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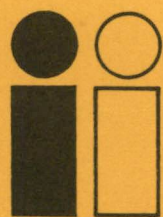
**SELF
INSTRUCTION**

ACTIVATOR PARENT

UNIT 4



**PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN**



SELF-INSTRUCTION WORKBOOK

UNIT IV

ACTIVATOR PARENT

PARENTAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS OF
HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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ACTIVATOR PARENT



INSTRUCTIONS: Turn the page and begin reading. Take a sheet of paper and slide it down the page as you read. Throughout the unit, you will come to exercises marked with a big circle. You should complete each exercise as you come to it. Then slide the paper down and check your answer with the answer provided immediately following the exercise. If you are not satisfied with your answer, go back and read the part just before the exercise and then redo the exercise. When you are satisfied with your answer, proceed with your reading.

FROZEN SCRIPTS

FROZEN IN THEIR OLD SCRIPTS BECAUSE THEY DON'T
KNOW HOW TO DEVELOP A NEW ONE.

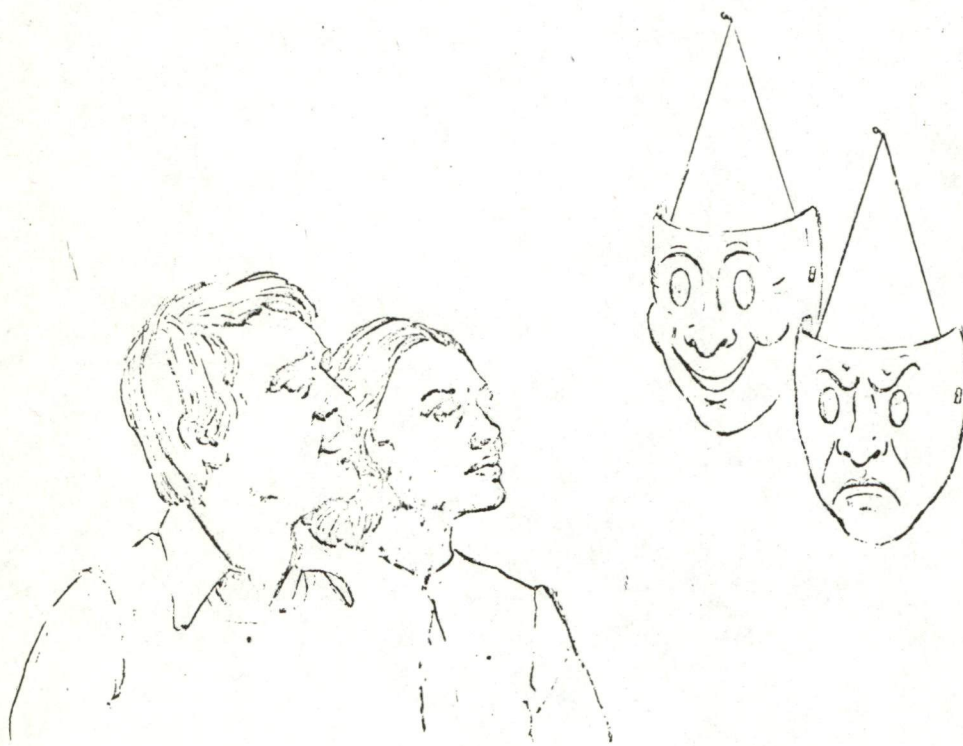


HANDICAPPED
CHILD

IN FAMILIES WHERE THERE IS A HANDICAPPED CHILD,
PARENTS HAVE A REAL CHALLENGE IN BUILDING NEW
SCRIPTS. THEY MUST BE MORE FLEXIBLE AND MORE
CREATIVE THAN PARENTS OF NORMAL CHILDREN.

UNIT 4

THIS IS THE FOURTH UNIT IN THE PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM. THIS UNIT DEALS WITH DEVELOPING AN ACTIVATOR PARENT SCRIPT.



SCRIPTLESS
ACTOR

IN PREVIOUS UNITS WE DISCUSSED THE FACT THAT THE PARENTS OF A HANDICAPPED CHILD ARE ACTORS IN A NEW SCENE FOR WHICH THEY HAVE NO SCRIPT OR...

HOW?

THE QUESTION IN EVERYONE'S MIND NOW IS PROBABLY....HOW? HOW DOES ONE DEVELOP A NEW SCRIPT FOR PARENTING A HANDICAPPED CHILD?



ACTIVATOR
PARENT

CONSIDERING THE FIVE DIFFERENT PARENT SCRIPTS, THE ACTIVATOR SCRIPT STANDS OUT AS THE ONE WHICH WORKS BEST IN REARING A HANDICAPPED CHILD.

ACTIVATOR SCRIPT
STEPS

1. GOAL
2. NEW INSIGHTS
3. BEHAVIOR

DEVELOPING AN ACTIVATOR SCRIPT INVOLVES THREE STEPS: FIRST YOU MUST DEVELOP A GOAL, SECOND YOU MUST GAIN NEW INSIGHTS, AND THIRD YOU MUST LEARN AND USE SOME NEW BEHAVIORS.

SCRIPT STEP #1

GOALS

THE FIRST STEP IN CREATING AN ACTIVATOR SCRIPT IS TO DEVELOP A LONG RANGE GOAL. ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS: WHAT IS MY JOB AS A PARENT TO THIS HANDICAPPED CHILD? WHAT CAN I HOPE TO DO? WHAT DO I WANT FOR MY CHILD IN THE NEXT FIVE, TEN, FIFTEEN AND TWENTY YEARS?

GOAL

- SELF-SUFFICIENCY

WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT, THE GOAL OF PARENTING ANY CHILD IS REALLY HELPING THE CHILD DEVELOP SELF-SUFFICIENCY. IT IS NO DIFFERENT FOR A HANDICAPPED CHILD. A HANDICAPPED PERSON MAY NEVER BECOME AS SELF-SUFFICIENT AS A PERSON WHO IS NOT HANDICAPPED, BUT HE NEEDS TO BECOME AS SELF-SUFFICIENT AS POSSIBLE.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY

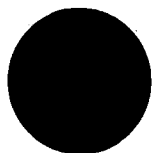
IMMATURE MATURE
|—————→

ONE WAY TO LOOK AT SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS IN TERMS OF GROWTH FROM BEING CHILDLIKE AND IMMATURE TO BECOMING ADULTLIKE OR MATURE. THE ACTIVATOR'S GOAL IS TO HELP HIS CHILD MOVE TO THE DEGREE POSSIBLE AWAY FROM IMMATURITY TOWARD MATURITY.

DEPENDENT →

INDEPENDENT

ONE COMPONENT OF MATURITY RELATES TO INDEPENDENCE. IN ORDER TO BECOME MORE SELF-SUFFICIENT, A CHILD MUST MOVE FROM DEPENDENT TO INDEPENDENT. THIS MEANS BEING CAPABLE OF MANAGING A GREAT MANY THINGS WITH LITTLE OR NO ASSISTANCE. A GOAL OF THE ACTIVATOR IS TO DEVELOP HIS CHILD'S PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, AND SOCIAL SKILLS SO THE CHILD MAY MOVE FROM DEPENDENCE TO INDEPENDENCE.



What are the three skill areas a child needs to develop if he is to move from dependent to independent?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

(The three areas are physical skills, intellectual skills and social skills. Often handicaps in some way prevent a child from achieving total independence. Actually, none of us can achieve total independence for ourselves or our children. Independence does not mean being free of other people. Instead it means being able to manage, where we can, with little assistance.)

PASSIVE →

ACTIVE

ANOTHER COMPONENT OF MATURITY RELATES TO THE CHILD'S MOVING FROM PASSIVE TO ACTIVE. THIS IS THE PROGRESSION FROM BEING RELUCTANT TO ATTEMPT NEW THINGS TO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN MANY ACTIVITIES. THE ACTIVATOR BELIEVES THE HANDICAPPED CHILD MUST BE MOTIVATED TO BECOME ACTIVE. THE MORE ACTIVE A CHILD, THE MORE SKILLS HE DEVELOPS.

