OBSERVING AND RECORDING the Behavior of Young Children

Dorothy H. Cohen
Formerly Senior Faculty, Graduate Programs
Bank Street College of Education

Virginia Stern
Formerly Research Associate
Bank Street College of Education

with Nancy Balaban
Director, Program in Infant and Parent Development
Graduate School of Education
Bank Street College of Education

THIRD EDITION

ISBN: 0-8077-2713-X

TEACHERS COLLEGE PRESS
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York and London

(i.e., steer and pedal)? a four-year-old, to walk up and downstairs by himself with alternating feet? a five-year-old, to skip, jump rope, "pump" himself on a swing?
- Are the child's large-body movements generally clumsy, awkward, uncoordinated?

Five-year-old Juan was engaged in block building in conjunction with dramatic play. Several times he knocked down the building of another child who was playing near him, as he passed by. Juan was surprised each time it happened. It was clearly not an intentional act.

- Is the child hyperactive (i.e., constantly in motion that is purposeless and unrelated to a specific activity or situation)? When sitting, does she tend to twist, turn, squirm?
- Is the child hypoactive?
  Are his movements sluggish?
  Does he appear sleepy or uninterested in what is happening around him?
- Are the child's movements jerky and restricted?
- Does she tend to confine her activities to an unnecessarily small area?
- Does he tend to go beyond set or natural boundaries?

When joining pieces of track for his train to go on, five-year-old Ronnie went way beyond the confines of the block corner.

- Is the child able to judge the spatial relationship of objects to each other or to himself?
  For example, does he know whether there is enough space between two objects to move his wagon through?
- Is the child unusually cautious and timid physically? Or is he careless about his safety?
- Is the child's energy level consistently very high or very low? Or is there extreme fluctuation in energy level?

More striking and unusual behavior may be observed:

- The child walks around in circles, or moves around the room repeatedly in the same order, e.g., from block area to easel to housekeeping corner.
- The child flaps his arms up and down when walking and there is no overt evidence that he is pretending to fly or be an airplane or a bird.
- The child may engage in a series of seemingly meaningless bodily motions.

Bernie (age four) turned the handle on the vise for a moment; took two small jumps, twice; stuck his hand in the empty aquarium; pointed at a variety of objects in succession; rocked back and forth from one leg to another, talking to himself all the time.

Both the level and quality of the child's large-muscle coordination and spatial orientation can be observed during indoor and outdoor play, as he moves around the room or from the room to the playground and back, and, especially, during play on the jungle gym, on the slide, on a swing, jumping rope, etc.

Details to Observe—Small-Muscle Coordination

- Does the child's capacity to perform skills requiring small-muscle coordination lag behind that of other children his age? For example:
  Is a two- to three-year-old not yet able to string large beads, hold a large crayon between thumb and fingers?
  Is a three-year-old as yet unable to make balls and snakes out of clay, to button and unbutton large buttons?
  Is a four-year-old not yet able to cut on a line continuously, lace her shoes?
  Is a five-year-old not yet able to hold a pencil like an adult, to tie a bow, not yet completely left- or right-handed or clearly ambidextrous?
- Does the child have difficulty picking up or holding objects between thumb and index finger?
- Is she unable to balance one small block on another?
- Does the child have trouble fitting the proper pieces into a jigsaw puzzle (one that is age appropriate)?

The level of the child's small-muscle coordination can best be observed during routines such as eating, dressing and undressing, going to the toilet, and also when the child paints, colors with crayons, plays with clay, builds with blocks, and even when "cooking" and "serving meals" in the housekeeping corner.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE

Details to Observe

- Does the child have difficulty relating to other children or to adults?
  Does he appear to be uncomfortable with people?

Four-and-one-half-year-old George looked up but made no other response when the teacher said hello to him. He continued with what he was doing. Shortly after, another teacher suggested that he do something. George moved away, trembling a little. When this teacher patted him a moment later, he ignored her, made no response. George ignored the teachers' overtures throughout the play period, continuing to play by himself.

- Does the child tend to play by herself? (Preference for solitary activities must be distinguished from age-level tendencies, i.e., two- and three-year-olds tend to play alone while older children tend to play with others.)
- Does the child make eye-to-eye contact with people?
- Does the child seldom talk to other children?
- Does the child tend not to join in group activities?
- When involved in a group activity, does the child tend to be shy?
- Is the child overattached to one person while appearing to be frightened of others?
- Is the child excessively resistant to the teacher's suggestions and directions?

When the teacher called four-and-a-half-year-old Michael to go wash his hands, he followed her to the bathroom. The teacher asked if he wanted to wash his hands, and he said, "No." When she told him to go back to the classroom, he went back and asked another teacher, "Will you play with me?" That teacher replied, "After you wash your hands." Michael then crawled to the bathroom, but refused to wash and came back to the room, where he went over to the housekeeping corner. Again, he asked the teacher to play with him, and the teacher said, "Not until you wash your hands." Michael screeched, as if he were in extreme pain, and then stopped suddenly. He continued to resist washing for the duration of the play period.

- Does the child cling to adults, touch them frequently?
- Is the child very dependent on and demanding of adults for help, approval, etc.?
- Is the child extremely unassertive?

  Does she tend to give up materials, etc., to other children without objection? give up her turn easily?

When Isabella (age five-and-a-half) left her seat, announcing she was going to the bathroom, and another child sat in it while she was gone, she unprotestingly sat in the other child's seat.

- Does the child tend to give up quickly if he does not get an immediate response from others?
- Is the child aggressive?
  Does he fight frequently with other children?
- Does the child's aggressiveness tend to be expressed physically?
  Does he hit, scratch, bite, or kick?

Johnny, age five, tends to be physically aggressive. When Carmen said her turn came before his, Johnny hit her repeatedly. Later, when sitting in a group, Johnny waved his arms around, hitting Carmen in the nose.

- Does the child express aggression verbally?
  Does he scream, curse, or call names?

The nature of the child's relationship with others can be observed during the entire school day in a variety of activities and situations. The child's dependence on or independence of adults for help and approval can be seen particularly during routine activities (eating, dressing, resting, etc.), during play (painting, block-building, etc.), and during adult-directed group activities, such as games, rhythms, and stories. The character of a child's relationships with other children can be deduced from observations of the way she reacts to overtures by other children, the presence or absence of interest in other children or specific children, the extent to which she seeks out or avoids contacts with children, and the ways in which she initiates and responds to contacts with other children (aggressive, fearful, negative, manipulative, etc.).

AFFECTIVE MODES

Details to Observe

- Does the child tend to control his anger?
  Does he fail to express anger either verbally or physically even when the stimulus would ordinarily provoke anger?

- Is the child overly fearful?

José (age five-and-a-half) told the teacher that, when he went to Puerto Rico on a plane, he was very scared. The teacher asked why. José said, "Bees bite plane."

- Does the child have persistent phobias (e.g., fear of dogs, of strangers)?
- Does the child tend to be passive, timid, or apprehensive?
- Does she cry a lot?
- Does the child frequently act out her anxieties in her dramatic play?

Four-and-a-half-year-old Andy sets up a line of chairs in the middle of the room, and sits in the driver's (i.e., the first) seat. He turns an imaginary wheel and says, "I'm the bus driver." As he continues to turn the "wheel," he becomes excited, stands up, and whirls around and around. Then he pulls his chair behind him across the floor, saying, "I drive myself. I drive myself." He then yells excitedly, "The bus is out of control, the bus is out of control."

