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David Elkind, Helen HARTNESS, and Alta Hunter
"Panel Discussion on Early Childhood Education"
March 13, 1976
Portland State University

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HOST: Step one, for you to get to have the enjoyment that I have in meeting these people is for you to meet the panel, and then they can tell the truth. First of all, an ill wind that blew the flu to Carolyn Sheldon brought good luck to us in the person of her colleague, Dennis Millholm, who is with the Sunny Hill Elementary School in North Bend. They're both part of a pilot program from the State Department of Education which emphasizes meeting the needs of the total child, and to this end, they are working to establish positive relationships between and among children, parents, teachers, and the community. Mr. Millholm.

Dr. Williams comes to us from the University of Oregon Medical School, the Crippled Children Division. He is an associate professor of pediatrics and his specialty is in teaching medical students to understand child development, or to pay attention to child development, excuse me [speaker and audience laugh]. Mrs. Alta Hunter was recently a child development specialist with the 4 C's Council in the metropolitan area. She is now the director of a small daycare center in Newberg. She is one of the friendliest people I have met recently, and the mother of eight. [applause, laughter] Ha, get it? I don't know whether that's for friendly or children.

Dr. William Ludlam comes to us from Pacific University, Forest Grove where he is a professor in the school of optometry. He's also a practicing specialist in vision problems with children. He lectures in graduate classes in the relationship between vision and learning. Moderating our panel today is Dr. Helen Hartness, who is a professor of education at Lewis and Clark University,

and she is interested particularly in child education and early childhood education... in child psychology and early childhood education. Dr. Hartness.

HELEN HARTNESS: Thank you. [quietly] Are these on? [tapping on microphone] Since the panel has been introduced, we'll move directly to presenting some of our interpretations, reactions, and responding to Dr. Elkind's presentation. And the panel members will do this from their orientation as they have been working with children, philosophies that they seem to adhere to, and we hope that the emphasis of course is on the developmental approach, as we've been hearing this morning. I would like to remind you to prepare your questions and please give them to one of the monitors at the mic. And we will begin with Dr. Ludlam, presenting his interpretation and reaction to Dr. Elkind's presentation. Dr. Ludlam.

WILLIAM LUDLAM: Thank you very much. As an optometrist and as a biometrician, there is a whole other aspect to this business of learning, and that is the effect on the physiology. And I have conducted a longitudinal research project for the past ten years, funded by the National Institutes of Health, on the development of visual problems in children and with relationship to the age at which they started reading, and what Dr. Elkind so aptly put, the PPF, the Pushy Parent Factor. And we have found a number of physiological changes and anatomical and growth changes which go on as well with this movement, at least in some quarters, for beginning a formalized program in reading.

Now I don't think Dr. Elkind, and I certainly, have no objection to a youngster whose proclivities are in a direction of teaching himself to read. If this is the level he's at and this is what he wants to do, that's one thing. But for the parent who says, "Johnny is going to be a lawyer because his dad is a lawyer and his dad needs someone to help him in his practice, and therefore he's going to learn to read early... because he has to be a good reader in order to go to law school, so therefore I'm gonna start him at age two and we're gonna put names on all the things at home so that on the refrigerator, there will be written, 'refrigerator,' and on all the pieces of furniture at home, he will know the names of all these; and we'll discuss the letters, and we'll discuss the names and by George, by the age of two he knows a lot about reading." And of course, once you know how to read, what do you want to do? Immediately, then, you want to sit down and read, and unlike his physiological readiness, which all of you know for a two- and three-year-old is *not* to engage in one activity for any long length of time, the reading act is only successful when you engage in it *for* a long length of time. If you're gonna read for five minutes, it's very little information that you're able to acquire in that time. And the eyes and the oculomotor system are not ready to sustain effort for the long periods of time.

So, not only are there psychological and educational and creative problems taught by... that result from formalized reading programs, lockstep kind of programs, which involve long times of instruction and long times of activity, but there are physiological and growth changes which occur; and in practice I spend several days a week repairing many of these problems that result from youngsters who have gone through these early programs of lockstep teaching of reading. And so I think we've been extraordinarily fortunate in hearing Dr. Elkind this morning. At many of these conferences which I attend, the individual is what I would call a wholesaler; he is an individual who reads what others write on this whole subject and has little experience himself.

Now, Dr. Elkind is a headmaster of a school and obviously watches his own children's development very closely, and so he is in constant contact with the reality of the developing child, and I think this is a... although an individual who is like this is often termed a professional schizophrenic, because on the one hand, he's got to be very careful about interpreting data, he's got to understand experimental design and he's got to understand the statistics and things like this. And on the other hand, he's got to know how to teach and he's got to know how to deal on a retail level with a child, and I very much appreciate hearing the kind of ideas we've heard this morning from Dr. Elkind, both on the wholesale and the retail level. [laughter, applause]

HARTNESS: Mrs. Hunter?

ALTA HUNTER: I have to tell you what's on my mind, okay? Some of you were here, oh, I think it must've been 7 or 8 years ago, when somebody who was interested in early childhood education asked me to do a demonstration on reading stories with children, and the kids came with me and we started to read a story, and [chuckles] so as I paused, as you do when you read a story to get some input from them, one kid said to me, "What are all those little squares?" And I was reading a story about the friendly cow. [laughter] So we put the books down, and we talked about the squares and the lights and all the people and stuff like that, and that was fine, except when we got through, there was a woman who said to me, "But isn't there some time when the story is important?" And fortunately it was not in front of everybody else, so she and I had quite a dialogue, and I tried to tell her that, "Well, the story may be important all the time, but never more important than the kids." And she couldn't hear what I was saying, and I refused to hear what she was saying. [laughter] And I'm kind of reminded of that, because what I hear him saying, and I'm so glad to hear him say it with a fresh twist, is the same kind of thing that I've heard people say for quite a long time.