IRRESPONSIBLE →
RESPONSIBLE

THE MOVEMENT FROM IRRESPONSIBLE TO RESPONSIBLE IS ANOTHER COMPONENT OF MATURITY. RESPONSIBILITY MEANS TAKING CARE OF THINGS YOURSELF. THE IMMATURE PERSON TENDS TO BE IRRESPONSIBLE. THE ACTIVATOR BELIEVES THAT IN ORDER TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE, CHILDREN MUST BE GIVEN A CHANCE TO ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY ON A GRADUAL BASIS.

INWARD →
OUTWARD

A FOURTH COMPONENT IN MATURITY IS THE MOVEMENT FROM INWARD CONCERN TO OUTWARD INTEREST. THE IMMATURE PERSON IS INWARDLY ORIENTED, CONCERNED WITH SELF AND SELF PROBLEMS. THE MATURE PERSON TENDS TO BE OUTWARDLY ORIENTED, CONCERNED WITH THE OUTER WORLD IN PROBLEM SOLVING. THE ACTIVATOR BELIEVES THAT THE HANDICAPPED CHILD SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO BECOME OUTWARD.

SHORT VIEW →
LONG VIEW

THE FINAL COMPONENT OF MATURITY RELATES TO TIME. THE IMMATURE PERSON HAS AN EXTREMELY SHORT-RANGE VIEW. HE WANTS IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION. THE MORE MATURE PERSON HAS A LONGER VIEW. HE CAN GIVE UP SHORT-TERM GRATIFICATION FOR LONG-TERM GOALS. THE ACTIVATOR BELIEVES THAT DEVELOPING A LONG VIEW REQUIRES THAT THE HANDICAPPED CHILD SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO DEVELOP PATIENCE AND SELF CONTROL.



Below is a list of the five components of immaturity. Opposite each characteristic, write in the corresponding characteristic for the mature person.

IMMATURE PERSON		MATURE PERSON
1. Dependent	—————>	_____
2. Passive	—————>	_____
3. Irresponsible	—————>	_____
4. Inward	—————>	_____
5. Short view	—————>	_____

(The answers are: 1. Dependent - Independent 2. Passive - Active 3. Irresponsible - Responsible 4. Inward - Outward 5. Short view - Long view)

MOVE TOWARD
SELF-SUFFICIENCY

THE ACTIVATOR'S GOAL IS TO HELP HIS HANDICAPPED CHILD MOVE FROM DEPENDENCE TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY. IT IS HERE THAT OTHER PARENT SCRIPTS FAIL. YOU WILL RECALL THAT THE SCRIPTS OF THE AVOIDER, CONTROLLER, CAVALIER AND MARTYR FAIL WHEN IT COMES TO DEVELOPING SELF-SUFFICIENCY IN A HANDICAPPED CHILD.

WORKS
TOWARD
GOAL

IN DEVELOPING YOUR ACTIVATOR SCRIPT YOU SHOULD WORK ON THE LONG RANGE GOAL OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY DAY-BY-DAY. AS YOU HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP HIS SKILLS, ALWAYS KEEP THE LONG RANGE GOAL, SELF-SUFFICIENCY, IN MIND. IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOAL, YOU MUST ACTIVELY SEEK INFORMATION CONCERNING YOUR CHILD'S HANDICAP AND TECHNIQUES FOR SUCCESSFULLY TEACHING YOUR CHILD.

SCRIPT STEP #2

INSIGHTS

THE SECOND STEP IN DEVELOPING AN ACTIVATOR SCRIPT INVOLVES DEVELOPING NEW INSIGHTS. YOU WILL NEED NEW INSIGHTS TO HANDLE THE PROBLEMS YOU WILL ENCOUNTER AS YOU PARENT YOUR HANDICAPPED CHILD.

INSIGHTS

- . RIGHTS
- . NEEDS
- . POTENTIAL

YOU WILL NEED INSIGHTS INTO YOUR CHILD'S RIGHTS, HIS NEEDS AND HIS POTENTIAL. THESE THREE AREAS TEND TO CAUSE MANY PROBLEMS FOR BOTH THE CHILD AND PARENTS.

INSIGHTS

- . RIGHTS

YOUR IDEAS ABOUT A CHILD'S RIGHTS DETERMINE TO A GREAT EXTENT HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CHILD, HOW YOU ACT TOWARD HIM, AND THE KIND OF THINGS YOU EXPECT FROM HIM. THIS WILL HAVE A GREAT DEAL TO DO WITH HOW HE DEVELOPS AS A PERSON.

RIGHTS

YOUR HANDICAPPED CHILD HAS THE SAME RIGHTS AS ANYONE ELSE. HOWEVER, HE WILL HAVE PROBLEMS IN OBTAINING EQUAL TREATMENT IN THREE AREAS. FIRST, PEOPLE MAY FAIL TO TREAT HIM AS A PERSON; SECOND HE WILL FACE DIFFICULTIES IN DEVELOPING HIS POTENTIAL; AND THIRD HE WILL LACK OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE AND CONTRIBUTE.

RIGHTS

• PERSON

YOUR CHILD IS A PERSON, A PERSON WITH A HANDICAP, NOT A HANDICAPPED PERSON. AS A PERSON, DISTINCT AND INDIVIDUAL, HE HAS THE RIGHT TO BE RESPECTED FOR WHAT HE IS. MANY PARENTS FAIL TO ACCEPT THE PERSONHOOD OF THEIR HANDICAPPED CHILD. THEY FAIL TO VALUE THEIR CHILD FOR HIMSELF.

RIGHTS

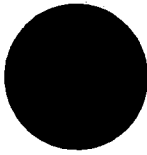
• POTENTIAL

YOUR HANDICAPPED CHILD HAS A BASIC RIGHT TO DEVELOP HIS POTENTIAL, EVEN IF IT IS VERY LIMITED. HE HAS A RIGHT TO EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES SO HE CAN DEVELOP PHYSICALLY, INTELLECTUALLY AND SOCIALLY. MANY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ARE DENIED THIS RIGHT BY OVERPROTECTIVE PARENTS OR PARENTS WHO MORE OR LESS IGNORE THEIR CHILD.

RIGHTS

• OPPORTUNITY

YOUR HANDICAPPED CHILD ALSO NEEDS OPPORTUNITIES TO BECOME INVOLVED AND TO CONTRIBUTE. MANY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ARE NOT PROVIDED SUCH OPPORTUNITIES AND TEND TO BECOME NON-PRODUCTIVE AND PASSIVE. YOU SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT YOUR CHILD HAS THE RIGHT TO BE AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT.



Below is a list of three basic rights of handicapped children and three statements. In the blank, put the number of the statement which corresponds to each right.

RIGHTS

STATEMENTS

PERSON _____

1. The handicapped child should be given a chance to develop his abilities.

POTENTIAL _____

2. The handicapped child should be able to actively participate in his environment.

OPPORTUNITY _____

3. The handicapped child should be respected and valued.

(Many times handicapped children are denied opportunities to fulfill their basic rights by parents or other people. Sometimes people fail to respect a handicapped child as a person. There are occasions where a handicapped child is so over-protected that opportunities to develop his potential are denied. Some people, even parents, at times, do not consider that a handicapped child should actively participate in his environment. Statement 1 corresponds to the potential; 2 to opportunity; and 3 to person.

INSIGHTS

• NEEDS

IN CREATING AN ACTIVATOR SCRIPT, PARENTS ALSO NEED TO DEVELOP INSIGHTS INTO THE BASIC NEEDS OF THEIR HANDICAPPED CHILD. INSIGHTS INTO THESE BASIC NEEDS, WILL HELP YOU DO A BETTER JOB OF PARENTING.

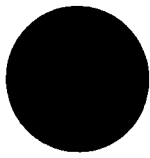


INNER PERSON

IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND BASIC NEEDS IF YOU WILL THINK OF EVERYONE AS HAVING AN INNER-PERSON. THIS INNER-PERSON IS ALIKE FOR EVERYONE, NO MATTER HOW PEOPLE MAY APPEAR ON THE OUTSIDE. INSIDE PEOPLE HAVE AN INNER-PERSON WITH THE SAME BASIC NEEDS, NO MATTER IF THEY ARE YOUNG OR OLD, MALE OR FEMALE, HANDICAPPED OR NOT.

