

family



JERRY CAMMARATA FATHER'S DIARY

Parents can get too much 'help'

Why not start by denying that parents need help today? It is my impression that parents today are being helped to death. Now this is not the fault of agencies, specialists or governments directly, rather, the problem arises out of basic insecurities parents have today about parenting and instead of making a mistake as a parent or working through a home situation, the parent retreats into the arms of an "all knowing" source and follows the advice rendered. Since many parents today are not training themselves to cope with and self-correct difficult family problems, we are developing into a society of dependent parents. We are hooked on all kinds of good advice and our only recourse is to go back and back again to our suppliers of parenting direction and follow the word.

License Parents

I received a letter from Victor Borge not too long ago that contained his views on parenting. He indicated his belief that parents must be responsible procreators and do all they can to give of themselves so the child born into this world could maximize his or her fullest potential.

Help is on the way

Knowing that parents are being helped to death today, there are still parents who really cannot survive without help. If social services were not available, they would crumble and cause incalculable damage to themselves and their children. To

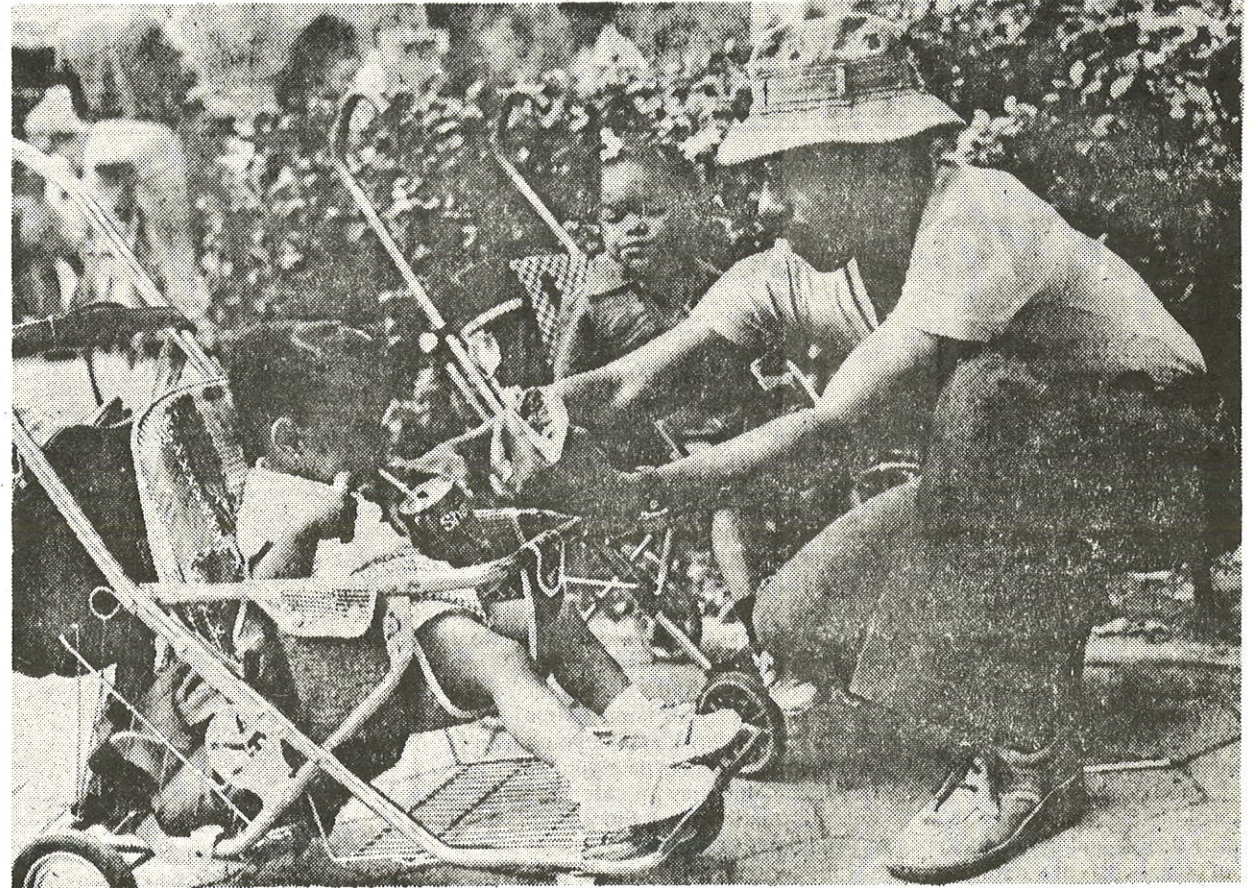
Borge was also quick to note that of the few things that can be done these days that do not require a license or certificate, having a child ranks high on the list. The statement was a product of Borge's subtle humor. However, he does have a point. Although we certainly would not want to advocate licensure for parents to have children, the thought of being more educated, prepared and wiser is of importance.

It is my philosophy that the uniqueness of parenting is in the basic differences of parenting. There are, therefore, as many different parenting techniques as there are parents. Through sharing ideas in academic courses, or living room brainstorming sessions, parents learn to incorporate and reject certain parenting skills so that the management of the family and its members can be effective.

those desperate parents we must extend our hands and give support. We should be opening our homes to them and let them sample a home environment that says, "parenting can work." Further, we have an obligation to assist our fellow parents in their pursuit of problem resolution. If you are saying to yourself, "All my friends are stable and can cope," you may be very fortunate, indeed. I tell you, you will find yourself in the midst of a crisis situation sooner or later and you should be prepared for it.

To those who will offer help and to those who will need help, "THE HELP BOOK" by J.L. Barkas can be the reference that may save a child from drug addiction, a mother from loneliness, teach you how to be a volunteer in your spare time and identify schools in Peoria for your friend who has a six-year-old profoundly mentally retarded child. With over 5,000 annotated entries, "THE HELP BOOK" (Scribners, 1979) can put organizations, agencies and programs throughout the country right at your finger-tips in just minutes. The book is conveniently divided into topic areas such as aging, courts, crime, victims and witnesses, food and nutrition, legal services and suicide prevention, among some 46 other categories.

According to the author, "The listings are the result of thousands of questionnaires and telephone and in-person interviews and have been subjected to scrupulous checks. Yet the effectiveness of any of these listings is subject to such unpredictable factors as staff changes and



The uniqueness of parenting.

funding cutbacks that can alter or limit services."

In spite of personnel changes at various agencies, however, you can at least target a general source of reference and then seek some

specialized services from a referral they may give.

If we want our kids to be strong and inheritors of a world they can cope with, we as parents must be in tip top shape in all aspects of living.

Be a parent helper, have a concern for your neighbor and his or her family, give of yourself and you will grow wealthier as a resourceful, coping and productive controller of life.