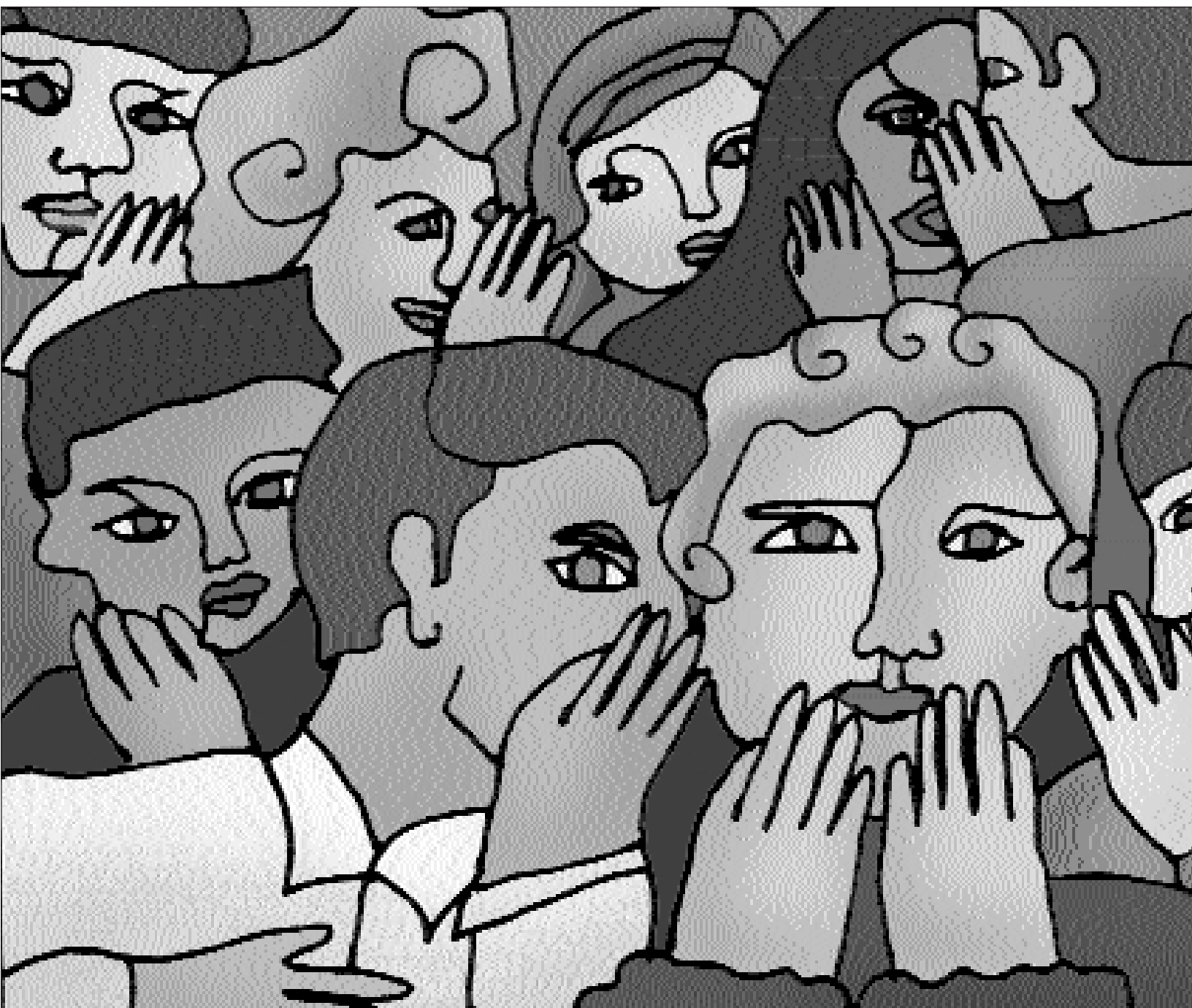


WORDS CAN HEAL.ORG

Family Kit





TAKE THE PLEDGE!

Take the **Words Can Heal Pledge** and become a part of a new national campaign to enhance relationships and build respect, tolerance and integrity through the practice of positive speech. This compelling call to sensitize people to the power of their words will make a difference in your life and the lives of everyone you know.

An all-star team of political, corporate, entertainment and spiritual celebrities has already signed on in support of the campaign, including U.S. Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, Senators Harry Reid, John McCain, Joseph Lieberman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr.