For example, he talked about the product and the process, and how important the process is. And he talked about the fun; every once in a while kind of to the side, he would talk about how

fun it was, and I keep thinking in my mind, "Isn't there some way, then, that we can stop measuring the product and measuring the important things like reading and writing and arithmetic, and get to the point where we really can measure the process and the fun the kid has in the process?" For example, how do you measure the fun and the pleasure and the satisfaction of rocking back and forth in the boots in the mud that would be meaningful to adults? How *do* you... couldn't wem instead of worry about the fact that we haven't changed IQ, could we stop worrying about that [chuckles] and could we start measuring the numbers of questions that kids ask, instead of the answers that they can give? I have a feeling that if somebody could come up with a plan like that, you might think that was okay. [laughter]

And I'd like to ask him the question, "Can you somehow spark those of us who are still working with kids?" And I think that's really where it's at, that we can be brave enough to say to the federal government and to some other people, "I don't care if there's any change in their IQ or not. I can prove to you that the kids that I've had who have never looked at a book *really* want to know, and that they've learned this method by relating to me and to each other and to the out of doors and to the kitchen that asking a question is their legitimate business." [applause] And if he could encourage us so he wouldn't be afraid to fight the battle, we may be able to convince someone in Washington that money for kids being measured on the real things that are happening, instead of the things that they understand in Washington will solve the problems, or at least some of them. That's an oversimplification, but I'd like to hear you relate to that.

ELKIND: [quietly] Do you want me to wait or...

HARTNESS: Would you like to respond to that? I think as we say, the teachable moment... [laughter, applause]

ELKIND: I'm much more optimistic about children than I am about Washington, I must say [laughter] Yeah, I think that what you're saying is something that I perhaps didn't emphasize here, but because it preps... obvious to people in early childhood, is that too much of our emphasis, I think, in Washington, the assessment approach is sort of the notion of early education as preparation, and thinking of young children as always sort of a stage, waiting in the wings of life rather than being an important phase of life in its own right! And that happy, exciting, interesting time is valuable, regardless of what it means for the future. Why should we always look at young children in terms of what it's doing for the future? And I think that as if they're standing in some vestibule, waiting to live, rather than being in important living time right now. And I don't really care, our own school too, whether the children do that much better—I *hope* they do—but if they have a good and a happy and enriching experience this

year, then that's valuable regardless of what they have next year or the year before. People say, "Well, you're gonna spoil them or they're gonna have a year and then, then they're gonna..." it's like saying, "Well, you're gonna break your leg next year, might as well break it today," or something. Too often I think we always look at early education as sort of preparation, and forget that the quality of life today is every bit as important as it is the preparatory thing, and I think that good education for children can justify itself in terms of the here and now as well as the future.

In terms of assessing the other things, many of us have been trying. It's a very difficult thing to do because the people at the higher echelons are looking at SAT scores, at math and reading achievement, and they're looking at competencies and nobody's really interested in creativity. Although, there are a few voices in the wilderness. People... psychologists of repute are saying, "Look, if you look at achievement tests and intelligence, that really doesn't predict academic... it doesn't predict vocational performance," or even achievement in college doesn't predict vocational performance; that all intelligence does is predict academic achievement in the college, but if you're looking at vocational or life success, those tests don't predict as well as many other variables. There's been a lot of misunderstanding in extent of what intelligence really does and what it predicts; there are many other variables that predict vocational success, and maybe we can begin to get people to look at the variables which predict vocational success. I think it's the sort of thing that you're talking about; the children's attitudes towards themselves and others, and it doesn't even have to be vocational success necessarily in a monetary way, but if people are living happy, productive lives doing what they want to do, then that to me is vocational success, and maybe we oughta start looking at that and looking at different criteria rather than simply accepting traditional ones as to what is success and what is not success. And I have to hope that we're moving as a country at the end of our second century into adolescence, and that perhaps eventually we will mature, and I see some signs of it in the domains. I think we're beginning as a country to appreciate the arts and sports and live a little bit more leisurely, certainly in this part of the country, you do. [chuckles] And I think that kind of life orientation, I think has to feed back into education and help children to look at the quality of life as well as its products.

HARTNESS: Dr. Williams, would you like to comment now?

WILLIAMS: There's a serious problem with this panel; the problem is that this panel and perhaps much of the audience agrees so thoroughly with Dr. Elkind. [laughter] If there are some of you who are having the reaction, "But wait a minute, that's very nice, but..." please put that kind of thing in your questions, because if we all just spend the day congratulating one another on our wisdom [laughter] ...and I have enjoyed all these presentations very much, particularly

the one about the squares on the ceiling, and the boots; I'm going to remember the boots story for a long time. And even there's a problem because we crystallize that story instead of discovering our own boots with water in them.

One of my friends told of an instance in which this preschool child who had a urinary problem; everybody that knows me knows it's hard for me to talk here without some reference to the bathroom [laughter] ...which is an area of child development that's very important. Anyway, little Laurie was three and a half, and it was evident—Laurie had been perfectly well toilet trained and then she began to have accidents—and it was evident that she was holding for a long time her urine and then having the accident. And this story really illustrates all the views of child development and getting stuck on one view. First of all, the father being a pediatrician, he thought medically and had some urine analyses to see if she had a bladder infection and things like that, and she didn't. So then he tried a psychoanalytic approach, and wondered if it was just a symptom, had they been mean to Laurie or whatever and couldn't come up with anything. And then he tried the behavior modification approach, and they praised Laurie for being dry and said if she's dry for three days she'd go to her grandmother's, and it worked, but temporarily. And then they thought, the ordinary pediatric developmental approach: well, lots of three-and-a-half-year-olds have urinary accidents, and that's true, but Laurie had not before, so this didn't quite fit. And they missed one approach; they missed the Piagetian cognitive view of this. Finally, in exasperation, they said, "Laurie, how come you used to be dry and now you're holding your urine and having accidents?" And she said, "You told me that if I eat a lot and drink a lot I'd grow, but if I eat a lot and it runs out there I'm not gonna grow." [laughter]

When they were able to explain to Laurie in terms she'd understand that it wasn't all gonna run out there, she still would grow, the problem was solved. You have to, in your differential diagnosis, think of the cognitive view as well as all the others, and what this means to the child.

It's fun to work with many of you at the Crippled Children's Division and together try and solve some problems of child development where there's a big problem, and when I work with many of you it's a mutual process; not our staff telling you something you didn't already have some hunches about. And it's also fun to try and share with medical students and nursing students something about child development. They have a lot of other priorities and a million things to learn, and I think we probably get about a C+ as we teach child development with medical students. But I think it's very important, because they are, rightly or wrongly, asked many of these questions in young children. And it's fun at the same time to be teaching students in psychology and speech and special ed something of the biological view of the organism, because it would be a mistake for the non-medical fields to have too behavioral a view of the

organism without realizing some of the biological limitations. So, it's fun to be on the interacting edge of all these things, and it's fun to be here today.