It is clear from Andy's behavior that he is expressing his anxiety that he may not be able to control his possibly aggressive impulses.

- Does the child have extreme and/or frequent changes of mood? (For example, during a twenty-minute period, Jorge's moods varied from happy to angry to depressed to almost ecstatic.)
- Does the child have sudden, seemingly unprovoked outbursts of crying or anger or laughter that he is unable to control?

Five-year-old Alfredo was playing with a camera and humming happily to himself. Suddenly, he threw a plastic knife that was in his lap at the cabinet near him, making a stifled but angry sound. He then turned to Paula, who was sitting nearby, and said, threateningly, "Don't you hit me!"

- Does the child tend to scream frequently?
- Does the child tend to respond inappropriately to situations or stimuli?

Five-year-old Juana smiles continually whether the situation warrants it or not. When the teacher told her she could go to snack, she smiled, threw a kiss to the teacher, and went to the table. When she sat down, she said, smiling, "I don't like chocolate milk." After she had drunk her chocolate milk very fast, she said, continuing to smile, "It's freezing in here." She then turned her cup upside down. A few drops fell on her mat. She smiled, banged her feet on the floor, still smiling, and said, "Hee hee."

- Does the child have frequent tantrums?

Chris (age 6) got very excited when the teacher said she was going to fix a book that was torn. He said he was going to "shoot" her. He then lay prone on the floor, crying and kicking his legs. Then he sat up, continuing to cry and talking unintelligibly. After the teacher taped the book, he continued to cry, refused to listen to the story, and repeatedly yelled, "Take it off" (i.e., the tape on the book).

- Does the child express expectations of disaster?

A child may display any of the above extreme behaviors in a variety of situations, e.g., when going to the toilet, at rest time, when engaged in play with materials, or in dramatic play alone or with others; or in response to many different stimuli or, even, to no observable stimulus. It is important, as always, to record the situation and the stimulus (or lack of overt stimulus) and especially the qualitative characteristics of the behavior—*how* the child did what he did.

COGNITIVE FUNCTIONING

Details to Observe

- Does the child have a short attention span?
  Does he stay with an activity for a much shorter time than do the majority of children in the group?
- Does she tend to be highly distractible—by sounds, activities of other children, etc.?
- Does the child have poor visual skills even though his eyesight is normal?
  Is he unable to judge size, shape, location, color?
  Is he unable to see similarities and differences? Is he unable to match colors, shapes?
  Is he unable to follow an object, e.g., a ball or a person, with his eyes?
- Does the child have poor auditory skills even though her hearing is normal?
  Is she unable to remember verbal directions or stories the teacher *tells* (when there are no pictures to help her remember the story)?

Does she have difficulty distinguishing between sounds, e.g., "t" and "p" (as in "ten" and "pen") and "l" and "r" (as in "lead" and "read")?

Does she have difficulty figuring out where a sound is coming from?

During outdoor play, if the teacher called four-year-old Annie to her from a distance within the range of normal hearing, she would stop and look around, indicating that she had heard her name, but she could not distinguish from what direction the sound had come.

- Does the child tend to be unaware of or, possibly, disinterested in what goes on around him?

During group discussions or story reading, Sandy (age three) would sit and play with some small object, or lie on the floor, often masturbating, apparently oblivious of what was going on around her. When she was spoken to, she showed no sign of having heard, nor did she react to subjects that were being discussed by other children.

- Does the child have few interests? (As a result, instead of engaging in activities as other children do, he may suck his thumb, masturbate, rock, etc.)
- Does the child tend to confuse "you" with "I"? "she" or "he" with "I"?

Three-year-old Angie confuses both "you" and "she" with "I," as in the following examples:

ANGIE (to teacher): Now it is morning. She gets up and has her breakfast.

TEACHER: What do you have for breakfast?

ANGIE: She has cereal. Then she has to get dressed. Then she goes to school.

ANGIE (to the teacher): You want to ride a bike. (Meaning: "I want to ride a bike.")

- Do changes tend to confuse the child?

  Do changes in the location of classroom furniture, materials, etc., confuse him?

  Do changes in the usual class routine, such as going on a trip and having rhythms on a different day or at a different time, confuse him?
- Is the child unable to learn, as do other children of her age, through seeing and hearing?

Does she learn only through touching or smelling, which is normal for much younger children?

When Carol (age four) arrived in the morning, the teacher was preparing the materials for a sewing project that required large yarn needles, yarn, and burlap. There were several needles on the table. Carol ran over to her as soon as she entered the room.

CAROL (to teacher): What's that? What are you doing?

TEACHER: I'm fixing these needles and yarn so we can do some sewing.

CAROL: You need to be very careful. You need to be careful so that you don't hurt your finger.

TEACHER: Yes, you do need to be careful, but these are special needles. They don't have sharp points.

CAROL: Will you hurt your finger if you touch it here (indicating the point)?

TEACHER: No, you can touch it there gently. It really isn't very sharp.

(Carol picked up one of the needles, rolled it in her fingers, and poked it gingerly.)

CAROL: Is it very shiny?

TEACHER: Yes, it is shiny.

CAROL: Is it long and shiny?

TEACHER: Yes.

CAROL: It is long and shiny, but not sharp.

TEACHER: Yes, that's exactly right. It is long and shiny, but not sharp.

(Carol fingered the needle for a few more seconds, seemingly using her sense of touch to confirm not only the tactile qualities of the needle, but the visual ones as well. Then she returned it to the table, and darted off.)

- Compared with his peers, does the child have less general knowledge about the world and self, e.g., about work roles, animals, natural processes such as birth, growth, death? (If the child comes from an impoverished environment, this category may not apply.)

When Timmy, who was not quite four years old, was asked in reference to something in the story the teacher was reading, "Can you take off your hair?" he said, "I could."

When the children were planting radish seeds in paper cups, six-year-old Tom was very much interested and wanted to plant more than the three that he had already planted. He asked when they would grow. The teacher showed him another child's cup in which

the seed had begun to sprout. She said that maybe after Saturday and Sunday his would sprout. Tom, making a very large gesture with his hands, said, "It will be this big."

Lillian, almost five years old, raised her hand when the teacher asked the *boys* to raise their hands.

- Does the child have a very poor memory?
- Do the child's mental processes tend to be incoherent?

Martin, who was almost six, had been making "stoneware" dishes out of clay. He told a story about them for the teacher to write down, as follows: "The title is 'Instructional Book.' Reflections of stoneware is very good. I want to go to outer space but I can't go." (The teacher asked, "Why?") "Because I have all this 'nail' (i.e., mail) business. You have to take the cracks and always make a serving dish and two cups and two bowls. And what you have to send away to the _____ School (name of the school he was attending). And people get what they want for free."

It is impossible to pinpoint specific activities or times of day when all the above behaviors can be observed. It is possible, however, with some. For example, the extent and content of a child's knowledge might best be observed during group discussions—about a story the teacher has just read, or during or after a trip. If the teacher records the exact time at which each observation of a child's activity begins and ends, she will find out not only about his attention span in different activities, but also how distractible he tends to be. Recording a child's responses when he is spoken to may indicate whether the child can discriminate between sounds. As has been pointed out before, recording a child's behavior in many different situations and activities (or nonactivity) and at different times of the school day will undoubtedly yield the necessary information.