HANDICAPPED CHILD

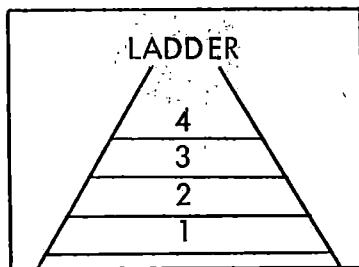
THE ACTIVATOR THINKS OF HIS HANDICAPPED CHILD AS BEING LIKE EVERYONE ELSE AS FAR AS HIS INNER-PERSON IS CONCERNED. HE KNOWS THAT ALTHOUGH HIS CHILD MAY BE PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY IMPAIRED, INSIDE HE IS NO DIFFERENT, HIS NEEDS ARE LIKE OTHER CHILDREN'S; LIKE OTHER PEOPLE'S.



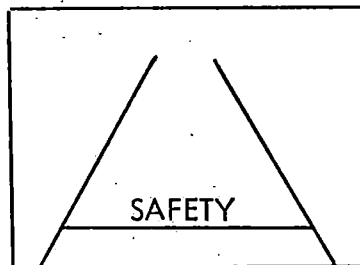
Check the statement which are true about our "inner person".

- ☐ 1. Everyone has a similar inner person.
- ☐ 2. Handicapped people have different inner persons than non-handicapped people.
- ☐ 3. All people are similar because they have similar basic needs.

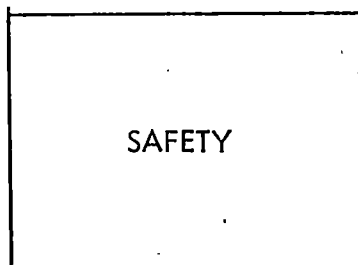
(Statements 1 and 3 are true.)



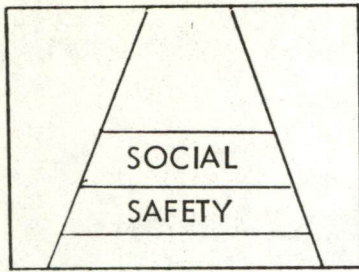
THERE APPEAR TO BE FOUR KINDS OF NEEDS THAT AFFECT THE INNER PERSON. THE ACTIVATOR SEES THESE NEEDS AS STEPS ON A LADDER.



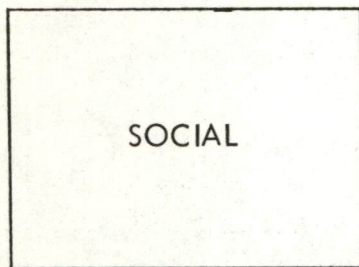
THE MOST BASIC NEEDS, THE ONES ON THE FIRST STEP OF THE LADDER, ARE THE NEEDS FOR SAFETY. THESE ARE THE NEEDS TO FEEL THAT REQUIREMENTS FOR LIVING WILL BE MET-ADEQUATE FOOD, CLOTHING, SHELTER AND HEALTH. THESE ARE THE NEEDS TO BE FREE FROM THREATS OF PHYSICAL HARM.



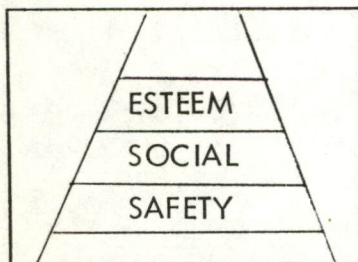
CHILDREN WITH HANDICAPS MAY HAVE MORE THREATS TO THEIR SAFETY THAN OTHER CHILDREN. THEY OFTEN HAVE ILL HEALTH, OF DIFFICULTIES IN SEEING, HEARING, OR MOVING ABOUT. THESE THINGS CAN CAUSE THEM TO FEEL LESS SAFE THAN OTHER CHILDREN. THE ACTIVATOR TAKES TIME TO HELP HIS CHILD FEEL SAFE.



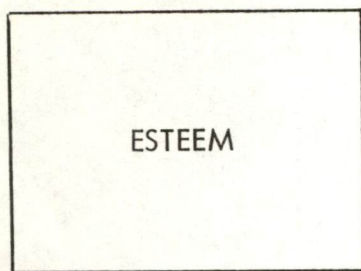
SOCIAL NEEDS ARE ANOTHER KIND OF NEEDS. ONCE A CHILD FEELS PHYSICALLY SAFE, HIS SOCIAL NEEDS BEGIN TO SURFACE. THESE INCLUDE NEEDS FOR LOVE, AFFECTION, BELONGING, ACCEPTANCE AND BEING INCLUDED. CHILDREN NEED TO FEEL THAT PEOPLE LIKE AND ACCEPT THEM.



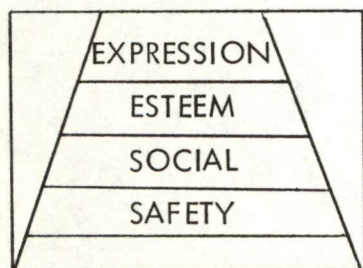
BECAUSE OF STEREOTYPING, STIGMA AND ISOLATION, HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ARE OFTEN DENIED OPPORTUNITIES TO FULFILL THEIR SOCIAL NEEDS. UNFILLED SOCIAL NEEDS LEAD TO FEELINGS OF INFERIORITY. THE ACTIVATOR PARENT SEEKS TO HELP HIS CHILD FULFILL HIS SOCIAL NEEDS BY ACCEPTING HIM, SHOWING AFFECTION AND BY HELPING HIS CHILD DEVELOP SOCIAL SKILLS SO OTHERS WILL DO THE SAME.



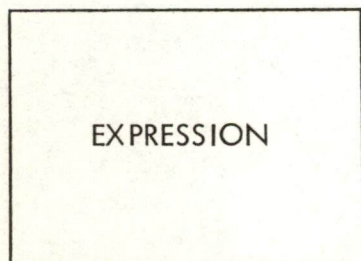
ON THE NEXT STEP OF THE LADDER ARE ESTEEM NEEDS. ESTEEM RELATES TO FEELINGS OF ADEQUACY, ACHIEVEMENT AND CONFIDENCE. IT INVOLVES A FAVORABLE SELF-IMAGE IN ONE'S OWN EYES AS WELL AS IN THE EYES OF OTHERS.



HANDICAPPED CHILDREN OFTEN HAVE PROBLEMS OF SELF-ESTEEM DUE TO LACK OF ACCEPTANCE BY OTHERS, AND BECAUSE THEY MAY NOT BE ABLE TO DO THINGS THEY SEE OTHERS DOING. THE ACTIVATOR PARENT HELPS HIS CHILD DEVELOP HIGH SELF-ESTEEM BY APPROVING OF HIS CHILD, AND HELPING HIM DEVELOP HIS SKILLS SO THAT HE CAN DO MANY THINGS.



CHILDREN ALSO HAVE NEEDS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION. THIS RELATES TO THE NEED TO BE CREATIVE, TO CONTRIBUTE, TO MAKE DECISIONS, AND TO BE SELF-DIRECTED.



SOME HANDICAPPED CHILDREN HAVE FEW MEANS OF SELF-EXPRESSION. SOME HAVE FEW INTERESTS WHERE THEY MIGHT EXPRESS THEMSELVES. SOME ARE SO DOMINATED BY OTHERS THAT ALL PLANS AND DECISIONS ARE MADE FOR THEM. ACTIVATOR PARENTS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEIR CHILD TO EXPRESS WISHES, IDEAS AND TALENTS. THEY INCLUDE THEIR CHILD IN MAKING DECISIONS AND PLANS.



Below is a list of 16 examples of the four basic human needs. You are to match the examples with the appropriate need. Write in the numbers of the examples next to the name of the need to which it applies. HINT: there will be four examples from the list for each need.

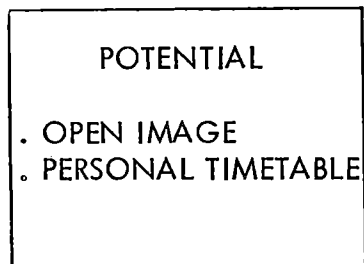
<u>NEEDS</u>		<u>EXAMPLES</u>
SAFETY	_____	1. Belonging
		2. Shelter
		3. Achievement
		4. Included
SOCIAL	_____	5. Self-directed
		6. Food
		7. Favorable self-image
		8. Creativity
ESTEEM	_____	9. Clothing
		10. Affection
		11. Acceptance
		12. Adequacy
EXPRESSION	_____	13. Opportunity to make decisions
		14. Health
		15. Contribute
		16. Confidence

(Next to SAFETY should be numbers 2, 6, 9, and 14; SOCIAL: 1, 4, 10, and 11; ESTEEM: 3, 7, 12, and 16; and EXPRESSION: 5, 8, 13, and 15.