Pediatricians generally respond to questions of development with the view that children grow—it really is the developmental view—and let children mature, let them have some individual variations, allow for some variations in maturation. In fact, this often brings the pediatrician into some conflict with his school, if that particular school doesn't want to put up with this variation, whether this variation is academic or whether the variation is behavioral. If you take an early second-grader who isn't reading to the pediatrician, many times he's apt to say, "Different kids start at different times; let him grow a little bit." And sometimes that advice is happily accepted and sometimes not. Likewise, if you take the child that is too active for the classroom, the pediatrician may say, "Kids are like that." And that may not—of course, he doesn't have to have that child with twenty others [laughter]—but that's the reaction that many physicians would have to some of these kinds of problems, and I think that obviously there are also some pathological entities that we have to look for, but nevertheless an awful lot of individual variation does take place, and many pediatricians respond along this line.

Back to the bathroom for a minute, one of the things that bothers me the most is not only in 1976 is it not possible for every child to get a flexible approach to his education, it's pretty hard in 1976 for a child to go to the bathroom in some schools—none of yours, I'm sure—when he needs to. And right now in 1976, children in the middle grades even are having bathroom accidents because we don't let them go to the bathroom when they need to, a privilege we usually allow ourselves; we generally go when we need to and we... it seems to me we have a long way to go in schools if we haven't yet made the concession to human development that people oughta go to the bathroom when they need to. So much for that plug. [laughter]

Let us—as I wind up, because I think I'm at my time—watch out, whether it's education or behavior, watch out for fads, and not get too far along in one fad or another in education or behavior management; try and apply our critical judgement and try to continue to understand there's variation in human development.

HARTNESS: This makes me wish that I had my little article that James Hymes wrote: "The personality is formed on the pot." [laughter] And where no one usually rears its ugly head, and is the first time to discover we have a little opposition as we are trying to show evidence of our autonomy. I think I'll have to have a copy and send that to you. [laughter]

WILLIAMS: Thank you.

HARTNESS: Would you like to react, Mr. Millholm?

DENNIS MILLHOLM: I took a quick scan around the audience at the point where... of not reading and working on concentrating on reading skills directly in the first grade, and I kinda saw this a little bit, but the contradictory thing I saw with that is that eyes were dilating also. [laughter] That kind of, "I can prove to you that it will not damage a child if you don't start right away." Kinda that inner voice going, "I can prove to you my principal won't like this." [laughter] I don't know how accurately I saw that concern, but there are some people that maybe can identify with that. Maybe a latent behavior we have as adults and educators and parents is our ability, lots of times, to use substitution instead of integration, in the sense that when we start looking at the affective domain within the public schools, we can look at it as substitution in such... in looking at it as humanistic teaching.

I had a teacher that once said, in response to the child development specialist program which I'm involved with, talking about the affective domain and additional needs that really need to be met, especially in the social and emotional areas. He said, "Dennis, I think we're gonna have the happiest ignorant children in the state." [wry laughter] And I think that is a kind of response that is a product of substitution as opposed to integration. And I think we gotta make that distinction and get away from teaching humanism to teaching humanistically. And when we teach humanistically I think we start getting in on a... integrative type of concept as opposed to substitution.

Anyway, I would like to... maybe if you could elaborate slightly on some of the things that people are doing around the nation to actually... maybe the anxiety level of some people here are saying, "Wow, I'm kind of living under a double standard; that's kind of scary because I kind of buy into the idea that we're putting too much pressures on some of the cognitive things that are going on, but I have another force that is pulling on the other direction that is... I have a lot of responsibilities to a lot of parents, a lot of administrators, a lot of superintendents." And maybe if we could get it maybe just on a tangible kind of approach: what are some things being done that actually changes this whole thing from a philosophy to an actual, workable model? And to get some really good change happening in public schools?

HARTNESS: Dr. Elkind, would you like to respond to that?

ELKIND: Yeah, there are a number of aspects. I think the... it's very true, and I feel uncomfortable often sort of spouting what our... somebody's idealistic notions about how we oughta go about educating kids. And I know some of the real pressures and real constraints that people in the schools are operating under. And teachers often come to me and say, "We have

to teach this open court at kindergarten, what am I supposed to do? It's really bad, what do we do?" And I think there certainly are very real constraints on teachers, and I appreciate that. I think we have to be working at all different levels to try and demonstrate that some of these things are really not helping kids. I think many teachers do what is, basically, to subvert the system, to cheat. [laughs] Sorry, I shouldn't say this just before income tax time, I suppose. [laughs]

Often what I say to teachers is... we talk about testing. I really believe that we oughta document rather than evaluate kids, and that if you give parents a folder of a child's work for the year, that's a very dramatic kind of demonstration of what the child has done, and the evaluation often is detrimental. Pretty soon the tail wags the dog and you're teaching to the tests and so on. Piaget is not very emotional most of the time; when he talks about tests, he talks about it as poison. I've never seen him talk about anything... he gets most upset when he talks about testing. He thinks it's the poison of the educational system and I tend to agree, but we have to live with it. And the question is, what do you do? And one thing that we do is we teach children to take tests. That if you're going to use tests, if tests have to be given, and if tests are part of our educational system, then... we have to then take them seriously and give them seriously. We take old tests and have the kids take the old tests so they get used to the test; test language is foreign to kids; test procedures are foreign.

So we prepare them, we go through an OSS procedure and they take tests, they get used to testing, they use test language and so on, because it's a very different thing, and if you spring tests on kids unexpectedly, you're really not doing the test service either, because the test presupposes kids know what they're doing. And I think the teachers have to take the time to read the test, to know the instructions, to know how to administer them, they've gotta take time to score them correctly and so on. That if we're going to... I don't want tests, I don't like them, but if we're gonna use them, and if so much weight is going to be put upon them, then I think we have to take them seriously and give the kids a break. And I think administering tests at the right time... giving tests in the morning is really the right time.

