

RELEASING THE POTENTIALITIES  
OF THE CHILD

A New Conceptual Basis for  
Comprehensive Educational Planning

by

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## PREFACE

During the last decade we have witnessed an emerging social consciousness of the relationship between experiences in early childhood and the quality of adult life. Benjamin Bloom's interpretive summary of longitudinal research concerning the growth and development of young children indicated, for instance, that 50 percent of the development of intelligence as it is measured at age 17 has usually taken place by the age of four (Bloom, 1964a). In a very general way, his study confirmed the old adage "as the twig is bent, so grows the tree." Ineffective schools and deleterious social conditions in many parts of the country prevent twigs from growing into trees that are as fruitful as they might be. Fortunately, the pragmatic spirit of Americans tends eventually to compel a translation of high levels of awareness of a social need into some kind of action pertinent to that need. It is therefore not surprising that we should find ourselves in the midst of a growing national trend in the direction of providing a wide variety of educational programs and services for the very young child.

Our pragmatic spirit, though praiseworthy on one level, sometimes has an impulsive element -- an impatience that disclaims the value of careful thinking, long-range planning, and pains-taking evaluation. The trend towards extending educational services downward to include the preschooler has reflected some of that impatience. Political expediency on the one hand and very little planning or professional preparedness on the other has led to a careless and wasteful use of resources. Many of the programs were and still are hastily planned, inadequately staffed, poorly administered, and not properly evaluated.

Part of the reason for the lack of preparation has been the fragmentary nature of research concerning early childhood growth and development. To be sure, a great deal is known about growth and development, but no one has yet integrated theory, research, and practice around a clearly articulated philosophy that would not only shed some light on how we got where we are, but would also sustain a vision of where we want to go. It is the purpose of this book to acquaint educators of young children with a new perspective on early education -- a perspective derived from a consciously adopted set of assumptions about the nature of man which can serve as a unifier of research and theory in the service of practice. We believe that a vision of the destiny of man is not just a concern for theologians, philosophers, and aestheticians, but a practical necessity for doing good work as professionals and a prerequisite to any kind of significant break-through in solving the many problems facing education as a social institution. This book represents our initial efforts of "thinking through" a vision about the nature of man to its practical consequences in the form of an early education system.

The product of such efforts begs for a name. We chose one that would reflect the blending of the usable and fruitful past with a new sense of the future. The early education model we are developing is called "Anisa," a word that means "tree of life", an ancient symbol which represents never-ending growth and fruition in the context of protection and shelter.

Work on the Anisa Model began over nine years ago. It represents a multi-disciplinary effort to arrive at an acceptable philosophical base for education from which has been derived a theory of development, a theory of curriculum, and a theory of pedagogy. No comprehensive

educational system can maintain its integrity and still pioneer the future without the unifying force of a body of theory congruent with an overall philosophy. We trust that the Anisa Model represents a significant step in that direction.

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a time-consuming but nonetheless essential prerequisite to systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation. This information has been extensively cross-indexed and placed in computer storage for quick access and easy retrieval. In a very real sense the staff members of the Anisa project can be regarded as co-authors of this effort, for we have drawn directly upon their work. While all have contributed to every aspect of the Model, each one has concentrated on one or more aspects of its development, as indicated: Dr. Linda Blane (psycho-motor, perceptual, cognitive and affective areas); Dr. Pattabi Raman (nutrition, cognition, computer operations and administration); Miss Magdalene Carney (affective development, educational technology and teacher preparation); Torcy Wiley (classroom adaptation and teacher preparation); Ray Shepard (philosophical and theoretical basis of the Model); Dr. Lola Washburn (psycho-motor, perceptual, and affective development); Michael Kalinowski (critical periods and development); Steven Waite and Gerard Baruch (cognitive and affective growth); Patrick and Nancy Conway (nutrition, volitional competence, affective growth and philosophical aspects of the Model); Susan Theroux (nutrition, moral and affective development); Wallace Carter (moral and affective development); Walter Leopold (creativity); Loismay Abeles, Mildred Lepard, and Geff Marks (language acquisition); Steven Boal (language, affective, moral and spiritual growth); Joel Levine (development of self-image and evaluation methods); Robert Blodget (teacher preparation and classroom management). Such a research staff requires the support

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