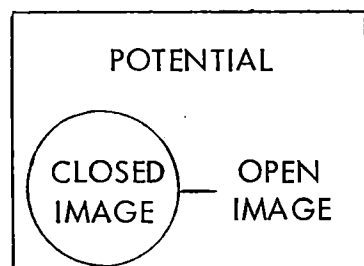
INSIGHTS

POTENTIAL

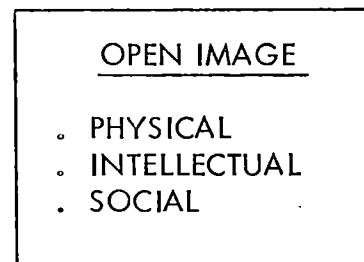
THE THIRD AREA WHERE YOU WILL NEED INSIGHTS INVOLVES YOUR CHILD'S POTENTIAL. THIS IS AN AREA WHERE THERE ARE MANY UNCERTAINTIES, AND FEW GUIDELINES TO FOLLOW. THIS IS WHERE MANY PARENTS HAVE THEIR BIGGEST PROBLEMS. THEY SAY, WHAT CAN I EXPECT, WHAT CAN MY CHILD BECOME?



IN DEALING WITH YOUR CHILD'S POTENTIAL YOU SHOULD HAVE AN OPEN IMAGE OF YOUR CHILD AND REALIZE THAT YOUR CHILD WILL HAVE HIS OWN PERSONAL TIMETABLE.



MANY PARENTS HAVE A CLOSED IMAGE OF THEIR CHILD. SUCH PARENTS PUT A CEILING ON THEIR CHILD'S POTENTIAL THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIS ACTUAL CAPABILITY. IN BECOMING AN ACTIVATOR YOU MUST REMAIN OPEN IN YOUR JUDGMENTS CONCERNING YOUR CHILD'S ABILITY.



LIKE ALL CHILDREN, THE HANDICAPPED CHILD NEEDS TO DEVELOP HIS PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL SKILLS. THE NATURE OF HIS HANDICAP MAY RESTRICT THE POTENTIAL IN ONE OR MORE OF THESE AREAS. HOWEVER, EACH CHILD HAS A LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT HE CAN REACH WITH ASSISTANCE. THE ACTIVATOR MAINTAINS AN OPEN IMAGE IN EACH SKILL AREA.



Below are 3 statements which reflect an open image of a handicapped child. Match each statement with the skill areas to which it applies. Write the number of the statement next to the skill area to which it applies.

Skill Area	Statement
Social Skills _____	1. Someday he might have a family of his own.
Physical Skills _____	2. There's no telling how soon he'll be able to stand by himself, or if he ever will.
Intellectual Skills _____	3. I don't know how well my child will learn this.

(Social Skills = 1, Physical Skills = 2, Intellectual Skills = 3)

ABILITY TESTING

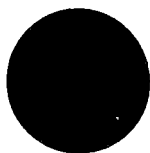
LET'S LOOK AT HOW HAVING AN OPEN IMAGE WORKS. FIRST OF ALL, INSTEAD OF ASSUMING WHAT YOUR CHILD CAN AND CAN'T DO, YOU BECOME AN ABILITY TESTER. HERE YOU BREAK SKILLS DOWN INTO THEIR PARTS AND ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO LEARN THE STEPS, ONE BY ONE. YOU TEST HIS ABILITY AT EACH STEP AND ONLY ENCOURAGE HIM TO MOVE ON WHEN HE MASTERS A STEP.

OBSERVING

THE SECOND THING IN MAINTAINING AN OPEN IMAGE IS TO OBSERVE. CHILDREN NATURALLY TRY OUT NEW THINGS, AND YOU WILL OBSERVE YOUR CHILD TRYING TO DEVELOP HIS OWN SKILLS. WHEN YOU SEE YOUR CHILD TRYING SOMETHING NEW, YOU CAN ENCOURAGE HIM, SHOW HIM HOW, OR HELP HIM INVENT NEW WAYS IF HE HAS TROUBLE WITH IT.

PERSONAL
TIMETABLE

YOUR HANDICAPPED CHILD'S TIMETABLE MAY VARY CONSIDERABLY FROM THE TIMETABLE OF OTHER CHILDREN. IF YOU EXPECT YOUR CHILD TO DO THINGS ON SCHEDULE AND IN CONVENTIONAL WAYS, YOU MAY GET DISCOURAGED YOURSELF AND STOP TRYING. TO MAINTAIN AN OPEN IMAGE YOU MUST EXPECT YOUR CHILD TO PROGRESS AT HIS OWN PACE, TO FOLLOW HIS OWN TIMETABLE.



There are three techniques which a parent can use to help him maintain an open image of his child. Below are statements which represent those three techniques. Match the statement with the technique it represents. HINT: There are two statements for each technique.

TECHNIQUE	STATEMENT
Personal timetable _____	1. Break skills down into parts.
Observing _____	2. Watch your child as he plays.
Ability testing _____	3. Expect your child to progress at his own pace.
	4. Encourage progress when steps are mastered.
	5. Don't expect your child to do things on a conventional schedule.
	6. Encourage your child when you see him try something new on his own.

(The statements for Personal timetable are 3, and 5; for Observing - 2 and 6; and for Ability testing - 1 and 4.)

SCRIPT STEP #3

. Behavior

THE THIRD STEP IN CREATING AN ACTIVATOR SCRIPT RELATES TO DEVELOPING FLEXIBLE PARENTAL BEHAVIOR SKILLS.

BEHAVIOR

• EFFECT ON CHILD

AS AN ACTIVATOR YOU MUST REALIZE THAT HOW YOU BEHAVE TOWARD YOUR CHILD PROFOUNDLY AFFECTS THE CHILD.

MODEL

YOU MUST BE AWARE THAT THE WAY YOU BEHAVE SERVES AS A MODEL FOR YOUR CHILD. KNOW THAT, EVEN IN THE MOST SUBTLE WAYS, A PARENT'S BEHAVIOR TEACHES A CHILD HOW TO BEHAVE.

COUNTER BEHAVIOR

THE ACTIVATOR ALSO KNOWS THAT THE WAY HE BEHAVES TOWARD HIS CHILD CREATES A COUNTER BEHAVIOR IN HIS CHILD. IF HIS BEHAVIOR IS EFFECTIVE, HE GETS A DESIRABLE COUNTER BEHAVIOR. IF HIS BEHAVIOR IS INEFFECTIVE, HE GETS AN UNDESIRABLE COUNTER BEHAVIOR.

• MOTIVATION
• COMMUNICATION
• STRESS
• RISK TAKING

IN SUCCEEDING UNITS WE WILL DEAL WITH THE TYPES OF EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR THE ACTIVATOR SHOULD UTILIZE IN MOTIVATION, COMMUNICATION, STRESS SITUATIONS AND RISK TAKING.

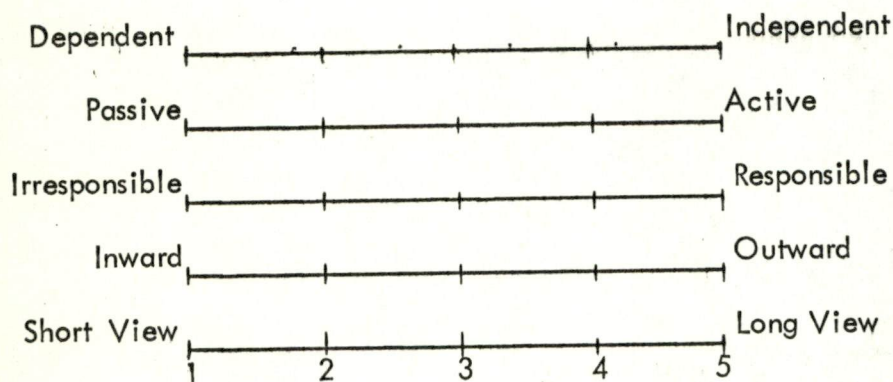
IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION, YOU WILL FIND
PRACTICE ACTIVITIES. THESE ACTIVITIES WILL
PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO APPLY
WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED IN THIS UNIT
TO PROBLEM SITUATIONS WHICH ARE SIMILAR
TO THE PROBLEMS PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED
CHILDREN FACE.