LANGUAGE AND SPEECH

Details to Observe

- Does the child talk infrequently?
  Does he communicate nonverbally (through body movements, facial expressions, etc.) more than verbally?

For about an hour, when David (age four-and-a-half) was engaged in a variety of activities, in all of these with one or more children

(stringing beads, a color-matching game, "cooking"), he seldom spoke and tended to communicate nonverbally when necessary (shaking or nodding his head for no and yes; hitting his head with his hands when the colored die did not turn up his color in the color-matching game, smiling when it did).

- Is the child echolalic? Does he echo whatever is said to him instead of responding appropriately?

When the teacher asked, "Do you want some apple juice?" Daryl repeated several times, "Do you want some apple juice?"

- Does the child confuse words that are associated with each other, e.g., say "table" when he means "chair"?
- Does the child have poor "receptive" language? Is she unable to understand what is said to her even though there is nothing wrong with her hearing?
- Does she have difficulty following simple directions?

When the teacher told the children to sit "in a circle," Linda, age four, sat in the *center* of the circle. The teacher explained to her in several different ways what she meant. She told her "to sit on the tape" (which had been put on the floor to help children sit in a circle), "on the edge of the circle, on the outside of the circle, next to a (particular) child." Linda, however, continued to sit in the center of the circle. Linda was the only child in the group who could not follow the teacher's directions

- Does the child not understand the meaning of prepositions, such as "in" or "out," "up" or "down," "in front of" or "behind"?

When the teacher was playing a game in which the children were supposed to sit or stand behind, on, in front of, etc., a chair, either when she told them to or in imitation of a doll, it was obvious that Jeff (almost six) understood the meaning of very few of the prepositions. In most cases, he either imitated the other children or did it incorrectly.

- Does the child have poor "expressive" language, i.e., does she have difficulty expressing herself verbally?
- Does the child use concrete terms instead of the usual general terms?

Nancy (age four), when sitting on the toilet, said, "I made yellow water."

- Does the child have difficulty learning correct grammar and sentence structure? (Age is a factor here.)

  At age five, Frankie said, "I be a daddy" and "Me doctor."

- Is the child unable to remember words she knows, substituting onomatopoetic sounds, such as "baaa baaa" for sheep, "choo choo" for train (like a much younger child)?

The presence and quality of children's language (or its absence) can be observed at almost any time of the day or in any situation. Although discussions and story-time may be the best times, conversations at snack-time, when the child is playing with clay or is engaged in dramatic play, as well as social conversations with an individual teacher or child will yield good examples of children's language and speech.

EGO FUNCTIONING

Details to Observe

- Does the child have a low self-concept?
  Does he tend to be self-devaluing, self-deprecating, unsure of himself and his capabilities?

  Tony (age four) frequently called himself "stupid" and "dope."

- Does the child tend to be overly sensitive to criticism, afraid of disapproval?
- Does the child tend to be self-punishing?
  Does she bite her nails or other parts of her body, bang her head against the wall repeatedly?
- Is the child reluctant to try new materials or activities?
- Is the child highly impulsive?
  Does he tend to act without thinking of the possible consequences of his acts?

  Within a short period of time, Mike (age five) engaged in a series of impulsive actions. While playing with sand, he suddenly got up and charged toward the light switch, shouting, "Put the light switch on." As he pushed a chair across the floor, bumping into whatever was in his way, he screamed at the top of his lungs in unison with the screeching noises made by the chair. Then, after slapping himself hard on the head, he suddenly dashed off to the teacher, grabbed her hand, and rubbed his head with it in the place where he had slapped himself.

- Does the child tend to control her feelings excessively?
  When hurt, is she unable to cry?
  Is she unable to express anger despite great provocation?
  Is she unable to display joy when pleased or when she achieves her goal?

  Donna was riding a large tricycle on the roof playground. She fell over onto the brick floor, and the tricycle toppled over on top of her. A teacher and another child rushed over to disentangle her from the tricycle. When Donna and the tricycle were righted, she got back on and rode off. The other child observed in amazement, "Look at Donna, teacher; she didn't even cry."

- Does the child have low tolerance for frustration?
  For example, does he have more difficulty than other children waiting for his turn on the swing when standing on line?

  Most of the children were seated at tables waiting for clay. Mary was sitting between Meg and Joshua. When she received her clay, she pounded it onto the board, and then tried to lift it. To her delight, she discovered that the board was stuck to the clay. She picked it up by the clay and banged it back down on the table several times. Joshua asked her to stop, but she ignored him and continued the banging. Then the teacher called to her from the next table and asked her to stop. She yelled, "No!" repeatedly, then burst into tears.

- Is the child a perfectionist?
  For example, when drawing a picture, does she keep erasing parts of her drawing and then redraw?
- Does the child tend to engage in repetitive activity for unusually long periods of time?

  On many occasions, five-year-old Jerry drew numbers repeatedly for long periods of time.

  Benjy (age four-and-a-half) hung on to the post in the room with one arm. He tried to walk around the little ledge at the bottom of the post. There was a broad smile on his face, but it seemed mechanical. He slapped the post rhythmically with one hand, producing a metallic sound, as he continued to walk around the post on the ledge He persisted in this way for about fifteen minutes.

- Does the child tend to talk to himself, audibly or inaudibly?

Four-year-old Arnie was sitting at a little table, talking inaudibly to himself. He then got up, moved around, while continuing to talk to himself. He continued to talk to himself during a variety of activities such as playing with a dump truck, and walking around the room touching various objects.

- Does the child have difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality?

FERNANDO (age five): You know, it's my aunt's birthday. (He continues after a pause.) I got married to Laura.
TEACHER: Who's Laura?
FERNANDO: Laura lives in Forest Hills.
TEACHER: When did you marry her?
FERNANDO: December 22.
TEACHER: Where is she now?
FERNANDO: She's sick. I married her nine times. Eight times when I was three years old. I married her ten or eleven times.

Alisa (age four) talked to the teacher about having a sister named Flavie, and a baby. She said her sister screamed. (Both the sister and the baby are imaginary; Alisa is an only child.)

Some of these behaviors can be observed when the child works with different materials; others, when the child does not engage in any activity at all although the other children are busy. Some characteristics can be inferred from what the child says; from the way he responds to peers and teachers; from the way he reacts when hit or called names, when he wins or loses a competitive game; and from his behavior during transition times.

GENERAL IMPRESSION

In addition to the kinds of specific behavior described above that may presage future emotional disturbances and/or learning disabilities, an outstanding characteristic of these young children with special problems is that they give the impression of being much younger than their chronological age. Jonah, for example, although four years old, seemed like a two-year-old or a very young three-year-old. The babylike quality of his skin and hair contributed to this impression, as did his high-pitched voice, his babyish pronunciation of words (such as "appoo" for apple), his unawareness that his pants were constantly falling down, and the fact that he always

played alone, never with other children. In other children, this impression may stem from other sources as well, such as a developmental lag in one or more aspects of functioning—physical, social, emotional, language and speech and cognitive.

Remember. No single behavior listed above has any significance by itself. Only a combination of several, if they occur frequently and persistently, may be indicative of a problem.

went to the musical bells. While there are still materials she has not touched, such as blocks, setting table with dishes, cars, she is adding to her play more materials each day. Outside equipment is now, and has been from the beginning, used without fear of falling. Every piece of equipment has been used by her, and with good control of muscles, expression and movement of body indicating extreme satisfaction. The swing is the one place where she always hums and sings.

