

Burton L. White.
EDUCATING THE INFANT AND TODDLER
Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath and Company, 1988.
361 pp. \$19.95.

The experiences of the first few years of a child's life have special significance for the entire life span. . . . most children are better off when most of their waking time during these first years is spent with their parents, grandparents, or someone else who has a special feeling for them. Full time day care for children under three is not generally advisable . . . (pp. 150, 151)

Burton L. White's views on the education of infants have been clear and consistent over many years. His numerous studies of young children have shown that the three-year-old child who demonstrates relatively advanced language and intellectual skills is likely to be well prepared for formal education at five or six years of age. On the other hand, the child who is nine months or more behind in these skills may never achieve educational success.

In contrast to other early childhood educators, White maintains that, unless a child has special needs, he or she does not have to attend a day care centre or a nursery school in order to be prepared, intellectually or socially, for elementary school. Instead, White advocates a program of support and education for parents, all parents, regardless of need or circumstances. The home, he insists, is the ideal location, and the parents the best teachers, for the upbringing of the young child.

To this end, *Educating the Infant and Toddler* has been written to provide parents and parent educators with information on learning processes and child development. It also describes a program of parent support, New Parents as Teachers (NPAT), that White has created in the state of Missouri. The book is divided into four basic sections: developmental processes, developmental influences and problems, child care education, and the NPAT project. The appendices occupy almost as much space as the text and require additional explanation.

Included among the aspects of development in Part 1 are: intelligence, language, social skills, personality, and physical and perceptual abilities. White reviews the parameters and briefly describes the stages for each aspect of development. He describes selected instruments used for assessing the various developmental processes. In areas where tests are not available, he explains what has been accomplished in assessment and what kind of diagnostic tools we might expect in the future. He outlines ways

parents and teachers can enhance their infant's development in different areas; equally important, he also describes what does not work. White criticizes some recent notions of the capacities of neonates; for example, their ability to learn a second language. Throughout the text he urges parents to be wary of unrealistic claims to increase the developmental potential of infants. "In the meantime," White states, "what we do know about helping a child develop into a healthy social creature – with a genuine enthusiasm for learning, fine language and intellectual skills . . . offers substantial and remarkable opportunities for parents and professionals to provide much better beginnings for children" (p. 70).

Nine chapters in Part II review influences and problems pertaining to development. The chapter entitled "Spoiling" should be particularly useful to parents. White describes situations in which spoiling is likely to occur and outlines avoidance procedures.

In Part III White advocates the creation of programs that will provide education for parents. He believes strongly that the educational experiences of the young are far too important to be ignored by a nation concerned for the welfare of its people. New parents, he suggests, would benefit the most from such a program – the object of which would be to assist the family unit as the ideal educational system.

Part IV describes the Missouri NPAT project that White helped to establish in 1981. The purpose of the project was ". . . to create a sensible and comprehensive educational system to help parents guide the learning processes of their children from birth to the third birthday" (p. 160). For the pilot program four different communities were selected; a staff was trained. All new parents within these communities were included in the educational project. The educational system included the following components: assessment, group visits, and home visits.

Assessment. Each infant was screened for interpersonal skill acquisition, intellectual and linguistic progress, and hearing. These assessments were repeated at regular intervals in each infant's life. Information on the family's medical history and the mother's birth experiences was also collected.

Group visits. Seven to eight couples, whose children were close in age, met every four weeks until their infants were 5 months, then every six weeks until their children's third birthday. The hour and a half meetings were held at the local centres created by NPAT. These meetings included guest speakers, toy-making sessions, and video or film presentations. A social atmosphere was encouraged through refreshments and informal discussions.

Home visits. These sessions were also scheduled once a month and lasted about an hour. The staff person observed the infant for the first ten minutes, noting developmental progress and interaction with parent(s). The parents were then asked what changes they had observed with their child and what concerns they had about any aspect of their child's development. Simple suggestions that were appropriate in fostering progress for this child were offered.

To assess the effectiveness of the NPAT project, the evaluation was contracted to an independent agency. A post-hoc control group design was used; the control group families were matched to the families in the educational project. The results indicated that while the project did not seem to enhance the infant's interpersonal skills, in those areas that had more of an influence on later academic work, the benefits were substantial and dramatic. The project infants scored substantially higher than the control group children in nearly all linguistic and intellectual areas. These benefits were seen across all socioeconomic levels. In addition, 99% of the responding parents reported a great deal of satisfaction with all the services provided through the NPAT project.

The cost of the project was between \$800 and \$1,000 per family (per year) – small in comparison to other plans. White feels that projects such as this one are so beneficial, and so cost effective, that their implementation on a much wider scale is inevitable.

Included in the appendices are samples of NPAT curriculum materials and group meeting and home visit agendas. Also provided is a useful review of 66 books on child care and development. Ninety-one films and videotapes are also assessed for their content and suitability for parent education projects. Information on magazines, newsletters, and resource centres is provided, but only a short bibliography is included.

The major problem with *Educating the Infant and Toddler* seems to be its lack of cohesion; the book is more a collection of information that White has written and presented in greater depth through his other publications. In the chapter on the development of intelligence, he tells the reader at one point that there is too much information to include any details in the text, and yet he does not provide suggestions for further reading. If every chapter were to include a list of references, this problem might be reduced. The bibliography at the end of the text is only three and a half pages, hardly a comprehensive compilation.

Nevertheless, White's *Educating the Infant and the Toddler* does have a number of strong features. The appendices provide information that is useful to parents and educators alike. The description of the NPAT project is

most interesting; and its feasibility is convincing. White clarifies his position against formalized day care services, and provides a description of what he firmly believes is the most desirable way to influence the lives of children for the better – an education-for-parenthood program.

Judith Pollard Slaughter
McGill University

The Gallup Organization Inc.
GEOGRAPHY: AN INTERNATIONAL GALLUP SURVEY.
SURVEY OF FINDINGS.
Princeton, NJ: The Gallup Organization Inc., 1988.
118 pp.

Perhaps the first thing to note, in reviewing this book, is that 1988 was the centenary of the founding of the **National Geographic Society** (NGS), and that this interest in and concern for geography to the benefit of the American citizen is of long standing. The founding of the Society came a mere four years after that of the **Royal Scottish Geographical Society**, also in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was the era of Manifest Destiny, rapid colonial expansions, explorations, and increasingly accurate cartography, all of which were paralleled by increasing literacy, as nations expanded their school systems, and the cost-cutting of the publishing industry in a manner which both used and enhanced geography. "Geographical literacy" was one of several "in" literacies associated with education and the social consciousness of the latter half of that century.

The extent to which geography was understood, as opposed to being popular and entertaining or surprising in those late 1800s and early 1900s, will however remain a moot point. And it is here that the difference lies between the founding of an institution, both as a matter of interest and education, and the difficulty of a subsequent examination of the status of that initial interest by that particular institution. The NGS has overcome this problem by putting the survey nationally and internationally into the hands of professional survey companies. Now to the content(s) of the Survey itself.

Geography: An International Gallup Survey assesses the extent of the basic geographic literacy among adults 18 years and over in the United States as well as in eight "companion countries." The study also explores both the degree to which Americans think that knowledge of geography is important and their level of awareness of geography's influence on a variety