The Words Can Heal Campaign promises to engage Americans of all walks of life, faiths, and affiliations through dynamic advertisements, an internet site, our new book called *The Words Can Heal Handbook*, lively seminars, and television, radio, and newspaper stories.

Join us by taking the Pledge today and letting others know about your commitment through sharing the pledge, stickers, tips & tools, and articles that are in this kit.

You can order additional pledges, pins, Workplace Awareness Kits, Family Awareness Kits, or the lively *Words Can Heal Handbook: How Changing Your Words Can Transform Your Life and the Lives of Others* at www.wordscanheal.org. While you are logged on to the site, sign up for bi-weekly healing words e-mails that will help you keep your pledge alive.

The Words Can Heal Pledge

I pledge to think more about the words I use.

I will try to see how gossip hurts people, including myself,
and work to eliminate it from my life.

I will try to replace words that hurt with words that
encourage, engage and enrich.

I will not become discouraged when I am unable to choose
words perfectly, because making the world a better place is
hard work.

And I am pledging to do that, one word at a time.

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Healing Words in the Family

Top Ten Tips

1. Bite your tongue before you gossip; your tongue may hurt but your family won't.
2. Stop yourself from gossiping by changing the subject or just walking away.
3. Never say derogatory things about yourself; people might agree with you.
4. Never use humor to put others down, especially your spouse or children. And remember, what goes around, comes around.
5. A harsh word, said in haste, is hard to erase. Count to ten and think of a way to say it sweetly.
6. Communicate with your spouse and family with kind and supportive words. Promoting the positive keeps out the gossip and hurt.
7. Kids don't miss a thing. It's up to you to set the example by using healing speech.
8. To have a family that won't gossip about you, you must be a family member who doesn't gossip about them.
9. You are the proud owner of a set of ears; listen to your family's problems, but remember, there are two sides to every story.
10. Family members do disagree; do it with respect, a desire to solve not win, and a loving tone of voice, and everyone will come out on top.

Healing Words for Kids & Teens

Top Ten Tips

[How to Deal with Teasing, Gossip and Other Big Issues]

1 Say nice things about the people around you and they'll do the same for you.

2 Avoid the gossip game; tomorrow you might be "it."

3 When someone confides in you, keep the secret, even from your best friend! You want the same for your secrets, right?

4 Respect yourself for your many talents and great features. Do the same for your siblings and classmates. Appreciate your differences and don't judge. Every person is special and this makes life interesting, rich, and beautiful.

5 Give yourself and others the benefit of the doubt, and reach out. Maybe the person you think is a snob is just shy, or the kid making fun of you is just jealous of your nice family or good grades.

6 Chat rooms and e-mail are fun, but they are not confidential. With the click of a mouse button, hundreds could be reading your real opinion of your friend's new jacket, and your friendship could be ruined, perhaps forever.

7 If you are being teased or ridiculed, don't let the bullies win by believing their taunts. They have a character problem, not you! Stand your ground!

8 Use the **3 P's** if you are being teased or bullied: **Prevent** means learning to know when you might be in a "situation," and getting help from an adult when necessary; **Prepare** to make the first move by being ready to use nonviolent alternatives, like humor or trying to make friends with the bully, and; **Protect** means getting self-defense training, like tae kwan do. Hopefully, you'll never need to use it, but, man, you'll have confidence.*

9 Remember, there are at least two sides to every story. It is far better to help make peace among your family members and friends than to contribute to the quarrel.

10 Disagree with respect, and avoid harsh words with your parents, siblings and friends. A harsh word, said in haste, can take a long time to erase.

*From T.W. Doyle's "Why is Everybody Picking on Me: A Guide to Handling Bullies."

Healing Words in the Family

Fact Sheet



Words spoken by people in positions of authority can seriously affect a child's life. Parents, teachers and peers have the most impact on young people. "Hurtful words can haunt people all their lives and may lead to heart disease, depression, suicide or stress, or even the aggression witnessed in the Littleton, Colorado shootings," reports W. Penn Handwerker, a Professor of Anthropology at the University of Connecticut. ⁽¹⁾



Children are deeply affected by the harsh words of their peers. 160,000 kids are estimated to skip school each day because of intimidation by their peers, ⁽²⁾ and 5.7 million children in grades 6 to 10 have experienced some kind of bullying. ⁽³⁾



Researchers have found that **a few kind words can boost the spirit** and pep of elderly relatives. Avoid using the negative stereotypes of aging, and watch Grandma kick up her heels more often. ⁽⁴⁾



Men are just as likely to gossip as women; they just call it "shop talk," or "shooting the breeze," or even "networking."



