

Our Children

By Mrs. W. B. Davis



Training To Think

The child of three who discovers that another child has her doll and who in order to regain its possession, finds and holds out a pretty book to distract attention then deftly snatches her doll exhibits the quality that made Newton famous. She thinks. It is a mistake to believe that children do not think. For a long time it was thought that reasoning was absent or inconsiderable among the young, but now we know better. To think is to solve problems; and the child has an array of problems, and he attacks them in the ways employed by his elders, among which ways he is thinking. As thinking is a consummation devoutly to be wished, the fact that children tend to reason--do reason, and reason increasingly and well if suitably directed—is gratifying.

Error in children's efforts to solve problems, to explain things they are baffled by, to get what they desire by processes of reflection, is so frequent that their reputation for thinking is dimmed.

Beginnings Of Reasoning

But it is not by successful effort but by effort itself that the presence of the reflective activity in the child should be declared. The child's recognition of a difficulty and his attempt to get around it by adaptation of means, show the reason in reaction,

while impotent anger, or mere imitation, implies a lower plane of consciousness. Any prominence in children of the tendency to exhibit merely anger or discouragement in the fact of difficulties is evidence of the undeveloped condition of their reasoning. Many of the difficulties of dealing happily with children arise when they are too little given to reasoning. The relief to all when they reason freely is like that associated with dealing with reasoning adults. The advantage of being able to appeal to the child's reason is outstanding, while for the child's future welfare rational tendency has a high value. The early development of children to be reasonable creatures—reflective, problem-solving, and circumspect—is desirable from every point of view.

The training of children in thinking is hindered by their emotional character, by adverse instinctive tendencies, and by insecure power of attention and erroneous concepts; their state is also influenced deeply by the observed behavior of adults with reference to method. To native handicaps of rationality must be sometimes added examples of petulance, lopsided argumentation, unfairness and prejudices among their elders. Children brought up in an atmosphere of trial and truthfulness show traits to correspond.

BIRTH



Mr. and Mrs. Norman Simms have announced the birth of a son on March 17, 1947, He has been named Norman Jr.

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