"GOAL SETTING ACTIVITY"

THIS EXERCISE WILL HELP YOU SET GOALS FOR DEVELOPING YOUR CHILD'S LEVEL OF MATURITY.

Below is the Self-Sufficiency Scale which was discussed in this unit. Think of the scale as ranging from one to five. One would indicate that the child is not at all self-sufficient; whereas, five would indicate a child who is very self-sufficient. Circle the point on each line where you think your handicapped child is at the present time.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY SCALE



Now decide whether your child's level of development on each component is appropriate. This will help you determine your short range goals for your child.

Look at the scale you have marked. Do you feel that your child is ready to become more independent? If so, write Move Toward Independence as one of your goals in the spaces provided on the next page.

REMEMBER: These goals are meant to be short range goals. Your long range goal is to help your child become as self-sufficient as possible.

GOAL #1 _____

GOAL #2 _____

GOAL #3 _____

GOAL #4 _____

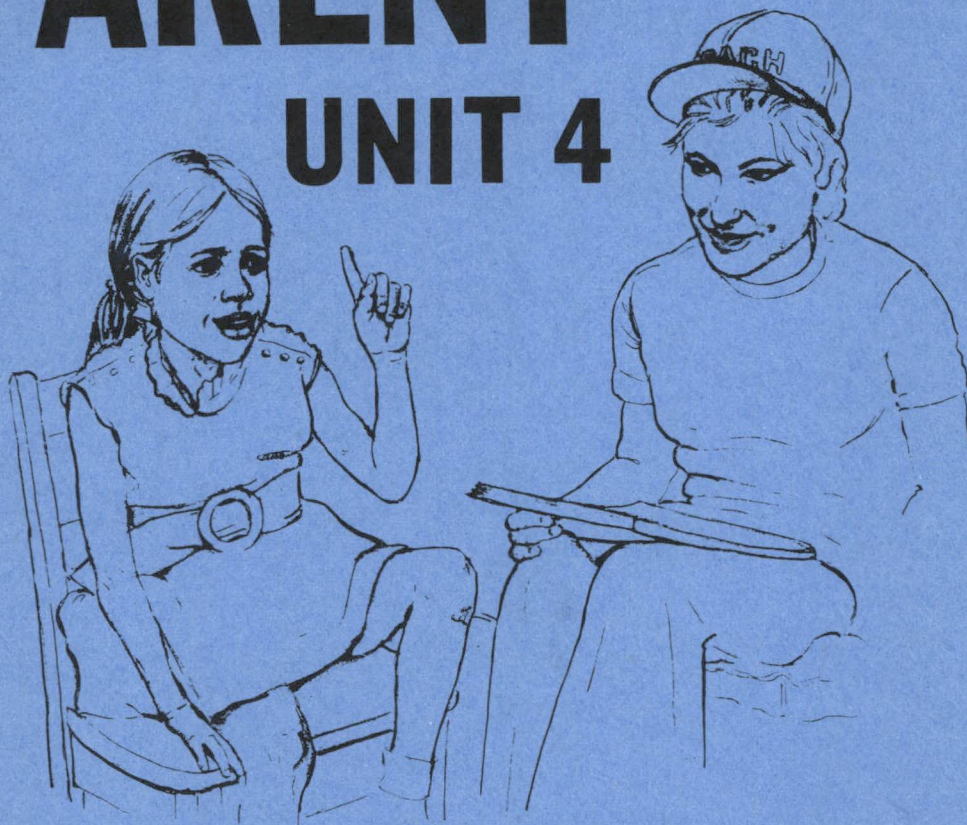
GOAL # 5 _____

Now you have established a list of short range goals for which you can plan activities with your child.

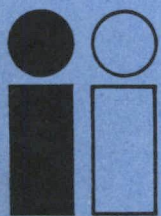
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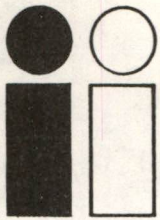
ACTIVATOR PARENT

UNIT 4



PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM HANDICAPPED CHILDREN





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FIRST DRAFT

TEXT

UNIT IV - ACTIVATOR PARENT

PARENTAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS OF

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

PROGRAM

By

Charlotte A. Clifford

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UNIT IV

ACTIVATOR SCRIPT

In the previous chapters we talked about how parents of handicapped children are involved in a scene in which they either have no script or are frozen in their old parental script which doesn't seem to work. In this chapter we will be learning how to develop a new script.

THERE MAY BE A BETTER WAY

It is pretty obvious that there may be a better way to go about parenting a handicapped child than by trial and error or by following old scripts. There is no reason why parents can't go about doing an effective job as a parent in much the same way they would go about learning to do an effective job in any other area.

In the last chapter the drawbacks of the Martyr, Controller, Cavalier and Abdicator parent scripts were pointed out. In one way or another each of these parents scripts held the child back and put roadblocks in his way when it came to his learning and development. The conclusion was that the Activator parent script would help a parent successfully parent a handicapped child.

The Activator Parent Script

The Activator parent script is a script that takes workable and useful ideas and parent behaviors of the past and combines them with new ideas and new behaviors for today's world. It combines some of the behaviors in all of the parent scripts,

This script requires that parents become flexible and learn to adapt their ideas and behaviors to their child as their child develops. (a)

Because the Activator Parent script contains many new concepts and behaviors, you will likely have had little opportunity to learn this script. This means that in order to develop an Activator script you may have to change. You may have to try new ways of behaving toward your child. It means breaking old habits. It means thinking about the effect you have on your child - not just today's effect, but the effect over many years.

Changing Is Difficult

There are always problems when people try to change. Changing is difficult. Change usually involves new ideas, new goals, and new ways of behaving. Change involves not being sure of how everything will turn out. This is what is indicated when people say: "You mean that what I believed all along isn't right? You mean, I've been going along all this time with ideas that don't really work? Are you trying to tell me that your ideas are better than mine?

That you are smarter than I am?" Most of us are really threatened by new ideas. We are simply frightened by anything new since we don't feel sure about it.

But it is not just with new ideas that people have trouble. There are even more problems when we begin to try to behave differently. Whenever we behave differently we experience a sense that we are play-acting. We may feel that "this

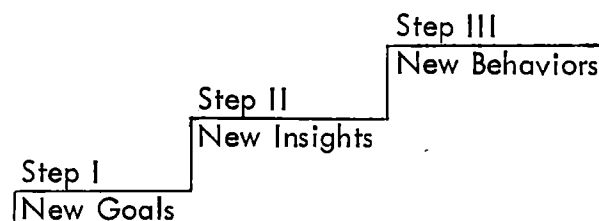
(a) See 6, 18.

isn't me, I'm only pretending," or may think, "I don't like feeling like a phony or a put-on." This typical reaction is really rather strange, since all of our behavior is learned. The fact is, that once we do a behavior over a period of time we get used to it, know how to do it, don't have to think about it, and think "this is really me." Consequently, you will probably feel strange when you first begin to try new behaviors. After a few tries, you will be more comfortable with it. After a while you won't even have to think about it, but it will take some practice before you feel it is "really you."

DEVELOPING AN ACTIVATOR SCRIPT

Now that you are forewarned that change is difficult, new ideas are threatening, and new behaviors feel strange, let's look at what it takes to build the Activator parent script.

There are three steps in building an Activator script. These steps involve:



The goals in Step I are probably the very goals you have for yourself as a parent. Some of the insights in Step II are likely things you already know, although some ideas may be new ideas to you. You are also probably using many of the Activator behaviors, but some may be new. Let's take a look at these steps one at a time.

Step I
New Goals (b)

Think about it! What is the job of parenting a handicapped child all about? Is it to see that every day is a blast? Is it to solve all of his problems and to be sure he does as you say? Is it to serve the child and do everything so he won't have to do it? Is a handicapped child such a problem that parent's should run from the job? Or is the job of parenting a handicapped child really concerned with helping the child grow and develop skills so he may become as self-sufficient as possible? Most parents have this goal, whether their child is handicapped or not.

One parent put it very well:

"I'm really trying to work myself out of this parenting job. If every year my child needs me less and less because she can manage and do more and more herself, than I will know I am doing a good job. My goal for my child is for her to become as self-sufficient as she possibly can. Of course, her handicap will prevent her from every being as self-sufficient as most people, but I want her to do as much as she is able by herself and for herself. It is not for me that I want this. I want it for her so she will feel good about herself and safe in knowing that she can manage many things."