Some family members use gossip as a tool to impress people and exert influence. The effect usually wears out, however, as relatives who gossip too much become known as "big mouths" who can't be trusted. Family members may even come to resent them for wasting so much of their time or for stirring up trouble. ⁽⁵⁾



Oversensitivity to perceived insults can cause people to bear a grudge and take revenge. "Not being able to handle insults is the root of many family quarrels," says family counselor and author, Zelig Pliskin. The good news is that **people can learn to change their attitude** and overcome the pain of insults. ⁽⁶⁾



Gossip has been shown to boomerang back on the gossiper. "When you gossip, you become associated with the characteristics you describe, ultimately leading those characteristics to be 'transferred' to you," reports researchers in the APA Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. ⁽⁷⁾



It is tempting to share something told to you in confidence, with family members, especially with a spouse or parent. This act of "I'll just tell you, but don't repeat it to anyone else" often causes embarrassment, financial loss, or other damage to the person who confided in you. Remember that once you reveal a secret, the secret becomes your master, for you live in fear that the secret may become known.

⁽¹⁾ "Hurtful Words Can Have Physical Effect, Says Uconn researcher," by Karen Grava, Office of University Communications. www.news.uconn.edu/re199010.htm, 8/16/99.

⁽²⁾ Cited in "Bullies: The Disturbing Epidemic Behind School Violence," People Magazine, June 4, 2001.

⁽³⁾ "Bullying Widespread in U.S. Schools, Survey Finds," by National Institute of Child Health and Human Development as reported in Journal of the Medical American Association (JAMA), April 25, 2001.

⁽⁴⁾ "Positive Talk About Elderly Can Have An Effect on How They Function," in the Journal of the American Geriatrics Society, November 22, 1999.

⁽⁵⁾ Levin, J & Arluke, A. *Gossip: The Inside Scoop*. New York: Plenum, 1987.

⁽⁶⁾ Pliskin, Z. *Gateway to Happiness*. New York: JLE, 1983.

⁽⁷⁾ "Be Careful with that Gossip" by J. Skowronski et al., Journal of Personality & Social Psychology, April 1998.

Healing Words in the Family

Inspirational Quotes

“Don't react, say it with tact!”

American wisdom

“Children seldom misquote you. In fact, they usually repeat word for word what you shouldn't have said.”

Anonymous

“Whatever words we utter should be chosen with care for people will hear them and be influenced by them for good or ill.”

Siddhartha Gomo or Buddha

“The things most people want to know about are usually none of their business.”

George Bernard Shaw

“Take a moment to formulate the thought you wish to articulate.”

Ellen Shield, a mother

“Who desires life, who loves days of seeing good? Guard your tongue from evil and your lips from speaking deceit.”

Psalms 34

“Who gossips to you will gossip of you.”

Turkish proverb

“Three people are damaged by gossip: the gossiper, the listener and the victim. One simple comment can travel far, damaging everyone in its wake.”

Jewish tradition

“Silence is true wisdom's best reply.”

Euripides

“Sauce can stain a shirt just as hurtful words can stain a heart.”

Internet User Caramello145

“Count him not among your friends who will retail your privacies to the world.”

Publilius Syrus

“A gossip is one who talks to you about others; a bore is one who talks to you about himself; and a brilliant conversationalist is one who talks to you about yourself.”

Lisa Kirk

“Do not go as a talebearer among your people.”

The Bible, Leviticus 19:16

“The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time but to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.”

Dorothy Nevill

Healing Words in Your Marriage

[Adapted from Zelig Pliskin's, Marriage, Chapter 3 (New York, Mesorah Publications, 1998)]

Your words to your spouse can create feelings of joy, love, closeness, gratitude, and maybe even radiant bliss. Your words to your spouse can console, comfort, inspire, motivate, elevate. But other words can create feelings of pain, distress, and anger.

When you choose the right words, you can say things that would create a quarrel had you said them differently. For example, you can say no to a request in a way that creates resentment or ill will. "You don't meet my requests when you don't feel like it, so I'm not going to do what you asked," is such an example. But you can say no in a different way. "I would love to meet your request at a different time. But I'm afraid that I can't say yes right now." As someone once said, "If you can't oblige, at least speak obligingly."