4

RECORDING CHILDREN'S BEHAVIOR WITH ONE ANOTHER

HOW CHILDREN LEARN TO SOCIALIZE

It is perhaps hard to believe, but nevertheless true, that young children at first look at one another as they do at objects and materials —as something to touch, to smell, and maybe to taste! So much is this so that a little two-year-old pours sand on another child's head and then stares in amazement at his distress, or calmly pushes someone down the stairs if she is in the way, or pokes a finger into a youngster's eye to see what makes it shine. This sounds like the cruelest savagery but it is really nothing more than evidence for the fact that there is a time in the life of human beings when they do not understand that other people have feelings like their own. As a matter of fact, there is even a time when human beings do not understand that they themselves are separate, individual people, capable of independent feeling and action. The consciousness of self, of being somebody, comes gradually. Paradoxically, one must have awareness of this selfness, this being, before one can even suspect that other living creatures feel pain and pleasure.

Feelings and Know-how

The early years are the time when attitudes toward people are laid down in the character structure of the child, and the techniques for getting along in our culture are more or less painfully learned. As teachers, we have to be aware of three things about children's social development:

- A child's attitudes toward people

(affection, love, trust, suspicion, hate, etc.)
- The strength of a child's feelings
  (deep, casual, indifferent)
- How much and what kind of know-how a child has in getting along with others
  (Do you get a doll by asking for it, stealing it, or grabbing it?)

In this sense, a child may feel warm and loving to all humanity, but show it crudely, perhaps by hugging those who do not want hugging at the moment. Or a child may be jealous or resentful, but knowing that hugging is approved by adults but hitting is not, may hug to hurt. By the time children come to school, there has already been a complex background of experience shaping their attitudes and techniques. They are, however, still very much in the process of learning (as we are too) and quite receptive to our efforts to help them feel wholesome attitudes and practice constructive techniques.

A Child Becomes Aware of Self

Babies at birth are completely unconcerned about other human beings. They become conscious of others in relation to the fulfillment of their own needs and wants, which means, quite naturally, from a self-centered point of view. This is neither wrong nor unnatural. It is, however, the base from which future behavior will develop, sooner for some, later for others.

At the time that children start to speak of themselves as "I" instead of in the third person ("Baby wants a drink"), they are still examining other children with curiosity and interest but without comprehension. Not until children feel themselves persons (know their names, their sex, their likes and dislikes, and something of where they belong) can they look at others and sense "They feel even as I feel." It is natural to the growth of a young child, therefore, to be in a state of progression from nonidentification with others toward increasing capacity for sympathy and understanding. Before one can guide a child in social relationships, one must know how far along that child is on the road to maturity.

How Far Is Far?

A brief look at a pair of two-year-olds and a pair of three-year-olds reveals clear differences in their social maturity.

Two-year-old Natasha and the teacher have been playing together with a Snoopy Jack-in-the-Box on the floor. Cory has been playing hide-and-seek in a nearby closet with some of the other children. Suddenly Cory's attention is caught by Natasha's happily saying, "Bye-bye, Snoopy," as she pushes the toy back into the box, and he reaches out to grab the toy with a look of envy in his eyes. Natasha, startled, whines, "No." Hesitantly she reaches out toward the Snoopy while gazing pleadingly at the teacher. The teacher explains to Cory that Natasha does not want to share the toy just now, maybe later. Cory looks angrily at the teacher and then leans viciously against Natasha, attempting to bite her but biting the Jack-in-the-Box instead. He breaks into a frustrated sob, then, after some comforting by the teacher, wanders off to find another toy to play with.

A group of three-year-olds were sitting on the floor in music class while the music teacher was playing her guitar and singing "There was an old woman . . ." The children were instructed to clap their hands and sing along if they knew the song. Melissa and Daniel were sitting next to one another, each focused on the music teacher. Both of them clapped and joined in singing many times. At one point Melissa sang words that were different from the teacher's and Daniel's. He quickly switched his focus to Melissa and stopped clapping and singing. He leaned over, looked squarely into Melissa's face and announced matter-of-factly, "Stupid!" Melissa stopped singing and clapping and looked at Daniel quizzically but said nothing. Daniel once more proclaimed Melissa "stupid" but not before he was almost on top of her with his voice and body. By this time, neither one was focused on anything but each other's eyes, waiting to see who would make the first move. Suddenly Melissa smiled, happily repeated "Stupid!" to Daniel and fell on the floor laughing. Daniel caught her infectious laugh as he fell on the floor, having fun with the word stupid. Very soon they were both just laughing together and the word stupid was no longer heard. By the time the music teacher finished the song, both children were sitting up and clapping along with one another and with the teacher.

When teachers first see them at school, children have not had too much time as yet for maturing. They behave with one another only as they know how within their limits. They may long to please but still do unto each other only as they know how rather than as we think they should. Even as we show them better techniques for getting along with one another, we must accept without condemnation the inadequate techniques they already have. This does not mean

that all and any behavior is permitted to go on without an effort to direct it. To do that would be a real disservice to children because they are dependent on us for cues to what is socially acceptable. It does mean, however, that we may not expect of children behavior they neither know about nor are capable of performing. So often what we judge to be naughty is due to sheer ignorance.

By the time we reach adulthood we have already incorporated into our personalities the morality and ethics of our culture. Young children, however, are still somewhat uninitiated and much of what they do is meaningful to them only in the purely personal terms of how they feel about what's happening and not in the objective sense of what is right or wrong. Understanding and accepting children's anger, jealousy, rivalry, fear, ambition, and anxiety establish an atmosphere of acceptance in which they can grow into socially necessary and morally desirable behavior without losing their self-respect and dignity as human beings.

We cannot close the gap between adulthood and childhood by trying to behave like children ourselves. But we can use our imagination and feel with children so that we see what is important to them from the limits of their experience as well as from the breadth of ours.

DO WE REALLY SEE WHAT IS GOING ON?

It is inevitable that teachers will apply their own yardsticks of social right and wrong to children's behavior, and it is good for children to learn from people who have convictions. But we adults have to be reasonably certain that our expectations fit the capacities of the children. We feel sure about what is right and wrong because we learned our lessons well in childhood. It may happen, however, that our "intuitive" knowledge is contradicted by thoughtful child study, because what we learned as children we learned uncritically and without understanding. Many of the attitudes we consider "natural" and "right" as adults were learned this way. Earlier in this manual, biases and prejudices that influence interpretations of behavior were discussed. They influence what we see, too, as anyone can testify who has listened to the conflicting testimony of eyewitnesses to an accident. Biases and prejudices are not necessarily negative or undesirable. But observation and, it follows, interpretations of children's behavior are more likely to be accurate when we know what our particular biases happen to be.

Seeing a child rejected by his peers is for some of us clearly a call to come to the child's defense, and in we move to demand humane behavior from a little tyrant. For others of us a physical tussle between youngsters is unnerving and perhaps a little frightening. Again we hear the call to action and with feelings of righteousness mete out justice "impartially." For still others the "show-off," the "bossy type," the "hog," the "poor sport," the "sneak," etc., are children whose behavior does something to us, impelling us to stop them somehow. And stop them we do, not always because it is necessarily right or in the children's best interests, but because we need to quiet the disturbance inside ourselves. We have feelings, too. And when children's behavior makes us uncomfortable, we do something to ease the discomfort if we possibly can.

