

## EDITORIAL

### 1979: A Year for Children

This year - this International Year of the Child - should remind us of a truly worthwhile resource - children. It should remind us of the reality that is a child's. The International year of the Child has examined numerous aspects of children. My aim here is simply to focus on one useful and wholesome aspect of children - their spontaneity. This is an aspect, which if regained in adulthood, may improve adults in all walks of life.

Although adults walk on the same planet as children, we see it so differently from children. Their world - their mental constructs of reality - is not ours. The child's world has been respected for centuries by Oriental thinkers because of its fresh and imaginative nature. North Americans tend to see it at best as a cute amusement, a novelty, a state of immaturity. In other words, the child's world is seen as a negative, while the adult's is seen as a positive. Both are negative, and both are positive, if not nurtured. The inspired adult recognizes the creativity of the child, while acknowledging the stability of the adult. Spontaneity without control is half positive. By considering the strength of the child we can, as adults, become better people: that is, people who marvel over the world, yet have a practical sense of how it works. By studying and appreciating children, we may become childlike again. We may regain the joys of being a child without the sorrows, the benefits without the shortcomings.

Abused children certainly deserve attention and have received their due amount in recent years. Unused children have not been focused on and should be. At best, most children are treated like plants in a garden: water them on occasion and pray for growth. Children are useful and should be used to benefit everyone. The young and the old have trouble convincing the blind majority, though, of their utility. The International Year of the Child will aid children and adults if it helps demonstrate to the world the many ways in which children may be helpful - not only as amusements to adults but also as human beings who possess qualities that can benefit anyone willing to learn and improve. Most children want to be useful, just as most of us do. We must learn ways to use them in the most mutually beneficial ways we can. Perhaps, with the spontaneity of children would be a humane and efficient place to begin. May we regain this part of our childhood and cultivate it in the children we encounter as well as in ourselves. It is a delicate spark that may be fanned into a bonfire or doused never to become even a flame. So let us light up our children, and light up our lives.

As a tribute to The International Year of the Child, this issue of *THE JOURNAL OF EDUCATION THOUGHT* includes articles relating to the universal child. We hope our readers find these articles helpful in improving their understanding and education of children.

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