We did a study on creativity, as I mentioned, the World of Inquiry school; we gave a test of creativity to World of Inquiry kids and our kids in the public school, and to our surprise we found that the public school children were doing better on the creativity test than the World of Inquiry kids; we couldn't understand that at all. But then, I have an alert research associate who said, "Well, you know the children in public schools are not very excited about what they're doing. We take them out and these are... these creativity tests are production tests; how many uses can you think of for a brick and so on. Well, they won't wanna go back to the classroom, this is kind of fun, so they're working like crazy to think of all the possible uses, whereas the kids

in the World of Inquiry school want to get back to what they were doing; they give you a couple uses and leave.”

So we did another study in which we took children from the World of Inquiry school and we found out from teachers what sorts of things they liked; arts and crafts, science, and so on, and then we constructed some boring activities. We had sheets with numbers and letters, and numbers produced in random fashion, and the task was to circle all the sixes or all the N's. We took each child and we put him in a boring task, took him out for the creativity, told him he was going back to another boring task that he's circling sixes instead of circling N's, and we took the same child out of an exciting activity and told him he was going back to that, so that all the children were taken both from boring activity into testing, and from an exciting activity and back; we found for the same children, they were twice as creative and three times as original when they came from the boring activities when they came from exciting activities! [laughter]

So that the whole context in which testing takes place is important. As I say, I don't believe in testing, but it seems to me that if we're going to do it, we oughta give children the best possible shake, and that often you can teach to the test, you can take a month off towards the end of the semester and really sort of focus on the material that the testing is going to cover, and spend the rest of the year doing what you're gonna be doing. I think that in this day and age, as long as children are given a fair shake, that we can do a number of different things, and I don't like to be subversive, but I think sometimes to keep the best interests of children at heart that sometimes we have to do that, and I think most teachers do in one way or another... bend the system in a little bit one way or another... in order to meet their own consciences. And I hope that we will begin to get a more child development-oriented approach in our educational system. There are places around the country; New York state, I must say, with all its difficulties of the state, the superintendent does say there should be some open education programs in every school, so it can be mandated at the state level, and there can be programs. I just came from Colorado where I really saw some exciting schools in Boulder, where the kids were really busy building kites and bridges; they were learning math and they were learning reading, but they were really excited and involved and active kids; so there are examples. Connecticut had lovely schools and Massachusetts... and you can go to almost any state in the country and find schools where people are opening up, and kids are really doing great things and having creative as well as academic... good academic learning experiences.

A recent comprehensive study from England of the British informal schools, which only make up, as you know, only about twenty percent of the schools, shows that clearly the children coming out of the informal schools are doing as well or better on tests, reading or math, as children at the traditional schools. And so what we give children by opening up the schools a

bit, by giving them more opportunity to move around, to be creative, is not to diminish their academic performances at all, but really to broaden and to enrich their experience. I think it's wrong to expect these programs to enhance academic performance, but it does enhance other aspects of children's lives, so to the extent that we can do that, I think in whatever way... any little way that any particular teacher can do it, I think we have to try. I think it has to be done on a sort of evolutionary basis.

HARTNESS: I was very interested in Dr. Elkind's discussion about creativity and using the word "different." "Different" view a child has, and relating this to reality and unrealities. I'd like to relate to you an experience as a child in the fourth grade. I'm sure you're all aware at this particular time that we are beginning to present perspective... when we're teaching art, that's possible to do. And this day we had this model of these beautiful trees, a roadway, the hills in the distance, a little house, and what we could see of the little house was primarily the chimney, and a twirling bit of smoke. When the lesson was completed, we picked up the papers, and put them on her desk; the same pattern she followed every day that we had art. Sometimes it was an onion, sometimes it was a flower, sometimes it was a tree; various subject matters, but this same pattern. She also presented the picture that she thought was the best picture the next day. And of course we all waited to have our picture shown to the class.

This particular day... my picture was held up before the class. Never had this happened before. Of course the excitement and joy of having experienced this very special moment made me very happy. It certainly was affecting how I felt about myself, and I was waiting to see what my classmates were going to say. Here was the picture, and she said, "Did anyone ever see blue trees?" [audience groans sympathetically; panelists chuckle] Of course, I'm sure you know what happened to the development of the self-concept at that moment. [murmurs in background] Also, I... as Dr. Elkind was speaking, I began to think about that and I wondered: do we always have to see trees with yellow, green, red leaves? Can it be different, as not right or wrong? When in the perception of a child, it is as he sees it. That seems to be very important to him at this point. And after all, there are many blue trees. But I'm sorry my teacher didn't know that. [laughter] And I think I could say it was the end of an awful beginning in experience in art. What I'm really trying to say to you is that even though there's a developmental process that we seem to follow in teaching art, but there is something far more important that is happening inside the individual; as he experiences this particular creative moment that the door should be wide open; it is as he experiences this in his little world, and blue trees had been experienced somewhere along the way.

Now I would like to have questions from the audience. Would the people who are in charge of the mics please assume their... station? So to speak. And would you indicate to whom the question is directed?

AUDIENCE 1: Pardon?

HARTNESS: I said to whom the question is directed?

AUDIENCE 1: Probably, from reading this, to Dr. Elkind. What do you think about the movement of some parents to request traditional schools? Going back to the basic school.

HARTNESS: Dr. Elkind?

ELKIND: Yeah, my feeling is that we never left the basics; we always have been teaching basics, we're teaching basics now; so that I think it's again a slogan of what we mean by basics; we're teaching math and reading and so on, and continuing to do that. If people are talking about teaching the way we taught them 30 or 40 years ago, that doesn't make much sense to me. So I think the "back to basics" movement is again a kind of slogan, and I think we have to indicate to parents that children are being taught math and reading as... but perhaps in ways that are a little different than they were taught once before, because we have more information and do it differently now. So I think the implication is somehow that we're not teaching basics anymore, and I think that's wrong. At most schools that I know, most school systems I know are still teaching basics.

The problem, I think, is otherwise, and I'll speak to that this afternoon, and that's the problem of the curricula, which I think are... present real problems for teaching and for children, because they come from academics who know the discipline but they don't know children, and I think we've suffered from that for a number of years now. What "back to basics" is meaning, in the most general sense, is we're going back to teacher-constructed curriculum materials or at least educator-constructed curriculum materials, rather than academic or professional or scientist-constructed curriculum materials. That has both negative and positive advantages, but I think in practical terms that's really what "back to basics" means is the new curricula: new, more concrete math, back to phonics and reading and so on. But that's really... I think we've been teaching those all along, so that the "back to basics" is often kind of a slogan that, as we talked about before, education is prone to, whether it's performance contracting or what have you; "back to basics" is another slogan that somebody has caught on to. What I think we need to tell parents is we've been teaching basics all along, and will continue to.

