Brigham Young University Press was willing to publish our book, School Can Wait, which documents most of this synopsis. We also are grateful to Readers Digest/McGraw Hill for publishing Better Late Than Early. And we look forward to Word Books' production of our new parent handbook, Home-Grown Kids, in February, 1981.

Q. We have an only child. Doesn't he need preschool or kindergarten in order to learn to get along with other children?

A. An only child of course needs care to avoid his becoming self-centered, but unselfishness and altruism can be taught better by wise parents than by little school children who themselves are still naturally selfish. First, we don't suggest that you keep your child in a social straight jacket. Yet never be deceived by the modern myth that he needs socializing with a lot of other little children. Dr. Urie Bronfenbrenner of Cornell University says that the more people there are around, the less opportunity there is for meaningful human contact. These are human beings, not rocks to be polished by hitting against each other in a revolving barrel.

Because the young child learns by observation and imitation, exposure to other little children at an early age — also yet socially immature — tends more toward negative than positive socialization. Rather than learning to be unselfish, sharing, taking turns, and being kind to others, University of North Carolina professor Dale Farran reports that studies of day care children show up to 15 times more aggression than children cared for at home. This does not mean just greater assertiveness or willingness to stand up for one's rights, but a tendency toward verbal and physical attacks on others. They are also more easily frustrated, less cooperative, more distractible and more demanding of immediate gratification. The most important socializer for a young child is the parent who not only teaches but demonstrates the qualities he wants his child to develop.

Q. My preschool child has been tested and is said to be gifted and I am urged to put him in school to be sure to make use of his great potential. Shouldn't there be something special done for him?

A. Your child is no doubt very bright, but his feelings and needs are the same as other children of his age — emotional security, consis-

tent discipline, good adult models from whom to learn proper attitudes and behavior, and opportunities for useful work as well as exploration and experimentation in the world about him. Because gifted children are in a sense ahead of themselves, their weaknesses may not be obvious. For example, they may come up with amazing statements about concepts which they do not fully understand through actual experience or they may have fears or feelings of insecurity simply because their special brightness makes them more aware of potential danger. So help him deal with his overcautiousness and provide hands-on activities with real objects and experiences at real places. Do not hurry the formal learning or let him become academically overbalanced either at school or at home. You are the greatest potential builder of his genius by your example, one-to-one responses, attention to his developmental needs, and protection from any exploitation of his talents. As the finely-honed edge of an axe blade is more easily chipped than is a dull blade, so the brighter the child the more vul-

On Te

It was President Eliot of Harvard who in 1900 put English into our schools by making it a requirement for the college board exams. Eliot's idea was that pupils can be compelled to present ideas clearly and to enjoy literature. He would drill these skills into them. The sheer quantity of disciplined effort would get results and turn our 18-year-olds into incisive, clear, witty writers.

The result of all this massive drill, over nearly a century, has been to make our youth somewhat duller than before. Our few famous writers now are notable for their gloom, their insobriety, and their utter inability to come with answers to our problems. . . . It would seem Mr. Eliot added a year and more to everyone's

The Parent Educator and
Family Report


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 P.O. Box 9, Washougal, WA 98671.
 Publisher: Dennis Moore, M.A.
 Editor: Dorothy Moore, M.A.
 Contributing editor: Jolene Oswald, Ph.D.
 Managing editor: Lloyd Knecht

I am Phillip Lucas, I live at 1424 Ellis, Wichita, Ks. 67211. I am a member of the Teaching Parents Association and chairman of the Legislation committee. Our association has about eighty members.

I also speak as a concerned parent of three children, ages 8, 12 and 16 months.

My purpose today is to present evidence which will hopefully convince the committee to kill this bill.

In an article in the June 1972 Harpers Magazine, Raymond Moore, then a professor of education at Andrews University, and chief executive officer of the Hewitt Research Center had this to say.

(I won't read the entire 5 page article)

"There is simply no conclusive proof that even the best known early schooling plans are working and there is considerable evidence that most are not. Studies show that most of the extensive projects such as Head Start and Great Cities have failed to produce the expected growth in scholastic achievement. Furthermore, there is an impressive body of research indicating that the late starter generally does better through school than the child who starts early.