This parent's goal was to help her child become Self Sufficient. This is the major goal the Activator parent has for his handicapped child.

You may be saying at this point, "Wait a minute! My child is blind; he will always need help." Or you may think, "My child can't walk and you want him to be self-sufficient." Or perhaps your child is mentally retarded or deaf or cannot

(b)
See 7.

speaking. You may be saying to yourself: "You mean to tell me you are suggesting that my major goal is to make my child self-sufficient?"

Self-sufficient Is a Strange Word

Self-sufficient is a strange word. It means different things to different people. Let's try to come to some agreement concerning what self-sufficiency means here. First, remember being self-sufficient does NOT mean that a person needs no help from others. It does NOT mean being able to operate completely by oneself.

What Does Self-Sufficient Mean? One way to look at self-sufficiency is in terms of growth from being childlike and immature to becoming adultlike and mature. ^(c) In other words, as a child grows and develops, he hopefully becomes more and more able to manage more and more things for himself. That is, he moves away from immature and childlike characteristics in the direction of having more mature and adultlike characteristics.

MATURITY IS A MAJOR GOAL

Maturity is also a difficult word to understand. It means different things to different people. Perhaps you have heard someone called immature who was thirty-five years old. Maturity is not completely related to age. Hopefully as people get older they develop maturity, but that is not necessarily the case.

^(c) See 1.

Let's look at the various factors which appear to be related to maturity. These factors will help us understand our goal for developing maturity in our child and helping our child become as self-sufficient as possible.

MATURITY MEANS GOING FROM.....

1. DEPENDENT toward INDEPENDENT
2. PASSIVE toward ACTIVE
3. IRRESPONSIBLE toward RESPONSIBLE
4. INWARD toward OUTWARD
5. SHORT VIEW toward LONG VIEW

1. Dependent Toward Independent

One component of maturity is developing some degree of independence. (d)

An infant or small child is almost totally dependent on others. As he grows up he usually becomes less and less dependent. For a child to become self-sufficient, he must move away from dependence toward some degree of independence.

This means that gradually over the years the child should learn to manage and to do a great many things for himself. To become independent requires skills. It takes physical skills, intellectual skills, and social skills. It takes time and know-how to become independent and self-sufficient.

(d) See 21.

To learn these skills a child must be involved in a large number of learning experiences. Perhaps your child won't be able to develop an extremely wide range of skills in each skill area (physical, intellectual, social); yet even if a child, for example, could only learn to feed himself he would be less dependent.

ACTIVATOR PARENT GOAL #1

IT IS A GOAL OF THE ACTIVATOR TO HELP HIS CHILD
MOVE FROM DEPENDENT TOWARD INDEPENDENT TO
THE DEGREE POSSIBLE.

2. Passive Toward Active

Another component of maturity is being active rather than passive. This means being a participant in life rather than an observer on the sidelines. It means taking some initiative, starting some things, being involved. Most children start out after the first few months of infancy being active. They are curious. They want to learn. Yet handicapped children who are blind or deaf, for example, can become passive very quickly if they have no stimulation to arouse their interest. Other children can be quickly turned off and become observers if they are restricted, frightened, threatened, or fail too often. They can be turned off by being left alone with few experiences and few new things to interest them.

Being a participant means being willing to try new things. This means being motivated and stimulated. It requires that a child have a backlog ^(e) of successes.

ACTIVATOR PARENT GOAL # 2

IT IS THE GOAL OF THE ACTIVATOR THAT HIS CHILD
BECOME A PARTICIPANT IN LIFE RATHER THAN AN
OBSERVER ON THE SIDELINES, THAT HE BE ACTIVE
RATHER THAN PASSIVE.

3. Irresponsible Toward Responsible

The movement from irresponsible toward being responsible is another part of maturity. Developing responsibility means being willing to take care of things yourself. It means be willing to make decisions. The immature person tends to be irresponsible, always assuming it's the other guy's responsibility. Small children are like that. The major way they develop responsibility is by being given responsibility in small doses and learning how to handle it. Responsibility is something that is learned slowly over a number of years. To be responsible usually requires that a child feel that he is able to do what is required. This means a child must be given many chances to prove to himself that he can handle things and have a backlog of success. He must also have many chances to make decisions. When nothing is ever expected of a child and when he never has opportunities to manage

(e)
See 5.

or decide for himself, he cannot develop the feeling of self-adequacy that is necessary for responsibility.

ACTIVATOR PARENT GOAL #3

IT IS THE GOAL OF THE ACTIVATOR THAT HIS CHILD
BECOME RESPONSIBLE.

4. Inward Toward Outward

In infancy and early childhood the world to the child is small, and everything is judged in terms of the child himself. Small children are inward and self-concerned. They are mostly concerned with what they want. An immature person is inward with this same self-concern no matter what his age. The mature person tends to be outwardly oriented - concerned with the outer world and other people and problem solving.

Unfulfilled needs for approval, love, acceptance and attention can create this self-concern in children long after their early childhood. When these needs go unmet, a child will continue to be inwardly concerned. Because this self-concern takes so much time, there is little time left to be concerned with others, the outer world, and with doing things and solving problems. To help a child become active, a parent must create an atmosphere in which his child's needs can be met. Then the child will not have to spend all his time trying to fulfill his needs and can devote himself outwardly to achievement, involvement, and participation.

ACTIVATOR PARENT GOAL #4

IT IS THE GOAL OF THE ACTIVATOR THAT HIS CHILD
BECOME OUTWARD RATHER THAN INWARD.

5. Long Rather Than A Short View

Finally, maturity relates to time. The immature person has an extremely short view. He wants immediate gratification. He wants what he wants right now. He does not want to wait, and probably does not know how to wait. Small children are like this and very gradually they begin to develop the self control to wait for things. They also begin to realize there is a tomorrow that is affected by what happens today. When children are involved in making plans and decisions they begin to feel that they have some control over what happens to them. They learn about the future and develop skills to deal with it. This teaches them how to have a long view and how to plan ahead.

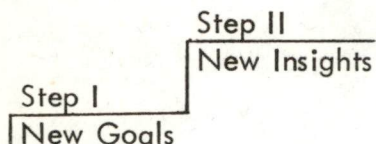
ACTIVATOR GOAL #5

IT IS THE GOAL OF THE ACTIVATOR THAT HIS CHILD
DEVELOP THE SKILLS TO LOOK AT THINGS IN A
LONG RANGE VIEW RATHER THAN TO JUST TAKE A
SHORT VIEW.

Activators have the following long-range goals in mind for the child:

1. Moving from dependent to independent
2. Moving from passive to active
3. Moving from irresponsible to responsible
4. Moving from inward to outward
5. Moving from short to long view

The Activator parent works on these goals day-by-day, helping his handicapped child to grow and develop his skills, his self-esteem and self-reliance.



The second step in developing an Activator script involves the development of insights. These insights are needed to successfully manage the problems you will encounter as you parent your handicapped child.

These insights primarily apply to three areas that many parents describe as creating major problems for both parents and for their child. These problem areas are the child's rights, needs and potential. Let's look at them one at a time.

PROBLEM AREAS

1. A handicapped child's rights
2. A handicapped child's needs
3. A handicapped child's potential

INSIGHTS INTO RIGHTS

Your ideas about your handicapped child's rights will have a big effect on how you feel about your child. This will also affect how you act toward him, the model you set for others to act toward him, and the kinds of things you expect from and for him.

It is very interesting to talk with parents of handicapped children about what rights they believe their handicapped child has. You might be surprised that quite a few parents rarely think of childrens' rights. You might be even more surprised at how many parents believe that their handicapped child has few rights.

Of course, there are some people who are not very concerned with the rights of anyone, their children's included. Such people are often the first ones to demand their own rights, yet they tend to ignore other people's rights. And our society has been guilty of injustice concerning the rights of handicapped people. Through the work of many people (parents, handicapped persons, legislators, and professionals) this is beginning to change. But as always, change is painfully slow. Yet we are beginning to become more aware of the rights of handicapped people in our country. This awareness is half the battle. Parents beginning at home with their handicapped child may be the other half.