AUDIENCE 2: Yes. This is directed to Dr. Elkind. How do you feel about special EEC programs that separate children with the low academic ability into smaller classes where they receive more individual help, but do not have a peer model?

ELKIND: I guess that question generally speaks to the whole issue of mainstreaming and non-mainstreaming. That seems to me to be the opposite of what's happening around the country which is to keep... put children like that, who have any problems, back into the regular classroom. One of the issues that I think needs to be emphasized is flexibility; that decisions to take children out of the classroom shouldn't be once and for all... if a child needs special help, then that oughta be done, but it shouldn't be a once and for all decision. There oughta be enough flexibility in the system for children to move in and out. I think a lot depends upon the particular context, and the particular school. Much mainstreaming would be effective if the teachers who were in the receiving classrooms were prepared to deal with the children that they were to accept, but often they're not, and therefore it presents really serious difficulties for teachers.

I think what happened historically was that there was, again, Washington played a sort of role that there was a lot of money for special education, and so a lot of special education programs, resource rooms, and so on and special educators stood there like the Statue of Liberty: give me your lame, your hard-of-hearing, your speech-disabled kids... and of course the teachers said, "Great, you can have them." [laughter] But then when the monetary crunch came, they said, "Well, you know, that's costing a lot of money, you'd better put these kids back in the classroom." And so many children were taken out of regular classrooms who shouldn't have been taken out in the first place. And now, many children are being put back who shouldn't be put back, not because it can't be handled, but often because the teachers haven't been trained and aren't given the help to receive and to deal with those children, and therefore their attitudes may fall back on the other children in the classroom, and I've seen children... very disabled children handled in a regular classroom and handled well, but if there are resource people to give the teacher in-service training to help that teacher, but if there's no support services for that teacher and she's being asked to mainstream severely disabled children or children with learning disabilities, then I think it's unfair both to the child, the teacher, and the other children.

But again, we're at the mercy of economic and political pressures and not educational ones. Again and again, political and economic factors rather than educational ones determine what's going on in the schools, and the mainstreaming is just another example. So I think there's no one answer to taking children out into resource rooms or smaller groups. It depends a lot upon the people involved, the atmosphere, and the attitudes of teachers, and so on. I don't mean to

cop out, it just seems to me I've seen it work well and I've seen it work horribly, and it often depends on the people who are doing it and how well it's done. We take children in the Mt. Hope school out for a year, because we feel that that's a useful experience; they need more individual attention and they need individual help; then we put them back and people said, "You can't do that, kids are going to be disoriented and they're going to have trouble." Well, it turns out that children in New York City—most of those move two or three times in a year anyway—change schools two or three times, so that we're not doing anything. We prepare them for going back to the school, they go back and visit the classroom they're going to attend, they see the teacher and so on. We've had no trouble with the children going back into the public school after a year. So I think it's really how it's done, and the preparation and the support services that are given for any particular program, rather than saying that this, in the abstract and the absolute, is either bad or good. I think that you can do all sorts of things well or all sorts of things poorly in education. It always depends on the people involved.

HARTNESS: Any member of the panel have a comment? Or wish to react to Dr. Elkind's interpretation? Now, let's move to mic three.

AUDIENCE 3: Dr. Elkind, if a child is not to be confused by dualistic rules of a teacher, what limits do you advise to a relationship which includes friendship, acceptance, affection, love, and teachings?

ELKIND: [pauses; laughs; laughter in audience] Well... the teacher's role is one as an accepting and caring person I think is one that goes along with it, the teaching... I think if a teacher becomes too close to a particular child, then I think you do have difficulties. It's difficult for the child, difficult for the other children, and so on. The advantage and the difference between the teacher's role and the parents' role is that her caring is diffused among all children equally, and children are very, very sensitive to fairness.

I once wrote a paper on teacher-child contracts, talking about the fact that there are certain implicit expectancies between teachers and children. One of those is fairness, the expectation that teachers will be fair and by that, they mean that they will treat all children equally, and for that, children really, in return, give teachers their respect. And on the other hand there's another thing which is warmth from the teacher, and from the child they get cooperation. So there are a number of different kinds of implicit contracts between teachers and children, and I think there is a caring relationship on both sides, but I think that there are degrees of attachment, there are degrees of love, and degrees of warmth; and the degree of caring and attachment between teacher and child is somewhat less than that between parents and child. A

necessity, it's a very important one, but it has to be much more diffused and much less than that, so there's not the conflict.

The question assumes that the intensity of the relationship between the teacher and the child is the same as between the parent and the child, but that isn't true. And so the particular relationship between teacher and child is different, in the sense that the affective bond is much less, and therefore there is not a conflict. The child isn't veering between a parent role and a teacher role, he recognizes or she recognizes from the very beginning that that situation is a different one than the family situation. As a matter of fact, one of the things involved in reading we found is attachment to a significant adult, that reading, again, is a difficult thing for kids to do and the motive that it's not intrinsically rewarding when kids first begin, so in order to learn to read they need the support of some adult, but most teachers can't provide that because the attachment bonds aren't strong enough, so they really need adults who reward, and model, and support reading behavior. So that's another indication that although the relationship between children and teachers is a warm and a caring one, that affectional bond is not a significant motivational one for learning the basic tool skills, which still has to come from the attachment to the parents. So I don't think one can equate the attachment relationships between the parent and teacher and child and teacher. They are different, and children recognize that from day one. [quietly] Some other people may want to participate...

HARTNESS: Yes, I wondered if they... anyone want to comment?

HUNTER: Yes, I'd like to comment on that very briefly, because in the last few years I've been spending a lot of time in daycare with young children, and I think that the process of attachment to a daycare person is sometimes different than to a teacher, per se. It's different for the caregiver too, because they have this interesting concept that "I'm a caregiver now, but at 9 o'clock I'm gonna become a teacher," and all of a sudden the role changes and the voice changes and the way they relate to kids change, and so it's a teacher-child kind of thing, where the rest of the time it's a caregiver kind of thing.