"A second series of arguments against early schooling emerges from the studies of neurophysiologists, psychologists and pediatricians concerned with the delicate harmonies at work in the development of the young child's brain. Research on brain development indicates that important changes are constantly under way in the normal child from birth into adolescence, including the shifting of control from the emotional centers to the reasoning centers. The period at which "reason" develops and the ability to organize facts emerges normally comes between ages seven and eleven.

"In an American Educational Research Association experiment with two groups of children matched by sex, age intelligence, and home background, H. M. Davis reports: "one group began reading at the age of six, the other at the age of seven. In two years the late beginning group had caught up with the early beginning group. After the first two years, these two groups were joined in classes. At the end of their seventh school year the children who began a year later were one year ahead of the early beginners.

"Research on brain development indicates that important changes are constantly under way in the normal child from birth into adolescence, including the shifting of control from the emotional centers to the reasoning centers. The period at which "reason" develops and the ability to organize facts emerges, normally comes between ages seven or eight and ten or eleven.

"Traditionally, of course, school people have argued that parents simply don't care or are too ignorant or too obsessed with the desire to protect their own freedom to fulfill the needs of their children. Parents, for their part, have seldom contested this view, possibly out of feelings of uncertainty or inadequacy when confronted by the opinions of these professionals. The facts, however, as determined by a number of investigations of parental willingness to aid the development of their children, run counter to this conception. The vast majority of parents, regardless of socioeconomic status, stand ready to help their children in terms of home education programs. While much of the justification for early childhood education has grown from the belief that children from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular will benefit, studies have repeatedly shown that the home provides resources that should not be lightly dismissed.

"In all the investigations of early schooling, the only clear evidence proving its value is in the case of special child care needs that are not common to most children - and even here that home should be the center of operation.

"The clear lessons of research in the field of child development are that we must worry less about exploiting the child's intelligence and more about understanding it, and that schoolmen must realize that there is less value in attempting to substitute for the parent than in helping parents to help themselves and their children."

In an attempt to keep from wasting time, I have not tried to educate this committee or present a research paper on all of the evidence supporting my ^{op} position to lowering the age for mandatory attendance at school.

I do hope that I have convinced this committee that research indicates that earlier schooling not only won't be an advantage but could possibly be to our children's disadvantage.

Thank You.

My name is Kathleen Ostrowski, a Topeka resident and mother of two (soon three) children.

Not for any religious reasons, but out of personal concern for my children, I feel that a child should be nurtured at home by his family for as long as is feasible. My husband and I are trying to create a supportive home environment in which our sons can grow in love and self-esteem.

I believe there is a growing group of parents, like us, that wish to take more responsibility for their children's well-being, from birth on upward. We are encouraged by our own experiences as well as those of child-care experts. As an example, my friends and I are not rushing our little ones into nurseries and pre-schools.

Most parents concur with child behaviorists that the child's emerging personality goes through many developmental stages, and that each child has his own individual timetable. There are significant emotional and cognitive differences between a child aged 5 and one aged 8. But there are also significant differences between children of the same chronological age, ie. two 6-year-olds.

I feel that my children will benefit if I have the option of sharing learning experiences at home with them until the time I determine they are prepared for formal, out-of-the-home instruction.

Therefore, I oppose the substantive change of HB#2730 that would lower the compulsory school age from seven years to six years of age. This age lowering would restrict those of us parents who wish to do so, from selecting the most auspicious time for our youngsters to attend public school.

Submitted to the House Education Committee, February 1, 1984

Kathleen M. Ostrowski

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

My name is Teddric Mohr. I reside in Topeka and serve as the director of public affairs for the KANSAS-NEBRASKA CONFERENCE OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS. We appreciate the privilege of appearing before this committee today, in order to voice our position on the question of what should be the compulsory school entrance age for the children of Kansas.

Our church operates, world-wide, the second largest parochial school system on the elementary, secondary, undergraduate, and university level.