How sure can we be that our techniques for handling antisocial or asocial behavior are the most helpful ones when we ourselves feel personally involved in this way? How sure are we that we are seeing all there is in a situation, and not only the obvious, the dramatic, or that which is personally important?

Do we assume that all smiles mean pleasure and all tears pain? That boisterous, noisy fighting can hurt more than quiet, calculated avoidance? Do we really see what is going on?

What, for example, is happening to the two who are smiling at each other on the swings? Is this a budding friendship of two shy ones or a budding plot of two rascally ones? Just what is going on between the two who hug a corner and engage in endless conversations? Are they seeking each other out for support or for stimulation? Can we always be sure what and who started a fight? Is every fight bad?

We need to ask ourselves whether every child in the group has a friend and whether all the friendships are profitable to those concerned. Do some children need special help from adults in getting along with others? Are there some for whom the best adult guidance is a "hands off" policy?

We must learn to look at children without preconceptions of what they "ought" to be doing, if we want to see what they *are* doing.

The following observation records a scene that is quite commonplace among six- and seven-year-olds. It shows behavior that can be very upsetting to some teachers. Yet the recorder does not reveal a single bit of her own attitudes. She just describes what she

has seen and heard, quite objectively.

Seven little girls sit busily drawing at a round table, the center of activity in the empty room. Spying the group, Eva scampers over and seats herself comfortably on a chair. Meanwhile, Koko has been displaying the contents of a plastic doctor's bag that she has brought to school. She hovers about the circle speaking and gesticulating importantly. Calling out in a stentorian voice meant to arrest all activity, she offers, "Who wants some gum?" Eva asks politely and cajolingly, "Can I have some?" Koko answers in a stern, firm manner, "Only my best friends." Instantly a chorus of voices pledge in unison eternal friendship with Koko, Eva among them with her lilting "I'm your best friend."

Koko then commands, "Just raise your hands and you'll get some." All obey unquestioningly, enjoying the game, as Koko walks around distributing wads of white tissue which serve as gum. Eva's eyes sparkle with excitement as she rocks in her chair from side to side. "Now everybody close their eyes." Eva sits upright, her eyes barely closed as if in a trance, eyelashes trembling slightly. She claps both hands over her eyes, opens her mouth slightly, and waits expectantly. Disappointed, she opens her eyes and begins to mold a bit of clay, declaring in a confident, conspiratorial tone of voice to Koko, "Anyway, I don't have to close them because I already know, right? I don't have to because I already know it, right? Right, Koko? I don't have to. Yeah, because I already know the trick, right?"

Koko whispers to Alexis. Interjecting, Eva says, "But I'm going to your birthday, Alexis." Koko turns to Eva and says persuasively, "Don't go to her birthday. You can hold Leo (her baby brother)." Completely dissuaded, Eva croons, "Oh. Leo's so cute." Koko, looking satisfied, strolls off.

We can assume that any good teacher would make a note to herself to watch Koko and Eva more closely and to find the appropriate time and place when she could be helpful to each in a more effective way than if she had interfered at this point. The teacher *as a teacher* is given to action; the teacher *as an observer* must record as though not involved. These are separate parts of a teacher's task, both necessary and not to be confused with each other!

Children Are Different from One Another

Some children follow a consistent pattern toward all other children. They are pleasant and sweet-tempered with all comers, always welcoming and accepting and equally gracious with everyone. An opposite kind of consistency is present in the child who is always suspicious, always hostile, a "lone wolf." How many such completely one-dimensional personalities are there in the group? Not many. We might say that such people, big or little, seem to have something inside them that keeps them one way all the time, regardless of what is happening outside themselves. But most children, like most adults, react to a number of things. One might be the behavior and expectations of the other fellow. A second might be the irritability of coming down with mumps or measles. A third might be the abundance or scarcity of something a child wants. And so on.

Many situations can affect children's reactions to one another. The presence or absence of certain teachers or children, or a long spell indoors with no chance for physical activity, would be such a situation. Or, on occasion, normally unaggressive children can become aggressive under the cover of group protection or when they feel unjustly deprived. Some children learn quite early whom they can push with impunity and whom to follow with regard. Most children seem to have a sixth sense about the children who are unable to defend themselves.

In other words, reactions to people are many-sided, especially while children are still learning the techniques of getting along with others, as is true in the early years. It is no surprise, therefore, that the healthy, normal youngster may show contradictory reactions. If we would guide children to good, successful interpersonal adjustment, we have to be sure that we know what their reactions to others actually are.

DETAILS TO LOOK FOR IN OBSERVING A CHILD'S BEHAVIOR WITH OTHER CHILDREN

Every teacher picks up a lot of useful information out of the corner of her eye as she goes about her busy day. She knows that a combination of Pamela and Naomi is sure to end up in mischief; that once started on cowboy play, Juan, Sean, and Evan will keep at it for the whole outdoor period; that Kay Kay will probably wander again today as she has since coming to school: and so on.

Is that enough? *Who approached whom* in the Pamela–Naomi combination? Who started the cowboy idea? Who leads? Who follows? How do the children make contact with one another?

Some children approach others with certainty and sure-foot-

edness. "Let's play," they say forthrightly, and play it is. Others come along with less assurance. "May I play?" they ask timidly, or hesitantly, or uncertainly. Some children walk up to others and stand speechless, waiting for acceptance and admission to the golden realm. And some wait for no introduction, but direct the activity immediately. "You be my passenger. I'm the driver."

Here are two children whose approaches differ considerably from each other.

It was midmorning, and the class had just come out into the playground. The yard is filled with a wide variety of climbing and swinging equipment. Matthew headed straight for the large, wooden climber in one corner of the yard. On the way, he picked up a short wooden board that the children place at various levels on the climber. The jungle gym itself is about four feet by eight in area and about seven feet high, open at the center except for two "fireman poles" that run from top to bottom.

Matthew places his board carefully on a high level, climbs up the side of the gym, and perches on a corner of the board. Three other children have followed him and climbed onto surrounding bars. He watches the others arrive and seat themselves, and then firmly and quietly proclaims, "I'm Superdog and I need some food!" Gary responds, "Hi, Superdoggie," and Matthew begins to make dog-like sounds of "Rufff, rufff." He reaches for a nearby pole and slides to the ground. His movements are smooth and easy, and he is smiling when he gets to the bottom, at which time he turns and climbs right back up to his perch.

The children have been on the play-roof for about twenty minutes. Most have settled into some game or activity. Carlo is standing alone on the tree house. He gazes longingly at the sandbox, where a group of children are involved in making cakes.

"Kelly, Kelly, Kelly," chants Carlo softly as he begins to climb down skillfully from the treehouse. He wastes no time, though he manages to get himself down without mishap.

"Kelly, Kelly, Kelly." He sings her name as he gallops across the roof, his face glowing with excitement, his hand swinging freely at his side. Kelly sits comfortably in the sand, her attention on her cake, her back propped up against the side of the sandbox. She seems oblivious of the almost imperceptible chanting of her name. Carlo leaps over the side of the sandbox, his arms and legs swinging in the air, and flops down beside Kelly. "Are you spitting in the sand?" Carlo asks cheerfully. He leans toward her as he asks.