I'm very fortunate right now because I'm working at a very small daycare center, and we don't have to deal with numbers, and so... it's interesting to watch the new children coming in, and depending on their age level and their own development of course, but almost always we have found that if they have a teacher that belongs to them, and that even though we're in an armory where there are 30 kids and the equal number of adults required by law, that that kid needs somebody to latch onto. The other interesting thing I've discovered is that when you get a new staff member, the staff member does better if she has a kid to latch onto. And I'm not sure what that says, [laughter] but I do think that caregiving and affection and love, that

sometimes we misunderstand what the child is asking for when the child needs to latch onto somebody. I don't think—and this is a personal observation—I don't think they're asking for a parent substitution necessarily.

When you get into all this stuff about these poor little deprived children whose mothers work, and I don't want to talk about that because I have some real biases about that, but I do think that the child's needing caring and warmth and loving doesn't mean the child needs a substitute parent, but he just needs somebody to care about him, and I think we get confused about the teacher needing to be a parent when that isn't what the kid is asking for at all.

ELKIND: [quietly] That's very true.

HUNTER: And I think we need to be careful that we don't analyze our feelings onto a kid, because they're so much clearer about what they need than we are about them. We are always interpreting what that kind of behavior would mean for us. And I want to go to the bathroom... [chuckles] with Dr. Williams [laughter], you know, I had a kid!

ELKIND: [laughing] I don't think that... [laughing]

HUNTER: I had a kid who was in the first grade, and he wasn't my first so I wasn't quite as intimidated by school, because when you get down to 5 and 6 the teachers know you. I went to school for the conference in October for my first grader and the teacher said, "I'm concerned about Allen's urinary problem." And I said, "Oh?" She said, "Well, he needs to go to the bathroom every... about every 10 minutes, and I've really been concerned about it." And I said, "Gee... I'm really glad you told me, because I wasn't aware of that." So I went home to my husband and said, "Now we've got a sick kid, we've gotta take him to the pediatrician who knows all the answers." [laughter] And so he said, "Now, just a minute. Have you talked to Allen about this?" And I said to Allen then, "Allen, why do you go to the bathroom all the time?" And he said, "Mom, I don't go to the bathroom, I just go down the hall to see what the other kids are doing!" [laughter] The teacher assumed that because he knew the rules and used them to get what he wanted, that he was going to the bathroom, because you can't get out of the first grade for anything else, but boy if you're at 6 and say, "I need to go to the bathroom," the teacher says, "Yes!" [laughter]

And I think that this affection that we're talking about and interpreting what the kid is saying when he's asking for warmth and caring... we confuse ourselves, because we don't really understand that the reality for the child is not our reality, but that it does exist, and that the difference doesn't make it wrong. And I would just like to hear him say it again. [laughter]

ELKIND: No, I think that's very true. There's some interesting data, for example the children from Israeli kibbutz, where these kids, as you know, spend their days and evenings in children's houses and just a couple of hours each day with the parents, but these children... they know their parents, and they're much more attached to the parents than they are to the metapelet who's the caretaker. And so even though they may spend only two hours with their own parents, they know very well who their parents are and have primary attachments to their parents. So the children, as you say, their reality is very clear as to who their parent is and who their caretaker is, and they may well go for comfort and mothering or fathering to another person, but they know who their parents are and those are the primary people in their lives, and they make those distinctions very clearly, I think.

HARTNESS: Did you wish to make a comment?

WILLIAMS: Right on. [laughter] No, I think it's really important to... that there is... I've seen, again, the ability to recognize relationships. I think that what children say is not necessarily what they mean. And I think they have a need to be heard, and I think that's where the parallel is very much the same as we, as adults. I think that sometimes we react to words more than we have the ability to get into what... the feeling area of the child, and so I think sometimes we make some pretty quick kinds of conclusions about what they're saying, because we're reacting to the words. And I think sometimes that's the mistake that we make when we draw our assumptions. Yeah.

HARTNESS: I think we might move to microphone 4.

AUDIENCE 4: Okay, this question is: are you suggesting the revival of the discredited concept of maturation? Please comment, particularly with regard to the gospel according to B. F. Skinner. [laughter]

ELKIND: I'm not... could you please repeat the beginning part? I'm not certain I heard it all.

AUDIENCE 4: Okay, the beginning part was really interesting. [chuckling] Are you suggesting the revival of the discredited concept of maturation? Please comment, particularly with regard to the gospel according to Skinner.

ELKIND: Okay... it comes as news to me that maturation has ever been discredited... [applause; laughter] I think children, as far as I know, continue to grow at about the same rates as they did before, and so to be sure, if you think of maturation as sort of happening in a vacuum and

independently of experience, that notion of maturation certainly has been revi... and I think what we mean by development is simply maturation which takes into account interactions with the environment, but certainly maturation plays an important part in development and no one would want to deny that.

I think what I was reviving was a notion of readiness, which I think has been sort of put into disrepute and which I still think is a very useful and a very important concept, and which was dismissed perhaps too readily by behavior modification people. So I... it seems to me that what we are moving to today is a very interactionist position, saying that maturation and the environment are both constantly interacting, both important, and we need to know more explicitly and more exactly how they interact. We know that the genetic endowment interacts in ways and sets limits and things that we never dreamed of before, that there can be gene complexes so that genes can control very complex behaviors that perhaps we didn't understand before, but certainly the environment plays every bit as important a role; and we're just beginning to understand how important a role. There's a recent study, as you may know, about cross-racial adoptions, which show that Black children adopted by white families gain IQs of 110, so I think there's some problems with those studies because unfortunately we don't know middle-class Blacks who adopted low-income Blacks and so on to see whether that affected... no matter how you do those studies, Blacks always come out... this means either they're bad parents or they have bad genes, one way or another they get it. But I think the important thing is it shows that environment... significant changes in environment can change IQ and so on, so we're getting all kinds of data, beginning to understand what environmental changes make what. And so I would say that our notion that we... that's why we really talk about development, but development doesn't mean that maturation is discredited, only that maturation is presumed by development and it is incorporated within that concept.

