Higher than the highest human thought can reach is God’s ideal for His children. Godliness—godlikeness—is the goal to be reached. Before the student there is opened a path of continual progress. He has an object to achieve, a standard to attain, that includes everything good, and pure, and noble. He will advance as fast and as far as possible in every branch of true knowledge...¹

Through such words of inspiration and encouragement Ellen G. White dealt keenly with both the temporal and spiritual development of the young child. Author, speaker and mother of four boys, two of whom died in childhood, she motivated parents and teachers to strive for excellence in character, learning and daily habits.

In an era when children were to be seen and not heard, Mrs. White showed an experiential and intuitive understanding for their developmental needs. “As soon as a child is capable of forming an idea, his education should begin,”² she wrote. “[F]or then the mind is the most impressionable, and the lessons given are remembered.”³ She believed that young children should be neither pampered and indulged nor ignored and deprived. She advocated for a balance in the careful instruction of young children by loving and attentive adults.

Solomon wrote, “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it (Proverbs 22:6).”⁴ Mrs. White understood these words to mean “it is by degrees that the character is formed, and that the soul is trained to put forth effort and energy proportionate to the task which is to be accomplished.”⁵

In writing to parents and teachers, she said: “No work ever undertaken by man requires greater care and skill than the proper training and education of youth and children.”⁶ “True education is not the forcing of instruction on an unready and un receptive mind.”⁷ “True education... has to do with the whole being, and with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers.”⁸ Such harmonious development is found in the study of God’s law, the Holy Scriptures, nature, service to others and “useful occupation.”⁹ Hence, the first object of education is to direct our minds and those of our children to God’s revelation of Himself (Matthew 6:22; Psalms 111:10; Proverbs 9:10).¹⁰

In dozens of books and hundreds of letters, Mrs. White detailed how parents and teachers were to accomplish their high calling. She wrote instructions dealing with the home life, classroom environment, discipline, training and teaching methods.

In the years since her death, the counsel from Mrs. White has repeatedly been validated through research. The techniques she recommended over a hundred years ago have become known as “best practices” within the early childhood community.

For instance, when teaching young children, Mrs. White recommended the use of methods such as:

- Memory work
- Hands-on activities
- Songs
- Bible and mission stories
- Prayer
- Nature object lessons
- Parental involvement.

Continued on page 4
Taking Back Childhood

In her new book, *Taking Back Childhood*, Child Care Exchange author Nancy Carlsson-Paige writes that childhood culture has changed dramatically in just one generation. Social trends — screen time, commercialism, sped-up daily life, violence and sexualization, academic pressures — are changing how children experience their early years. Carlsson-Paige observes:

“When corporations pitch their wares to kids, it’s not just products they’re selling through the increasingly sophisticated campaigns their marketers devise. It’s also a mindset — one that tells kids, ‘You’ll be happy if you have this toy, if you eat this food, if you look this way.’ One result is that from an early age many children get the message that happiness comes from acquiring things, which undermines their ability to find satisfaction and to meet their basic developmental needs through play and meaningful relationships with others. As we learn more about how commercialism is harming our children, we’ll see that, despite its pervasiveness, there are many ways to counteract its destructive influence.”

Carlsson-Paige suggests steps adults can take to counteract the harm to children from current social trends:

- Keep it simple with toys. Remember that fewer is better, simpler is better.
- Reduce television time, especially children’s exposure to commercial TV.
- Avoid substituting material things for emotional expression and connection.
- Find regular times to be together as a family and encourage children to contribute to family life as a way of caring rather than a means to getting a material reward.
- Help children find peace and sanctuary through connecting to the natural world.
- Help children explore their own unique talents and interests, and show your interest in their activities by making descriptive rather than evaluative comments about what they do.
- Point out ads, talk about why they exist, and ask open-ended questions that encourage children to think more about marketing, keeping children’s ways of seeing the world in mind.
- Prepare kids ahead of time for visits to a store.
- Help children learn how to handle the urge to buy without giving into it.
- As children get older, talk with them about our interconnections with the people and conditions that produce the items we consume.

Penguin Books is offering ExchangeEveryDay readers the opportunity to purchase *Taking Back Childhood* at a 15% discount. Add *Taking Back Childhood* to your shopping cart and on the shopping cart page add this coupon code: EXCHANGE

ExchangeEveryDay is a free service of Exchange Magazine. View this article online at ChildCareExchange.com.

Toddlers Mirroring Parents

Approximately one in every five Americans is now considered obese, double the rate in the mid 1980’s. What effect are parental eating habits having on young children?

Badger (2004) reported on results from research to be published in January. "A study of more than 3000 youngsters has found that significant numbers of infants and toddlers are downing french fries, pizza, candy and soda.

Children aged 1 to 2 years require about 950 calories per day, but the study found that the median intake for that age group is 1,220 calories—an excess of nearly 30 percent. For those 7 months to 11 months old, the daily caloric surplus was about 20 percent. 'By 24 months, patterns look startlingly similar to some of the problematic American dietary patterns,' an overview of the *Feeding Infants & Toddlers Study* stated.

* Up to a third of the children consumed no fruit or vegetables... for those who did have a vegetable, french fries were the most common selection for children 15 months and older. Nine percent of children 9 months to 11 months old ate fries at least once a day. For those 19 months to 2 years old, more than 20 percent had fries daily.