Kelly, who has been looking intently at her cake, turns quickly as if startled to find Carlo's face about an inch from hers. "No!" she yells adamantly. "I have not. I'm making a cake."

"Oh," replies Carlo, a little disappointed. Kelly begins to fiddle with her sock, shaking the sand off with jerky, somewhat angry movements.

Carlo watches intently. He squats there perfectly still. Kelly demands in a loud, shrill voice, "Let me see your sock, Carlo."

Carlo grins sheepishly, pushes his leg out in front of him, grabs his pants leg, and tugs it up to his knee to reveal his sock. "There," he exclaims victoriously.

Kelly inspects his sock closely. Carlo holds his pants leg up with both his hands and watches Kelly. "Oh, you don't have them," she states emphatically, a note of disappointment in her voice.

Carlo sits still, his eyes glowing with expectation, his body leaning toward Kelly. He drops the pants leg down. It sticks on the top of his sock. Kelly turns her head and her attention back to the sand and her cake. She begins to pat her cake.

Carlo watches her, then slowly gets up and, still looking intently at Kelly, climbs out of the sandbox and ambles over to the teacher.

Who Approached Whom? How Did the Child Do It?

Who approached whom? Is it that way all the time? Are there some children who always have to be asked and some who never ask? Are children different with different members of the group, asking some and not others, accepting some and not others?

- How did the child approach the other?
  - Was he bold and demanding?
  - Was she friendly and assuring?
  - Was he frightened and expectant of rebuff?
- How was the approach made?
  - Did she touch or push?
  - Did he caress the other child?
  - Did she gesture at the other child in some way?
- Or did the teacher get the whole thing started?

As children approach each other, they may be casual, relaxed, and at ease; they may be friendly or hostile, confident, or afraid. They may have the right words or still be relying on body contact. *Their approach will show both their attitude and their know-how.*

How Does a Child Do What He/She Does?

We get the quality of a child's approach to other children by the

quality of the voice, the rhythm and tempo of the speech, the facial expression, and the body movements. They are all there in one integrated response. We react to this total response, of course, but in recording it is necessary to articulate quite consciously the nonverbal clues that will eventually help us determine a child's feelings.

We have talked before of the difference between *what* a child does and *how* he or she does it. It is perhaps more important to see how children behave socially than how they use materials, because adults are far likelier to take sides and do something when children are working out their social relationships than when they are exploring materials. To see the meaning of the experience to the child, we must be sure to see how that child does what he or she actually does. The action alone is not enough. See how Juana's mood changes are revealed in this record.

> Juana had a wig on; she was the "mother." Glenda and Robert followed her, saying, "Mommy, Mommy." She pretended to be annoyed and said, "Hey!" very loudly. She turned to the children and shook each very briskly. She walked away, they followed; the action was repeated many times. They all smiled during this play. At one point Juana shook Glenda so hard that Glenda fell down and began to cry. Juana walked away. As she passed a table, she saw plastic Legos; she picked up a few very casually. She began constructing and sat down, getting more involved in the activity. Roger and Glenda began tickling her wig. Juana took it off. They tickled her head. She told them loudly to stop. They continued. Juana began to cry, with tears in her eyes, but not audibly. She complained to the teacher, who told Glenda and Roger to leave her. She went back to the Legos. Glenda tried to grab the wig; Juana put it firmly between her legs and got involved in her Legos again. Maria, sitting next to her, grabbed the wig. Juana grabbed it back. Maria began to cry. Juana worked at the Legos without looking at Maria, who continued crying. After a while, Juana said to Maria, "Mira, una máquina." (Look, a machine), and showed her what she was making. Maria's crying stopped. Juana said, "Quieres hacer este?" (Do you want to make this?) Maria responded pleadingly, "No, quiero eso," (No, I want that), pointing to the wig. Juana said cheerfully, "O.K.," and gave it to her, putting it on Maria's head and smiling broadly.

Body Positions and Movement

Perhaps it is hard for us to pin down and record significant body positions and movements in children because as adults we have become so circumscribed in our own movements that we cannot

feel the meaning of theirs in their own bodies. We do not sprawl on the floor easily any more; we don't give way to laughter by flinging our legs over our heads; we don't fall easily; we prefer sitting to running. In short, we have ceased to use our own bodies with the freedom and abandon of children. Consequently, we do not look at jumping or climbing youngsters and tingle in our own muscles with their exhilaration in stretching limbs. Yet body expression is personality expression. One's body is oneself. One uses one's body as one feels.

Even if Janine, in the next record, had not said a word to her father, we would know how uncertain she was about getting into the swing of things from her body movement and gestures.

> Janine arrived, holding her father's hand tightly, her thin body curved in an S-shape, her hand gently rubbing her father's sleeve. In a soft, anxious voice, she whispered, "I don't want you to go." Then she put her index finger into her mouth and sucked on it wistfully while her father put his arm on her shoulder and urged her to take several steps forward. Janine dragged both feet forward hesitantly, still sucking her finger, and put one hand up, resting it on the door frame. Her father rubbed his hands together cheerfully and said gaily, "Well, I'm off," and left Janine still leaning indecisively on the door frame. Mousily she moved to the chair next to Andrew only four steps from the door and stood with both hands resting on the back of the chair, watching him write his name. Abruptly, she plopped into the chair and a moment later stood up again. With a sudden burst of energy she stepped over to the crayon box. She picked up a crayon and purposefully and quickly wrote her name, her tongue sticking out between her lips. Still no greeting passed between the children, Andrew being involved in decorating his sign.
>
> Just as quickly as she had started, Janine finished her name, did not decorate it, and slunk over to the rug by the book stand, shoulders drooping, head slightly hanging down. She flopped loosely onto the rug, reached casually for a book, and gazed absently at it, methodically turning page after page. She looked up as another child sat down with a book. She stared at the child. Except for her eyes, she was motionless, with her big toe occasionally wiggling in her sandal.

In the process of relating to each other, children so often strike first and ask later, or grow rigid with fear but say nothing, or stand with head low and voice mute. The tilt of the head, the use of the hands, body stances, amount of body activity, bodily contacts (touch, shove, push, pat, buck), all are means of communicating.

Trust and fear, self-confidence and inadequacy, all find expression in bodily posture. So do restlessness, irritability, composure, and serenity. We know this to be true from experience. We must include the details of body movement in our records.

Quality of Voice

This is an integral part of communication. As children speak, their emotional state will be revealed in their voice.

- Is it strident, soft, querulous, screechy, flat, pleading?
- Is it lilting, whining, demanding, loud, strained, forceful, quivery?

" 'Give it to me,' he growled" is hardly the same expression of feeling as " 'Give it to me,' he whined petulantly." "I want that," can be said angrily, hungrily, wistfully, urgently, teasingly, or happily. It makes a difference to know with which kind of voice a child makes a comment or asks a question.

Tempo and Rhythm

These qualities of a child's speech tell us something about the tempo and rhythm of that child. He may drawl and move in unhurried fashion; or her words may tumble in unending floods of ideas and feeling. Slowness or speed may simply be the result of the organization of the child's nervous system (as it usually is), but it may be the result of anxiety, too. Children slow up when they are afraid of saying the "wrong" thing. They hurry when they are afraid they won't be listened to.