As far as Skinner, it's interesting that in some ways Skinner was more responsible than anyone else for the acceptability of Piaget in this country. That seems to be a paradox but I'll explain it. Skinner—learning theory in America dominated the whole scene, Skinner and learning theory—Skinner came on the scene and said let's forget about theory, let's just talk about behavior, let's just describe. And so what he did was set the climate for an observational approach to behavior, and saying let's look at behavior, let's count; let's not worry about the theories and the mathematics and so on. And so he in some ways set the stage for a more descriptive approach to human psychology, and certainly Piaget in some ways has presented a descriptive as well as theoretical approach, but Skinner helped to discredit traditional learning theory.

I think that behavior modification is a useful technique, and we use it on occasion as well. What I object to is it's being used as a total panacea, a total methodology, *the* methodology, *the*

approach. I'm a Piagetean, but at times I use psychoanalytic concepts, at times I use Skinnerian concepts because I think at this stage in our knowledge there's no one approach that has all the answers. [applause] And it oughta be one of the teacher's tools, one of the teacher's tools in armamentarium, but if it becomes the total approach and it becomes a religious kind of thing, then I think it's a mistake because as I've said, often when I see people in DISTAR for example—I don't know if you have DISTAR here—but DISTAR may be okay for some kids, and it may be useful for some children. The long term effects as far as I can tell are not very significant, but the danger becomes, for many teachers, a teaching style. And they use that and nothing else, and I think that's detrimental to kids, that DISTAR approach for some children, for some part of the time may be helpful and beneficial, I have no objections to that, but as a total teaching style and a total approach to children I think it's a mistake. So I would say that I think a Skinnerian approach is valuable in its place as one of the teacher's many tools, but to take it as a total approach, as the only approach, and the only one to be used is, I think, a mistake at this point in our knowledge.

HARTNESS: Would you like to comment?

LUDLAM: I think that there is physiological maturation or development if you want to call it, and behavioral maturation and development, certainly in the eye field we certainly know that eye movements, the fixation and saccadic movements that are necessary in reading only begin to develop at a certain age. And a youngster under 2 ½ years of age literally doesn't have the eye movement skills in order to be able to read. Reading, after all, is a system of communication that was developed by man... and women, but mankind... [chuckling; audience laughter] By people... [applause] and I don't object to that, but I still do not like calling them "person-hole covers." [laughter]

But reading, after all, was a system of communication that was found to be an extraordinarily efficient way of passing on information from one generation to the next, and from one individual to the next. And the size of the print and the size of the paragraph on the page in a lot of different societies is remarkably the same. The different kind of ideographs that are in Oriental languages and the different scan patterns that are used left to right in most Western European languages and right to left, of course, in Hebrew, and vertical scan patterns and things like this are different, but the size of the individual characters and the length of the swing on the eye scan are remarkably the same from culture to culture. And that's because there are certain characteristics about eye movements and about fixation and saccadic movements that are inherent characteristics [mic cuts out] ...advancement in behavior, educational, psychological, physiological processes.

HARTNESS: May we have another question from microphone 2, please?

AUDIENCE 5: I know time's running out; the questions I have are excellent, every one of them, so I will apologize that we can't read them all. We tried to have a variety of questions up here. This is to Mr. Millholm: At present, people with an early childhood... is that right? Oh, he's alert—good. [laughter] At present, people with an early childhood background rather than an elementary background are not considered for positions in public schools. Will you comment?

MILLHOLM: Could you read it again?

AUDIENCE 5: Yes, I love talking. At present, people with an early childhood background rather than an elementary background are not considered for positions in public schools. Will you comment?

MILLHOLM: Right after lunch, we'll do that.

AUDIENCE 5: You're gonna wait? You want to hold it?

MILLHOLM: If I'm hearing correctly, are we talking about a position as a child development specialist?

AUDIENCE 5: As a teacher, they're not accepted, apparently, in the... are you going to dwell on that later on? [laughter and cheers]

MILLHOLM: Yeah, I've got some qualms with that, I think we got... start looking at some problems and some hang-ups that we have in the public schools, and we start doing that pointing the finger thing, you know, "Don't blame me." And we waste a lot of time and energy that way. Personally I think that... I think we gotta get back to the colleges, and we gotta kinda make the approach to where you are prepared to be an effective teacher. I think the curriculum has to be enriched, and I think we kinda gotta get a lot of kinds of things into behaviorisms, effective communication skills, and that type of thing. Yeah, again, it's the system about licensing and on and on; personally, with this child development specialist program, if you are interested, that is... we have a wide variety of people that are fitting into that role and feeling very comfortable with that. And I think we could play that "Wouldn't it be neat if..." kind of game; I have some very definite biases about preparation for being a primary teacher. I see some nice things happening, but I think it would be rather academic to get into my personal perceptions of that... would somebody else like to comment?

HARTNESS: Dr. Elkind, would you like to comment on that question?

ELKIND: [laughing] I don't know the situation, really, here that well. It's certainly true that... and I don't know whether early... our teachers in the elementary schools have to have a teaching credential, which involves not only a bachelor's degree but certification by a school of education, plus, now mandated in New York state, courses in reading and a certain amount of teacher training: actual classroom practice, supervised classroom practice now. With the exception, perhaps, of the courses in reading, which are nonsensical because they're not very good, I can see where some sort of certification of teachers makes sense, and that therefore early childhood people with their training should have some avenues to get certification. What seems to me the problem is this certification issue, and if they're trained as early childhood people, I don't see why they wouldn't be available for certification. Maybe what you need is a state certification of early childhood. [laughter; applause]

HARTNESS: Of course that is one of the issues, major issues now, in the state of Oregon, is trying to bring about certification for early childhood education teachers; and I think we're all aware of the great importance of this if we're interested in allowing this child to develop in his own way, and face a world that is one of reality but coming through a definite developmental process. That if you're trained as an elementary teacher, and to come down to the level threes and fours, and five-year-olds, it is pretty hard to build a curriculum, if you want to call it that. And I guess we're going to talk about that this afternoon. But to provide experiences that are really within the setting of the development of children at that particular time in their stage of growth.

HUNTER: Can I just make a brief comment that I think we all need to be aware of? Not only is it almost impossible for a person who is trained in early childhood education to get an elementary certificate, but when the school needs an early childhood education specialist, and hires one as Portland Public Schools hired me—I finally got the job without a certificate because you can get an emergency certificate—but they gave me no credit for all the years I had taught children under 5. Which is kind of interesting, isn't it? They hire you to do a job for which there is no certification for in the state, and yet your credit that makes you eligible to do that job is non-creditable. I think we all need to be aware of the fact that somehow, not only the kind of thing that Dennis is talking about, so the preparation from teachers may need to be a little different, but also we need to talk about where do you learn to be a teacher? Is it only in the college that gives you your degree? Which is a question we could talk about for quite a long time, but I think we need to be aware of what's happening in our state, because we are all responsible for what's happening in our state, or what isn't happening too.