In the United States, we have the third largest parochial system, with

1,150	Elementary schools
336	Accredited high schools
12	Accredited under-graduate colleges
2	Accredited universities
1	Medical school (Loma Linda University Medical Center)

In our conference, Adventist schools include all of the first three levels above:

33	Elementary schools
3	Accredited high schools
1	Four year college, accredited by the North Central Association

In doing this, we refuse to accept any tax dollars from any political entity. It is our position that if we choose the road of sectarian parochial education for our children and youth, then we alone should pay the bill. Hence you can easily see that our interest in the question before this Committee is a pertinent one.

LATER THAN AVERAGE, BETTER THAN AVERAGE

WHEN SHOULD A CHILD START SCHOOL?

In the last twenty-five or thirty years, the subject of when to start children in school has appeared prominently in the educational journals, popular magazines, the congressional record, and in numerous articles on research of the subject, both in the United States and abroad. The fact that many laws of the fifty states differ as to the compulsory age at which pupils must first enroll in school indicates that it is not a moot.

The most common age requirements for the compulsory attendance are from 7 to 16 years. Through the 1970's there was a definite trend by states to raise the beginning age to 7. However, into the '80's, with enrollments decreasing and school districts hard pressed to fill all class rooms, there appears an indication that the pendulum is being influenced toward a younger age, and perhaps not to the best interest of the child. The latest nation-wide survey we had available (1979) showed the following mandatory entrance age set by legislation:

Age 5	1 State
Age 6	12 States
Age 7	33 States
Age 8	3 States

Dr. Raymond Moore, Director of the Hewitt Research Center, Berrien Springs, Michigan, states, "Since children develop at different rates,

including sex-related differences, a specific age at which they are ready to begin a formal school program cannot be precisely fixed. Overwhelming evidence on readiness points to later rather than earlier school entrance . . . seldom before eight, and often ten years of age or older."

Brenner and Scott concluded that generally the older a child is, the more he will have grown in structure and function and the more he will have accumulated in life experience and understanding of the world around him. And the greater his body of knowledge before he goes to school, the more successful the child will be at the beginning and in subsequent school years.

A study of 500 pupils whose progress was followed from kindergarten through high school revealed that children who were very bright but very young when they entered school had varying difficulties from junior high on. They were reported as being physically immature and emotionally unstable. They did not do as well socially, behaviorally, academically, or in leadership as those who were older at school entrance. Forester (1955) concluded that early entry could even have an adverse effect later in adult life.

Moore (1973), in a study of 300 individuals who started to school at about eight or later, found that all but four started at second and third grade or later. They quickly caught up with their classes and in most cases performed well above the class average.

Dr. Moore is quoted in the Congressional Record, 1972, as saying, "The young child, however bright, has a structurally incomplete central nervous system until he is at least eight or ten. This includes visual, auditory, and other sensory-motor faculties. Most children appear to be unready for the type of abstract thinking or stress of continued encouragement of reading by many schools until a similar age. And emotionally, they are

normally less likely to experience deprivation if school intervention is withheld until at least seven or eight. If early intervention is to be generalized, a large body of Early Childhood Education research indicates it would best be directed toward providing counseling for parents."

"Once the normal child has been left free to develop affective, cognitive and neuro-physiological readiness, research suggests that he will quickly learn the necessary skills with which he currently wrestles . . . The principal question, it appears, should be not so much one of providing more schooling, as of assuring a warmer, more enlightened home environment until the child reaches appropriate cognitive and neuro-physiological maturity. For reading with understanding, writing effectively and performing abstract operations, this appears to be much closer to age eight or ten than to age four. Fisher (1951)"

Bigelow (1971) found that children's perceptions proceed from global to less global (or more analytical) styles between the ages of five and ten. In perceiving figures independent of their field or background, elementary school children achieved a small average increase in perceptual performance from ages five to seven, but they showed a highly significant spurt ahead from ages seven to nine, with the sharpest increase at age eight.

Another factor of readiness is auditory maturity. Sound discrimination shows a progressive improvement as the child matures. A number of scientists have discovered that hearing, like vision, may not be mature enough for the child to read well until he is eight or nine years old. Carter and McGuinnis (1970) state that the ability to differentiate among speech sounds is considered by many investigators to be of prime importance in successful reading.