Rushing your spouse by saying "Come on already. What's taking you so long?" in a loud tone of voice so everyone can hear, is highly likely to cause pain. Tone of voice communicates a lot and even under anxious circumstances, like being late, you should be calm and pleasant when you speak. The challenge is how to access a more relaxed state and way to communicate. You might find it more helpful to say in a sweet tone, "You're worth waiting for. Nevertheless, I would appreciate it if you could hurry."

Every statement you make can be phrased in many ways. Choose positive ways to word things. Marriage is a great way to learn tact. Tact is when you say your position in a way that is sensitive to the feelings of the person to whom you are speaking. A husband or wife should avoid speaking in a way that would be considered mocking, belittling, scoffing, derisive, insulting, or a put-down. Sarcasm or jokes at your spouse's expense do not further your vows to love and cherish each other.

Here are some examples of put-downs and the more tactful option:

- ☞ "That's ridiculous." Compare this with: "I see some difficulties with that."
- ☞ "How could anyone in their right mind think that?" Compare this with: "I think that another position has its merits."
- ☞ "That's totally stupid." Compare this with: "Let's look at this in another way."

If your spouse doesn't understand you, it would be tactful to say, "I must not have expressed myself clearly. Let me explain what I mean."

If your spouse claims that your words caused him or her pain, don't argue that you think they really didn't. Apologize.

Do everything you can not to embarrass your spouse or put him or her on the spot. There is no need to point out every single error and mistake. If a mistake is likely to be repeated or needs to be corrected, do it with finesse. Most of the time, it is a one-time error that could, and should, go uncorrected. Your service is to build up your spouse, not bring him or her down.

Some people claim, "I can't control what I say and how I say it," but the control depends on the motivation. Many people actually believe this about themselves. But the very same people can usually control what they say and how they say it if someone they respect knocks on the door. And most people can do this even if the person at the door is a total stranger whom they will never see again.

Now, imagine that this person is your soulmate your other half because he or she is this person. Speak to them with the love and respect you both deserve.

And remember what a wise man once said when asked what came to mind when he thought about an important principle for marriage: "Don't say everything that comes to your mind," he said.

Raising Your Kids

USING POSITIVE SPEECH

[By Sue Dinwiddie]

Positive Speech is a powerful tool in raising your children. Without realizing it, parents easily fall into the habit of saying “no” and “don’t” often to children. Before long children can feel negative or tune-out what the parents are saying. Save “no” for the important, emergency situations. Whenever possible, tell the child what to do, rather than what not to do. Instead of “Don’t slam the door!” say “Please, close the door gently.” Exchange “Don’t talk with your mouth full!” with “Finish chewing your food, then you can tell me.” Children who are treated with respect, tend to become respectful of others.

Ask a question only if you are willing to accept any answer. A parent asks a child if she wants to pick up her toys. The child says, “No!” Where does the parent go from here? If you want your child to pick up toys, tell her: “It is time to put away the toys.”

If your child is resistant, testing the limits, try the Problem-solving Formula to help you determine how to proceed:

1. **Define your problem in behavior terms.**
“My child isn’t picking up toys tonight.”
2. **Gather data.** Look for patterns. How often does this happen? When does it usually happen? Did anything unusual occur shortly before this behavior? Who was around? If your child usually picks up toys, but is very tired tonight following a party, your choice of options will be different than if you child never wants to pick up toys.

3. **Select a positive option.**
Several are listed below.
4. **Implement that option.**
Try it out.
5. **Evaluate how the option worked.** If you aren’t totally satisfied, think about why. What option might have been more effective? Parents get lots of practice. It is almost certain you will have another opportunity to try a different option before long.

Here are a number of positive options which are often successful.

1. **Humor.** Make a game out of putting away the toys and include some fun and laughter. “Teddy Bear, blocks and truck are tired, let’s tuck them in the toy basket for the night. Good night Teddy Bear, good night blocks, good night truck.”
2. **Ignore your child.** If your child is trying to get your attention by negative behavior, is not doing anything harmful to herself or others, and is not damaging materials, you may decide to withhold attention until there is a positive behavior. Can you ignore your child’s toys on the floor? That will depend on your own values and the individual situation. If the toys are in the child’s room and not in the way of others, the parent may decide to ignore them. If things get cluttered and the child cannot find what she wants, she will learn from the consequences of her actions. If the

room is cluttered, the parent may not be able to get in to tuck the child in that night. If this isn't comfortable for you, go to another option.