Fast, slow, moderate—these refer to *tempo*. Rhythm is something else again. Rhythm is smoothness, jerkiness, or hesitancy. The rhythm of speech can be staccato, cadenced, flowing. Combining tempo and rhythm, we find that a child's speech can be fast and smooth or fast and jerky, slow and even or slow and hesitant. Rhythm and tempo together characterize the quality of the speech.

Six-year-old Jules adapted his needs to meet the needs of the occasion. Neither Jules nor Rick were at all ready for rest at the scheduled hour.

> As the boys' eyes met across their mats, they broke into wide grins that exposed the many empty spaces where their baby teeth had once been.
>
> "Oh good-eee," chirped Jules, looking at Rick. He raised himself from the waist and clapped his hands. "Give me six to pick up sticks," he chanted rhythmically, stretching out his left hand, palm upward. Rick, understanding the ritual, slapped Jules's palm, and a wide grin sprawled over the bottom half of his face.
>
> The teacher approached in businesslike fashion. "Do you two think you can manage yourselves?" she asked crisply.
>
> "Yeah, we can do it," Rick quickly asserted.
>
> Jules confirmed with, "Sure—er—no problem at all," giving the sentence a bit of a lilt as he spoke it.
>
> The teacher left, but soon laughter was heard again, and she approached a second time.
>
> Jules was spouting dramatically: "And-d I to-o-old the m-a-n to be of-f (giggle). And then the sp-oo-ky-ee cat (giggle) me-e-owed . . . (giggle) . . . He la-aa-anded like Sprunky-eee . . ." Lots of giggling. Jules sang and laughed and sang again at a high pitch, his eyes dancing as wildly as his words. Without saying a word, the teacher motioned Jules to carry his mat to another spot.

Facial Expression

This accompanies "quality" in speech. We expect smiling eyes with laughter, a droopy mouth with tears. Here are some of the descriptive terms we can use:

Eyes can be solemn, glaring, flashing, tearful, smiling, sleepy, bright, shiny, dull, sparkling, etc.
Mouth can be drooping, smiling, pouting, quivering, laughing, puckered, drawn, lips curled over teeth, etc.
Smile can be wholehearted, uncertain, full, wistful, furtive, reluctant, shy, open, dimpled, and half.

Of course not all details appear in every record. For one thing, children do not use their entire battery of possible shades of expression every time they react to life. For another, no human recorder could see enough or write fast enough to get everything onto a piece of paper. But the more details you can record that point to what is happening inside a child as he or she makes contact, the more accurate and expressive will be the picture that emerges.

> Vanessa shaded her eyes with her hands, frowned, and stared across the yard at Lillian. Her under lip jutted forward in a pout and her brows furrowed deeper than ever. Suddenly she swung her hands into fists at her side, stamped her foot and exploded. "Hey!" She ran across the yard and grabbed Lillian by the arm. Her head

punctuated every word as she screamed into Lillian's face, "Who told you to take my umbrella out of my locker?"

Elisa slithered silently against the wall, slowly edging her way from the clothing lockers to the clay table. She stood still some two feet away, sober and unsmiling, eyes darting from side to side as she followed the conversation being tossed around the table. Norman looked up and saw Elisa. "Hi," he grinned. "Hi, Lisey." Still standing immobile, Elisa crinkled her face into a warm, open smile. Her eyes alive, shining, she chirped, "Hi, Normie."

Approaching someone is only part of the relationship. After that, the other person's response or lack of response determines further action. What does the other child do and say? How does that child do it? The record above about Elisa, though short, is a clear-cut illustration of how behavior is affected by other persons' responses.

What Does the Child Say? How Does the Other Child Respond?

Speech may not reveal everything, but it tells a good deal. Record the actual words as far as possible and not just the sense of what a child says.

"Hey, Pete, let's put the big one here."
"Naw, it'll fall off."
"No it won't, no it won't."
"O. K." (good-naturedly).
"Push that one back a little.'
No answer.
"Hey!" (sharply) "Push that one back."

Does it take longer to write the actual dialogue than to write a paragraph about dialogue? The conversation above could be written about as follows:

Lucas told Pete where to put the blocks. Pete was pretty agreeable. When Pete didn't answer, Lucas shouted at him.

The first is raw material. It is flavorful and authentic and, more important, uninterpreted. The second may be accurate as to interpretation, but it involves the teacher's appraisal of the situation. Should she be wrong, there is no going back to check.

In the following record, both the dialogue and the quality of the voice form a very important part of the children's interaction.

Pilar and Ann are building together. Pilar puts a large cardboard cylinder in the house:

PILAR: We need this. (She accidentally knocks over the blocks of another nearby structure.)
ANN: Why are you doing that? That's not our house.
PILAR: (has begun using the knocked-over blocks, switches gear, and starts rebuilding the toppled building): I'm fixing it up.
ANN: How was it? Do you know?
PILAR: (matter-of-factly): We'll just put it back. (She finishes and stands up. She has previously been sitting on her haunches in a scrunched up but apparently comfortable position in which she moved about easily. She watches the goings-on in the dramatic play area inquisitively and then stoops down again. She speaks to the wooden doll in a chastising tone.) How did you get out of here? (She puts the doll on the bed, speaking firmly.) You go to bed. (She begins talking in a stream-of-consciousness style while Ann sits nearby.) And the woman (meaning the little doll, which she is holding) is the "figeroa," right? . . . You know what a "figeroa" is? (Ann does not respond so Pilar continues.) The woman go out to a "figeroa" and dance now. (She sings.) Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo-doo. (She moves the doll to make it dance, going up and down a clear aisle in the block area, walking on haunches as before.)
ANN: (bringing over a male doll): Man's gonna dance too.
PILAR: (with furrowed brow, her eyes bright, and a hint of authority in her voice): Wait, I'm gonna tell you something. We're gonna sing together. (And they do, making up words to their songs.)

What Happens Next?

After a contact is made, then what does a child do? Is there a sigh of relief and a quiet settling down to blissful submission? Is there a staccato-like bidding for supremacy of ideas and position? Or is there a purr of contentment as alternatives are weighed with other children? Do the children carry on conversation? Play the same thing separately? If the contact ends without going on into dramatic play, tell how it ends and what the child does immediately after. Subsequent behavior may reflect feelings about the contact.

Here are two boys reacting very differently to an event that was disturbing.

It was the middle of block building in the first grade, and the children were working on their buildings. Hank, however, was very upset, having just been involved in a very emotional, yelling, fist-swinging altercation that was broken up by the teacher. Seething, Hank stomped away from the block area, but on his way he accidentally brushed against part of Christopher's building, causing some damage

to it. Christopher became upset, and his face started to wrinkle as if he might cry. Then, as if having second thoughts, he raised his head and hurried over to Hank on all fours. He shook his fist menacingly in front of Hank's face, but not too closely. Hank was by now sitting in a chair in the meeting area, his face tense, silently fuming and staring in the direction of the blackboard. He was obviously still troubled by his previous altercation and could only blankly acknowledge Chris's anger. Chris looked into Hank's face, saw how upset he was, then turned, and edged his way back on all fours to make repairs on his building.

RESUMÉ OF DETAILS OF A SINGLE EPISODE

Taken all together, the significant aspects of a record of a child making a contact with another child might fall into some such general outline as the following.

1. Setting:
   Where does the contact take place?
   What were the children doing before the contact was made?
2. How is the contact made?
   What does the child who initiated the contact do? What does he say?
   Did the teacher get the whole thing started? How?
   How does the child do what she does?
   Body positions and movement
   Quality of voice
   Tempo and rhythm of speech
   Facial expression
   How does the other child respond? What does the other child say?
3. What happens next?
4. How does the contact end?