* Hot dogs, sausage, and bacon were also staples for many—7 percent in the 9 to 11 month group, and 25 percent in the older range.

* More than 60 percent of 12 month olds had dessert or candy at least once a day....

Continued on page 3
Avondale College and ECE

Australia is the first choice of many students from all over the world. Graduates from Avondale have been very successful in finding employment internationally and many hold very prominent positions in business, government and church organizations. Australian qualifications are recognized globally.

Avondale is unique in the Australian Higher Education system. They are the only Seventh-day Adventist institution in the nation providing higher education, and one of only a few post-secondary institutions offering studies with a Christian perspective.

Avondale is listed on the Australian Government’s CRICOS Register of institutions and courses approved for international students.

Avondale is a great option for students with a Christian background wanting to experience another culture but enjoy the security of living and studying alongside others with Christian beliefs and lifestyle. Students of other faith traditions will find the campus community to be very friendly and accommodating. Total enrollment is less than 1000 with excellent student staff ratios that can provide a supportive and very friendly study environment. Avondale has been operating for more than 100 years and has developed strengths across a wide range of majors, so study options are quite broad.

The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) degree is designed to prepare Early Childhood teachers to work with children aged from birth through to eight years. Graduates are qualified to teach in the Seventh-day Adventist Church school system both in Australia and overseas, as well as in the wider educational sector of government and non-government schools and in a diverse range of early childhood settings, including pre-schools, K–2 primary classrooms and long day-care centers.

The Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) is an integrated course of 192 credit points normally spread over four years of full-time or equivalent part-time study taught through the on campus or distance education program. The course requirements include 105 days of professional experience between semesters in February and July of each year. The course is comprised of Christian Studies subjects, a discipline elective, curriculum studies, education studies, and professional development and experience.

Learn more about Avondale College and their Bachelor of Education (Early Childhood) at http://www.avondale.edu.au, or contact Sandra Ludlow at sandra.ludlow@avondale.edu.au or Andy Matthes at andy.matthes@avondale.edu.au.

Mirroring Parents, cont.

* Thirty percent to 40 percent of the children 15 months and up had a sugary fruit drink each day, and about 10 percent had soda.

* Among infants, 29 percent were allowed to eat solid food before they were 4 months old. Seventeen percent were permitted to drink juice before 6 months. Twenty percent drank cow’s milk before 12 months.”

For the complete study results, look for the January issue of the American Dietetic Association journal.


The purposes of ACCN:

1. To affirm, encourage and empower all engaged in the weekday ministry to children. (On-going)
2. To provide opportunities for professional and spiritual growth. (On-going)
3. To provide networking opportunities for Seventh-day Adventist Child Development Centers. (On-going)
4. To set certification standards for child care providers. (In process)
5. To foster unity between all areas of child development within the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (In process)
6. To encourage the incorporation of Early Childhood Education in the nurture and outreach programs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (In process)
7. To foster working relationships with the world church, unions, conferences, local churches, and schools. (In process)
8. To encourage surveys and research in the area of Child Development and Early Childhood Education in cooperation with the North American Division. (In process)
9. To counsel with the North American Division and General Conference in the development and review of programs and strategies for Child Development. (In process)
10. To provide guidance and resources to training organizations, colleges, and universities. (In process)
11. To advocate the hiring of Early Childhood specialists at all organizational levels of the Seventh-day Adventist Church. (In process)
12. To develop working relationships with other Early Childhood Education organizations. (On-going)
13. To encourage child care centers to obtain national accreditation. (In process)

Join ACCN
Early Childhood was Important, cont.

As another example, one area of constant struggle for early childhood teachers is that of discipline. Mrs. White wrote that parents and teachers should reflect the character of Christ by:

- Blending authority and affection
- Acting from firm rules, never from impulse or passion
- Dedicating time and attention to individual children
- Avoiding coldness or harshness
- Not indulging self-indulgence or petting praise
- Not excusing or tolerating tantrums
- Protecting children from harm
- Lovingly denying children those things that are harmful or would cause injury
- Asking for God’s blessing on the seeds sown in each child’s heart.

The goal, of course, is to raise godly children who are independent “thinkers, and not mere reflectors of other men’s thought;” children who are “strong to think and to act;” “masters and not slaves of circumstances;” “who possess breadth of mind, clearness of thought, and the courage of their convictions.”

“Such an education provides more than mental discipline; it provides more than physical training. It strengthens the character, so that truth and uprightness are not sacrificed…”

Truly, the education and care of young children is a “high and noble work.”

The philosophy of education set forth by Mrs. White is that the church is to be ever vigilant in the upbringing and training of their youngest members. This is where the desire for Christ-centered early childhood education and care began. At the heart of Mrs. White’s philosophy is the idea of lovingly caring for another’s child; this caring provides opportunities to build strong bonds of trust and confidence between teacher and parent. It is through this medium that the gospel of Jesus Christ is taught and lived in the hope that the children and their parents will hear the call of Christ. And, through the faithful work of Seventh-day Adventist early childhood professionals with impressionable children, the gospel of Jesus Christ is being taught and lived in an effort to “train up [the children] in the way [they] should go” (Proverbs 6:22).

References

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The Adventist Child Care Network seeks to provide support and nurture for Seventh-day Adventist child care providers and to reach out with information and encouragement to churches and individuals who are starting a child care center.

Through this newsletter we seek to facilitate and develop a communication network among Seventh-day Adventist Child Care providers in North America.

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