Your handicapped child has the same rights as anyone else. He has the right to

be his own person. He has a right to develop his potential no matter how large or how small. He has a right to be involved, included and to participate and contribute in our society. And yet, he will have problems in obtaining equal treatment from others in these three areas:

1. Some people will fail to treat him as a person.
2. He may have difficulties in developing his potential.
3. He may lack opportunities to participate and contribute.

1. Rights As A Person

As an Activator parent you will want to remember this:

YOUR CHILD IS A PERSON; A PERSON WITH A HANDICAP, NOT A HANDICAPPED PERSON.

As a person distinct and individual he has the right to be respected for what he is. Many parents fail to accept the personhood of their handicapped child. Oftentimes this is difficult because the handicap a person has affects the judgments made of him by others. As Baldwin and Baldwin (no date) have noted:

This tendency for some aspects of the person, or for those aspects that are most salient, to influence the total picture of the personality seems certainly to affect the social judgments made of handicapped people. (p. 180)

Parents fail to value their child for himself. These parents are the ones who keep grieving for their lost dream of the perfect child and who somehow never

realize the great value of the child they have. These parents think of their child as "it" rather than he or she. They never see the person, all they see is the handicap.

2. Right To Develop

Handicapped children have a right to develop their potential. In order to develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally, they have a right to experiences and learning opportunities.

A handicapped child cannot develop his potential without a wide range of experiences that will enable him to learn about things, about people, about feelings, and how to do things. Learning is not just reading, writing and arithmetic. Learning is becoming aware of life. It is learning how to walk, or talk, or listen. It is learning how to think, or how to get along with others and what a rose feels like. It is learning what up means when you can't see. It is learning to say a word when you cannot hear. It's crossing the street, and looking for cars. It is learning how to share and give, and how to plan and a million other things.

We learn all our lives. The number of experience we have and the amount of exposure to the world determine what we learn and how much. If you take a child and keep him in a house most of the time and he has few experiences, all he will know about is that house and those people in it. If this

same child goes many places, is in many situations, no matter if he is blind, deaf, mentally retarded, or if he cannot walk or speak, he will learn more than by house exposure alone.

3. Right To Be Involved And To Contribute

Many parents (and other people for that matter) never think of a handicapped child as being able to be involved and being able to contribute. They do not seem to expect their handicapped child to do things that are constructive and which contribute to the overall family. Such parents protect their children from all problems. They fail to include their handicapped child in planning and decision-making processes. They just never seem to consider that their handicapped child should contribute to the family in whatever ways he is able. And they never think of this as denying their handicapped child his right to contribute and to be involved. They never think of this as a right their handicapped child has. Yet, without such opportunities to be involved and to contribute, handicapped children cannot develop the expectations that they might become involved and that they can contribute.

When children, or adults for that matter, are denied the opportunity to do their part or their share, they often place burdens on others who in some way or another manage to let them know of the burden they place. Then these handicapped people must deal with the guilt they feel for being a burden.

They are also denied the pleasure of being involved with others or the inner joy of being able to do something for someone else.

Although it is a basic right to be involved and to be able to contribute, children must learn how to be involved and how to contribute within their limitations. This is learned in the home when children are involved in decisions and allowed to do their share according to their abilities.

IN TERMS OF THEIR HANDICAPPED CHILD'S RIGHTS.....ACTIVATOR PARENTS:

1. Respect the personhood of the handicapped child
2. Provide a wide range of experiences so their child can develop his potential
3. Involve and include their handicapped child and expect and respect his right to contribute in the ways he can

INSIGHTS INTO NEEDS

Another area in which insights may greatly help in parenting a handicapped child involves an understanding of the basic needs of the child. ^(f) Such understanding will not only help parents develop an Activator script, but may help develop self understanding.

It is easy to understand basic needs if you will think of everyone as having an inner person. This inner person is alike for everyone. It doesn't matter if the person

^(f) See 15, 20.

is handicapped or not, a man or a woman, a child or old; inside we are all pretty much alike and we all have very similar basic needs.^(g)

A handicapped child's basic needs are the same as everyone else's basic needs.

It does not matter that a child is physically or mentally disabled, inside he is no different from any other child. His basic needs are like other children's; like other people's.

Four Basic Needs

In the literature you will find a considerable amount of research and writing about the basic needs of the person.^(h) Although there are variations in ideas, the general opinion is that there are four areas of needs which are important in understanding ourselves and others.

These are our needs to:

1. Be safe from physical harm (Safety Needs)
2. Be accepted and included by others (Social Needs)
3. Succeed, to have self-esteem (Esteem Needs)
4. Express ourselves (Expression Needs)

1. Safety Needs

Our most basic and primary safety needs are related to things that keep us alive, well, and protected from physical harm. These include biological needs

^(g) See 8.

^(h) See 4, 15.

which are necessary for survival: food, air, water, sleep.

There are also safety needs related to self-protection and the need to feel safe from bodily harm. These needs are satisfied when we feel physically safe. We perceive a direct threat to our physical safety when we are threatened by a punishment, when we feel our lives are in danger, or when someone fires us from a job.

Handicapped Children's Safety Needs - Children with handicaps perhaps experience more threats to their physical safety than other children. Often they are in ill health and ill health alone threatens safety. Many handicapped children experience threats because they cannot see, cannot hear, or cannot call out. Others are threatened because they cannot walk or move or run from danger.

In addition to actual threats that are faced by a handicapped child (for example, a vicious dog or fire) the handicapped child may have more imaginary threats. Due to lack of knowledge and experience, handicapped children may sense greater fears about the night, new places, new people and things that are new to them.

ACTIVATOR PARENTS ARE AWARE OF SAFETY NEEDS
AND THE THINGS THAT CAN MAKE THEIR HANDI-
CAPPED CHILD FEEL UNSAFE. THEY SEEK TO PROVIDE
SECURITY SUPPORT WHERE NEEDED.

2. Social Needs

Our social needs include needs for love, affection, belonging, acceptance, and being included. It is our set of needs related to feeling we are liked by others and that others accept us.

Handicapped Children's Social Needs - It is in the area of fulfilling social needs that handicapped children probably suffer the most. The first problem relates to the fact that their interaction is restricted. The second problem stems from the fact that they tend to be rejected by others. People reject handicapped children because they have unfounded ideas about handicapped people, or simply react to anyone who is different. A family member may reject the handicapped child by failing to show affection, approval or concern. When the handicapped child is excluded either by outsiders or family members his social needs are blocked. (i)

THE ACTIVATOR PARENT REALIZES THE DIFFICULTIES A HANDICAPPED CHILD FACES IN FULFILLING HIS SOCIAL NEEDS AND PROVIDES THE CHILD WITH ACCEPTANCE, LOVE, AND APPROVAL. ACTIVATORS ALSO SEEK TO DEVELOP THE CHILD'S SOCIAL SKILLS SO THAT HE WILL BE MORE READILY ACCEPTED BY OTHERS.

3. Needs For Self-Esteem (i)

Self-esteem relates to our needs for self-respect and our needs for a favorable self-image. All of us need to feel good about ourselves....to feel adequate

(i) See 3, 10, 13, 14, 19.

(i) See 12, 15, 17, 22.

and confident to face the world. (k) Our esteem needs tend to be satisfied when we achieve something important, feel useful or receive recognition from others. When our needs for self-esteem are threatened, we develop feelings of inferiority, weakness, and helplessness. These feelings, in turn, give rise to basic discouragement or perhaps neurotic behaviors.

Handicapped Children's Self-Esteem - Handicapped children have difficulties in fulfilling their esteem needs because others are always doing things for them. They are unable to feel useful or adequate. This is especially true when the child has over protective parents and the total atmosphere for the child is one of low expectation.

Sometimes friends and even strangers reinforce the child's feelings of inadequacy. They may tend to do more than is necessary in helping the child under such conditions. It takes an extremely strong child to fight for his self-esteem.

The handicapped child also faces difficulties in finding opportunities to achieve something. In some cases the child has such a backlog of failure that he lacks self-confidence. In other cases the child is not expected to achieve.

ACTIVATOR PARENTS REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT IT IS
FOR A CHILD TO HAVE A GOOD IMAGE OF HIMSELF
AND FOR OTHERS TO HAVE A GOOD IMAGE OF HIM.

(k) See 15.