Patterns of Behavior

Out of such details as those above, perceived in many episodes, there will emerge *patterns of behavior,* or the characteristic way in which a child is likely to respond in the daily relations with children. Over a period of a school year, *changing* patterns indicate growth or regression. We can organize these patterns of behavior by clustering items from the single episodes around such categories as the following:

1. Evidence of interest in children:
   Direct evidence would be the number of children played with; or a child's request for help in entering play situations; or positive approaches to children.
   Indirect evidence would be staring at others or watching them; imitating; attempting to attract attention from children by various means.
2. How contacts are made:
   Does the child move toward others or against them? (initially or always)
   How does he move?
   (confidently, tentatively, pleadingly, timidly, aggressively, etc.)
   Do others move toward him, awayfrom him, or against him?
   (initially or always)
   How does she react to the behavior of others?
   (to their affection, invitation to play, criticism, suggestions and ideas, aggressions, etc.)
   What does she do?
   (withdraws, enters play, rejects, tolerates, defies, aggresses, complains to adults, etc.)
   How does she do it?
   (shyly, confidently, eagerly, with curiosity and interest, crying, angrily, happily, fearfully, etc.)
   What methods does he use in making contacts?
   (speech, attack, with ideas, with things, enters situation directly, threatens, bribes, uses others to gang up, asks adults for help, etc.)
3. How does he behave with children?
   To what extent can he make his wishes, desires, irritations, annoyances, ideas, etc., understood?
   To what extent is she able to share equipment, props, materials?
   To what extent is he able to await his turn?
   What are the more usual causes of clashes with others?
   (possessions, ideas, unprovoked attacks, etc.)
   How does she handle conflicts?
   What does she do?
   (runs to teacher, cries, fights back, reasons, jokes, etc.)

How does she do it?
(tearfully, righteously, sobbing, angrily, indignantly, etc.)
To what extent is she aware of others' rights and needs?
How realistic are his demands for his own rights?
How does she protect her rights?
To what extent does he seek help from other children?
(how, under what circumstances, from whom)
To what extent is she able to help others?
(how, when, and whom)
To what extent does she contribute ideas, suggestions?
Does he accept other people's ideas, suggestions?
What seem to be the child's defense mechanisms?

4. What seem to be the child's feelings about other children?
(likes, fears, envies, etc.)
Special friends
(How many and who; nature of interrelationships)
5. Special problems or trends
(impatience with others; allowing or encouraging exploitation by others; excessive hitting, temper, or withdrawal; lack of speech; other physical handicaps; excessive dependence on teacher; different cultural background from group's; etc.)
6. Evidences of growth
Comparison of earlier and later behavior indicating more mature level

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

If children learn to get along with each other within a school situation they inevitably begin to develop a sense of the meaning of the large group along with their more intimate excursions into twosomes. But becoming a member of a group is a challenging task.

Every group develops a dynamic of its own, and groups of young children do the same. Once the children's first period of adjustment is over, they begin not only to seek their own place within the group's emerging structure but to recognize the places held by others as well. See, for example, how Paul, a six-year-old, was already wise to the hierarchy within his group.

Richard and Larry were playing a board game at table 3 with Paul and Tom standing by and watching, when George, the acknowledged leader among the boys, arrived, late. George sat down at table 2. Richard, with no outward sign that he was aware of George's arrival, said to Tom (who was just watching the game), "Tom, how would you like to play my man in the game? It's a very lucky seat." Paul, the other observer at table 3, turned to the teacher and said, "All the boys like George and all the girls like Heather." The teacher asked Paul what made him think so. He replied, "Look. See how all the boys stay near George?"

Paul then decided he would take Richard's place, at which Richard announced, to no one in particular, "I have to do something." Larry, his erstwhile partner in the game, remembered he had something to do too and stood up, saying to the teacher, "I'm very sorry."

Both Richard and Larry then made a "casual" beeline for Table 2. Paul gave the teacher a significant look and declared, "See, I told you so."

In addition, then, to observing a child in relation to individual others, one would want to know how the child is faring within the larger, total group.

- Where does the child fit in relation to entire group?
- Does she play with none, one, many, both sexes?
  Is he an established member of group; is he making his way; is he a lone player?
  How does she act toward new children entering the group?
- What is the child's position within the group?
  (leader, follower, instigator, disrupter, clown, uses group to hide etc.)
- What status does the child have?
  Is the child chosen by others, e.g., in games?
  How frequently is the child chosen by others? repulsed?
- Is the child accepted? a "fringer"? a scapegoat?

Summing up the generalizations that seem reasonable in light of the patterns that emerge out of the wealth of detail, we bring into focus an image of how a very much alive, vibrant child reacts in one important area of living. On the basis of such evidence we shall eventually be able to form hypotheses and plan for action. Judgment will have been based on objective data. Generalizations about two children's relationships with others follow.

SUMMARY OF A CHILD'S BEHAVIOR WITH OTHER CHILDREN

Jimmy, age four:

Jimmy has always shown a great interest in the other children and their activities. He used to stand watching them at their work a great deal. But if they looked his way, he would turn away and drop his head. He made no effort to contact anyone. At first the children ignored him pretty much. It was not until he began to help me serve juice that they even seemed aware of him at all.

The two children who seemed to fascinate Jimmy most were Lenny and Marilyn. Both four-year-olds, they are quick, active children, hopping from one thing to another. Good friends, they laugh and sing all day. Jimmy began to follow them around after being at school about two months. He would laugh at their antics until they began to use him as their special audience. Some time later they began to draw him into their play, giving him the role of baby or dog or anything else which they themselves preferred not to be. Jimmy, not being aggressive, fell into these roles and played them to the limit, delighted at being included.

The other children now seem to accept Jimmy as Lenny and Marilyn's friend and apparently like him. Although he never initiates play, we notice that he is not always willing to play baby any more. He seems to avoid rough-and-tumble, stepping aside if he sees it near him. He rarely joins in a group, but will now play with two or three children he knows well.

Lee, age four-and-one-half:

With his peers Lee shows a pattern of caution, observing them closely before he joins them. It has just been during the past few weeks that he has taken part in singing and rhythmic group activities. He seems to derive great satisfaction from this type of activity, asking, "Are we going to play the Jingle Bell game today?" etc. If sufficiently absorbed in a certain task, he ignores others in his immediate vicinity completely. He is friendly with most children, but tends to seek out one particular child to play with. This child changes on a day-to-day or week-to-week basis. When a third child enters (in my notes, it seems always to be Michael), he feels very insecure, covering his feelings of hostility with a sulky withdrawal, seldom with an overt act of aggression. (This week I did see him pounce unexpectedly upon Michael's back and wrestle him to the floor with much triumphant laughter on his part and complete bewilderment on Michael's.) Although Lee talks a great deal, he seems to be talking at the children most times, not with them. They all delight in listening to his tall stories. He has a good sense of humor and his hearty laugh can be heard throughout the room. He often uses laughter as a release from tension.

Just lately Lee has shown signs of approaching readiness to take aggressive action (e.g., wrestling Michael and Greg). His mother reported that he has told her proudly at home, "I had a big fight and I made that kid almost cry." Actually it was a very little fight, but its importance to Lee in his self-picture is very evident.