3. **Redirect the child.** Redirecting is telling a child what to do in place of what she is doing. A parent might begin to drive a truck around placing toys in it while saying, "It is time to drive the toys to the toy basket." The child may soon join in this game.
4. **Direct the child.** Describe the situation, give the child information, be brief, and let the child know your feelings. One effective way to direct children is with an extended "I" statement:

Behavior:

When you leave your toys on the floor,

Emotion:

I feel worried,

Effect:

because I'm afraid I will trip over them,

Desired Behavior:

and I want you to put them in the toy basket.

5. **Restructuring the situation.** This method is often effective. The parent changes the people, the time, or the place. If picking up toys right before the bedtime routine is frequently a problem, the parent might move pick-up time. Pick up toys before dinner is started, then structure in a new routine while dinner is prepared such as listening to story-tapes, drawing pictures, or using play dough in the kitchen. A child who is already in the kitchen might enjoy helping with the food preparation or setting the table. Sometimes, a child will respond better for a while if Dad, rather

than Mom, does pick-up time with her, etc.

6. **Offer choices to your child.** Young children don't respond well to unlimited choices. However, offering a choice between two options is frequently successful. "Do you want to put away Teddy Bear or truck first?" A second level of offering choices is the "When____, then____." approach. "When your toys are in the basket, then we can read the story you have picked out." A third level is the "Either____, or____." technique. "Either you pick up these toys, or I will put them off-limits for a day."
7. **Compromise often works well when time is of the essence.** "I will put Teddy Bear in the toy basket, while you put away the truck." If your child is very tired tonight, but usually does pick up toys, this option would be quick and allow you to get on with going to bed.
8. **Problem-solve together.** When you have time and your child is not tired, hungry or sick, you can brainstorm together what to do about picking up toys. You want to go for win-win solutions. "These toys in the middle of the floor at night are a hazard. I could trip over them; they could get broken. Shall we problem-solve together?" If your child says, "No!" you can go back to one of the preceding options. If your child says, "Yes!" negotiate. Share your feelings and your desires concerning the issue with each other. Listen to your child's reasons for not wanting to pick up toys. Then brainstorm together to resolve this situation. Let your child contribute as many ideas as possible. Children who have opportunities

to problem-solve become adept at generating solutions. They are also invested in the solution they have played a part in finding.

What if your child is so angry that you can't reason with her or get her to respond to anything? Young children easily are engulfed by their emotions. It is helpful to them to have you validate the emotion. "I can see you are very angry! When you feel calmer we can find a way to solve this problem." A highly distraught child can benefit from a short cooling-off period. This is not a punishment, nor a deterrent for the behavior. It is simply a time to cool off. Going to the same place each time helps make the cooling-off period predictable for children. Many children go to their room. Looking at books or playing with toys can help some children calm down. In 2 or 3 minutes the parent goes to the room to see if the child is ready to talk about the situation. Most young children do not need long to cool off. Sometimes parents also need time to cool off. Tell your child. "I am very upset right now! I am going to sit down for a few minutes and cool off. Then we can decide what to do."

Thinking about the behavior in a problem-solving mode can help you decide which option would be best to use. It is beneficial to evaluate the success of the option later, when you have some peace and quiet. As part of your evaluation, check whether you used a short-term, expedient option, such as compromise or redirect, or a long-term learning option, such as problem-solving together. Much of the time parents need a quick, effective strategy to be able to get on with the rest of the day. However, make sure

you build in time for learning strategies. It is the learning strategies which your child will take with her when you are not around to guide her yourself.

Your young child will probably not stop testing limits soon. That is part of her achieving ultimate autonomy. Despite her testing, she needs some limits. Children who have no consistent limits feel confused and out-of-control. You now have a large repertoire of positive ways to set limits for your child. In the long run your child will be more secure if she knows that the adults in her life will continue to have reasonable limits for her as well as guide her in positive ways to meet those limits.

Sue Dinwiddie is a former Head Teacher at Bing Nursery School, Stanford University and an Instructor/Lecturer/Trainer at Peninsula Conflict Resolution Center, Stanford University, Pacific Oaks College, Kaiser Permanente, and Community Colleges. She is a popular presenter at national, state, and local conferences, and is the author of numerous parenting and child development articles. Sue Dinwiddie is an experienced, sensitive teacher of young children and a very effective counselor to parents.