WILLIAMS: Very quickly, an avenue that might... we all might want to explore a lot more, I think, is a competency-based kind of a certification thing, and I think that's another route that might be productive.

HARTNESS: Do we have time for one more question? We have time for one more question. [laughter] Do we have one more?

AUDIENCE 5: One more? I'll tell you why, this is close to my heart too. They're really two together. Do you have some subtle suggestions for toning down a pushy parent for those involved in parent education? Also, can you describe an effective education in terms... *affective* education in terms of giving a teacher a definition to describe this area to parents and administrators? And I think administrators are often caught in the middle—this isn't on any of these papers, but I do think this makes it hard for a principal—he's caught in the middle. Dr. Elkind?

ELKIND: Yeah... very tough questions. How do you talk to pushy parents? My own philosophy is that you catch more bears with honey than you do with vinegar, and so my hope... I try always to give parents some normative information. Often parents see their children as somehow unique and separate and special, and I try to indicate the norms and where kids are alike and where they're different, and try to put the child in a broader perspective of where normal developmental trends are, what kids actually do and don't do, and sort of give them a context. That doesn't always work, but it seems to me that as a developmentalist, that's the best I can do.

It often helps when parents see their kids as behind, and not doing as much to recognize the variations in growth rates and to recognize that this is something they see that the kid is doing, and they feel as unique to that child—and of course the parents' reality are very special too; they may not have seen a child for twenty years, or been near kids, and really not having grown up in an extended family, don't know what kids are like at all, and so they see everything the child does as so unique and special and different, and if it's bad somehow their child is off the continuum, and often parents need to be reassured that their child is like other children in those regards. So I use the same strategy with parents who are pushing that maybe most kids don't... and it's okay for kids to move more gradually, and sometimes you always pay a price for what you do and maybe you have to consider at what cost the child is learning this, and help them to see what they're doing in perspective, and what price they're paying for what they're doing... and if the child is losing something, do they really recognize the loss; do they want their child to lose that in favor of this? And not to make decisions for them, but to simply... to provide information for them to make a more rational choice, recognizing all the dimensions of

the problem that are involved, and sometimes they see it in a very narrow way and you need to help them to see what they're doing in a broader perspective, the child's total life situation, and what sort of cost. Because you always pay a price for whatever you do, and you think this price... if you think this is worthwhile, then I think that's a decision you have to make, but I think these are some of the things you may want to consider. That's all you can really do, I think, is help parents see what's happening, what choices they have, and what sort of consequences there will be. The decision is, again, up to them, and of course many parents are so dead-set on it there's really not much that you can do, other than try to make them aware of the contingencies.

About affective education. I, as a psychologist, feel embarrassed about it, because I think that most of the affective education programs were introduced by psychologists, and I think that few psychologists really know what education is all about. And therefore, they don't understand curriculum and they don't know what the teacher's really coping with, and they do know something about affective interactions and so on, so instead of helping the teacher do more with the difficult curriculum she already has, they give her an additional one or two or three, which is every bit as bad [chuckles] as the one she already has! I think that the separation of affective education from education generally doesn't make any sense to me at all; that good education, and if a teacher who is really working with kids well, who understands kids, taking their point of view, trying to see where they are and helping them, is affective education in the best sense. When you're really relating to kids well and teaching them well, that's the best affective education. It means that you're trying to take their point of view, you're trying to see where they are, you're trying to deal with their problems and their issues; that's communicated with the child in a hundred different ways. To take affective education and teach it for an hour a day as if it were something separated from interpersonal relationships, as if it were something outside of moment-to-moment interactions with children, makes no sense to me at all.

It does, I think, it seems to me something that has been foisted on education by psychologists who simply say that this is something that needs to be done, it's another curriculum... mainly because they don't understand the real curriculum problems. I think that what psychologists really ought to be doing is helping teachers understand and making better reading curricula, better math curricula that are learnable and teachable, rather than adding additional curricula which are every bit as bad, unteachable, and unlearnable as the ones... that are as inappropriate for kids at that stage, to talk about reflecting of feelings for elementary school kids at the middle school levels... kids can't do that. And you're again giving them materials like social studies stuff which is so bad. I see first-grade kids learning the religions of the world which is crazy, just absolutely nuts, and I don't know if you're doing that here, but I look at that stuff and then I see the affective curriculum... it's every bit as bad.

So instead of doing the job better—it remind me of cars; we want to control the emissions system so we tack something else on, another purifier—well, I have a brother who's an engineer, a machinist, and so on and he says, "The best way to improve the engine itself, instead of tacking on more things at the other end and more contrivances: improve the functioning of the engine itself. And that'll clear up the emissions." Instead of... if they simply improve... you can improve the way the engine functions in many different ways. You don't have to tack on additional things. And I think we're doing the same thing in education; instead of improving the efficiency and improving what we're doing in the classroom with the curriculum we have, we are tacking on additional curriculum, and that has all these negative side effects that emissions things have: they produce additional gases and acids and so on. So I think we're doing the same thing in education we do in technology, because we look at education as an industry. Well, I won't go on, but I do think that the affective education system is a bill of goods that's been sold as education by some psychologists. [applause]

HARTNESS: I would like to add my own two cents. I think in our early childhood programs we need more time for more parenting programs, whereby perhaps parents can come to a greater understanding of the job that we are trying to do for their child. We would like for you people who have given questions and are still anxious for more of them... if you'll bring them to the podium here, we'll try to sift through some of them, and maybe we can answer some of those later this afternoon. If you will do this, I will be glad to do our best to meet your needs. It will be very necessary for you to have your yellow ticket to receive your box lunch, which they will have ready for you in the back of the room in a few minutes... [background chatter rises] and just a moment, we want the panelists and Dr. Elkind, and any of your other task force members that are here or any of our legislators, to make yourselves available. Get friends with all of these other people and help answer some of the questions. We want us all to be in this job together. Now you may get your lunches and have a happy time.

[program ends]