4. Needs For Expression

Self-expression is the need for a person to fulfill his potential: ^(l) Even if all the lower level needs are satisfied, a new discontent and restlessness may soon develop if a person is not doing what he is capable of and what he enjoys doing. The achievement of self-expression has also been called self-actualization. It includes the opportunity to contribute, to be creative, to make decisions and to be involved.

It is the psychological need for growth, development and utilization of potential. ^(m) Here the person is motivated to make "actual" those potentialities that he sees in himself.

Handicapped Children's Self-Expression - Self-expression needs are no different for handicapped children than for other children. Handicapped children need to be creative, to contribute, to make decisions and to do their own things. They need to fulfill their potential and work at making the potential an actual reality.

Yet, handicapped children often face problems with just moving in the direction of self-expression. Few people solicit their opinions and they often miss opportunities for being creative, making contributions or decisions.

Parents can help the handicapped child fulfill his needs for self-expression. They can listen to the child's ideas and release their

^(l) See 11, 15.

^(m) See 15.

child to try new things on his own. They can encourage, reward for trying, and allow some risk taking on the child's part. They can provide opportunities for the child to learn and develop on his own.

But self-expression is up to the child. He will need to find his own self-expression, his own joy, if his parents and others will permit him to do so.

ACTIVATOR PARENTS RECOGNIZE THE NEEDS FOR SELF-EXPRESSION, AND THE DESIRE TO DO ONE'S OWN THING, TO FULFILL POTENTIAL. THEY REALIZE THAT THEY MUST RELEASE THEIR CHILD AND ENCOURAGE MANY FORMS OF SELF-EXPRESSION.

A Few More Words About Needs

For those handicapped children who will never be able to personally assure their own physical safety because of their handicap, parents must plan and have alternatives for providing for that safety. They must include the child in developing these plans, once the child is old enough to have ideas about where he might want to live, what he might want to do, etc.

For those handicapped children who face problems in the area of approval and acceptance by others, parents must help them develop a philosophy and understanding concerning why people reject others, and they must help the children learn social skills; that is, teach them how to interact successfully with others and how to make others feel more comfortable.

The parents' approval, acceptance and love will help compensate for what others may do, but parents should not fool themselves that they can provide all the approval, acceptance and love a child will need as he grows up.

For those handicapped children who face problems of self-esteem because of things they cannot do, parents can help them develop realistic expectations for themselves, and develop skill in areas in which they can have successes. They can help their children learn what they can do for themselves so they will know what others may need to help them with.

For those handicapped children who reach out for self-expression, who become self-motivated and self-directed, even if the self-expression and motivation exists in a small area, parents can COUNT THIS AS A REWARD FOR THEIR EFFORTS.

INSIGHTS INTO POTENTIAL

We have talked about insights into a child's rights and needs. Let us now turn to a handicapped child's potential. ⁽ⁿ⁾ This is an area where there are many uncertainties and few guidelines for parents to follow. This is where many parents run into some of their biggest problems. They say, "What can I expect? What

⁽ⁿ⁾

See 21.

can my child become? What will happen to her?"

"Open Image"

All of us would like to know how far we can go, in order that we may set goals. With a handicapped child this is very difficult. Sometimes even experts cannot tell you with any certainty the potential of your child. This is because experts can only provide you with information based on other children with a similar condition.

One method of coping with the problem of your handicapped child's potential is to maintain an "open image." Rather than letting your need to know for sure make you put a ceiling on your child's potential, and make you have a closed image of his potential, you can try to remain open in your judgments concerning your child's ability.

In developing an open image you should try to avoid putting a ceiling on your child's potential based on hearsay and stereotypes. Many of these ceilings and stereotypes are based on how our society handled handicapped people in the past, and on what a handicapped person is allowed to do rather than what a handicapped person can do. Society is gradually changing its ideas about handicapped people. It may be twenty years before your child reaches his maturity and much can change. Therefore, in that time you should avoid planning the future for your child based only on how things are today. Instead you should look at the trends and see that the way he participates in society may be very different from the

ways that people with his handicap participate today. He will need to be prepared to live in that world. Keeping an open image will help you prepare him.

Different Kinds Of Skills ^(o)

One thing you can do to help maintain an open image is to look at your child's potential in terms of the different kinds of skills people can and do develop.

These are:

....physical skills

....intellectual skills

....social skills

....emotional skills

Few children are so severely handicapped that they are without some potential in each of these areas, and in some area each child likely has great potential.

In each area your child has a level of development that can be reached with assistance. You should try to keep an open image in each skill area. You should also avoid letting the handicap have a "spreading effect." That is, you should guard against generalizing that because your child has a handicap which greatly affects one skill area, he is handicapped in other skills as well.

Won't Follow Cultural Timetable

Your handicapped child's timetable for developing in each of the skill areas -

^(o) See 18.

physical, social, intellectual and emotional - may vary considerably from the timetable of a non-handicapped child. And if you expect your child to do things "on schedule" and in conventional ways, you may become discouraged yourself and give up. You should guard against developing a closed image simply because your child is not adhering to a typical developmental timetable. To maintain an open image, you should really expect your child to learn and develop at his own pace....to follow his own timetable. (p)

Ability Testing

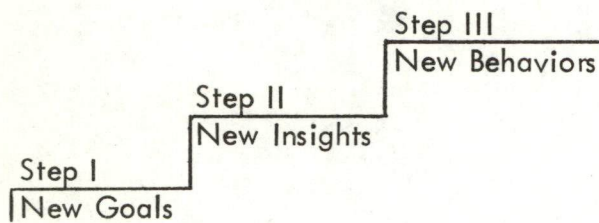
Rather than deciding ahead of time what your child can and cannot do, you can become an ability tester. In ability testing you break down the skills you wish your child to learn into their parts and encourage your child to learn the steps, one by one. You test his ability at each step by watching how he performs and only encourage him to move on when he masters a step. For example, consider teaching a child to tie a shoe. Mastering a step may be a long and tedious process, but you can look for signs that he is learning the skill step. If there is no change over a period of time, it may be that in this one skill step, your child has a limit at this time, or your child is not yet ready for this step. Stop and reward your child for trying and then have him try something new. Go back again to the old skill step at a later date. Always avoid trying to develop a more complex skill if your child has not yet mastered the less complex skill.

(p)
See 9.

Observe

Children naturally try out new things and you will observe your child trying something new. When you see this, you can encourage him, show him how, or invent new ways if he is having trouble.

ACTIVATOR PARENTS KEEP AN OPEN IMAGE
CONCERNING THEIR CHILD'S POTENTIAL.



In this chapter we have looked at Step I in developing an Activator script and suggested some new goals for the Activator parent. In Step II we tried to provide insights into the rights, needs and potential of a handicapped child. The third step, and perhaps the most important one, relates to learning new parental behaviors and evaluating the behaviors you already use with your child to see if they work or not.

New Behaviors

The remaining chapters of this text are concerned with those behaviors which an Activator parent may wish to use.

Just remember parents have a profound effect on their children and their children have a profound effect on them. How you behave toward your child will affect

him. You will serve as his model of how to be. Even in the most subtle ways, a parent's behavior teaches a child how to behave.

Often our parental behaviors are learned helter skelter. As parents we may know how we hope our child will develop, but we may not have the parental skills which will be most helpful to our child.

SUMMARY

1. In developing an Activator script, parents should develop some goals for their handicapped child. The goal of self-sufficiency and maturity were suggested as the most fundamental goals for a handicapped child.
2. In developing an Activator script it was suggested that parents might find insights into the rights, needs and potential of handicapped children very helpful in anticipating problems and seeking solutions and understanding.
 - a. In the area of rights it was pointed out that often handicapped children encounter problems in being accepted as a person, in fulfilling their potential, and in having opportunities to be involved and to participate and contribute.
 - b. In terms of insights into basic needs of handicapped children, four

basic needs were discussed: needs related to physical safety; needs for acceptance by others; needs for self-esteem; and needs related to self-expression.

- c. Problems related to a handicapped child's potential were explored and it was suggested that an "open image" is a useful tool for parents in managing the unknown potential of a handicapped child. This means not setting arbitrary ceilings on potential, recognizing the child's own timetable, ability testing and observing.

- 3. Finally, in developing an Activator script the importance of the actual behaviors a parent uses with his child as discussed. It was suggested that few of us have had an opportunity to learn the behaviors which will allow us to do our job as parents in the way we really want to. We need to develop some new skills. The remaining chapters cover developing new parental skills.

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