Wepman (1968) says that in some children auditory discrimination and auditory memory -- ability to retain and recall speech sounds -- are not well developed until the age of nine. (Wepman is the author of the Wepman Auditory Readiness Test)

What about visual maturity? This complex process, according to Chalfant and Scheffelin (1969) involves (a) visual analysis, the separation of the whole into its component parts; (b) visual integration, the coordination of mental processes; and (c) visual synthesis, the incorporation or combination of elements into a recognizable whole.

Carter and McGuinnis (1970) say . . . "The visual mechanism at six years of age is unstable and many children have difficulty in fixating at definite points and in keeping their place in reading. Children at this age make many regressive movements and are inaccurate in moving from one line of print to the next . . . Some children who cannot adjust to the difficulties of near vision find reading so uncomfortable that they give up trying to learn."

An interesting clinical study of fifty years was made by Henry Hilgartner, an ophthalmologist, and his father, also an ophthalmologist, on the incidence of myopia (nearsightedness) in children. They found that the earlier children start to school, the more frequently nearsightedness is discovered between the ages of eight and twelve. Their study reported that in 1908 the ratio had changed to one nearsighted child for each two farsighted children. In 1930 Texas again dropped its school entrance age, this time to six. By 1940 the ratio was one to one. And with television and even earlier schooling more and more common in the 1950's and 1960's, the ratio changed by 1963 to five abnormal (nearsighted) youngsters for every one who was normal (farsighted). Dr. Hilgartner (1972) reports that the situation has worsened

since 1963.

Frank Newton (1972), a Dallas ophthalmologist, found that Hilgartner's figures agreed closely with his own records.

As we reflect on the facts brought to light in this brief survey, some questions need to be answered. 1) If maturation for the average child does not occur until the age of eight or more, why has legislation of various states continued in lowering the age of school entrance? 2) Why not start children at the age of eight and let them learn the basic skills in the first year -- that normally require three -- and, as some experiments have proven successful, save millions of tax dollars? 3) What course shall parents take with their children while waiting for a suitable age? 4) Are we actually making intellectual cripples and causing unnecessary emotional learning trauma to immature children? 5) Would money spent on early school programs be better spent on parenting programs?

These questions along with the relative effectiveness of early schooling is an important challenge to be placed before educational planners, legislators, trustees, administrators, teachers, parents, and those concerned about the welfare of society, culture and country.

In the meantime, we, as educators and parents, must study carefully scientific research and make valid conclusions of our own. Then it becomes our conscientious responsibility to lend our support toward legislation and education of the general public toward what we consider is a proper school entrance age law.

Fortunately, in Kansas a student is not required to begin school until the age of seven. This allows more leeway than in many states where it is compulsory to begin school at a very early age. Parents can, therefore, ready a child for school and gain much of the advantages of "Later than aver-

age" school beginning and hopefully produce "Better than average" students as a result, until we are motivated and enlightened enough as citizens to raise the age of school entrance for more excellent results.

In view of the foregoing, our position is that it would be a mistake for Kansas law to take a backward step and revert to an entrance age that is out of step with current child development. For Seventh-day Adventist parents and educators, there is an added perspective, that of the spiritual or religious implications. They see the training and education of the child as being a balanced program of physical, intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and social development which contributes to the continual growth process of the child, beginning at birth and extending through the years of formal schooling.

Hence there is an area of conscientious religious belief for Adventist parents with respect to this question. It seems, then, that if a backward step is taken by the State of Kansas in this regard, the least that could be done would be provision for an exemption for the pupils of parents who are conscientiously and religiously opposed to their child beginning school at an earlier age. Several states make this provision in their legislation.

In the foregoing, we have referred to Dr. Raymond S. Moore, director of Hewitt Research Center in Michigan, who has done extensive research on the question for many years. For the benefit of the Committee, and to better document our position on the matter, we will leave with the secretary a copy of his book, SCHOOL CAN WAIT.

Thank you.