

INTRODUCTION

The New Extended Family: An Overview of the Hybrid Child Care Model

Over the course of their childhood, children today spend up to 12,000 hours in child care outside their home—more total hours than they will spend in elementary, junior high, and high school combined (Greenman 1998). Child care programs are reinventing themselves in response to that fact. Children attending child care centers, Head Start programs, or state-funded preschools on a part-day basis—typically three hours per day during the school year—are in those settings for 500 to 1,000 total hours, depending on whether they attend for one or two years. Clearly, children experience different kinds of lives: children in year-round, ten-hour-per-day programs are living virtually all of every weekday in a child care setting, whereas children in three-hour-per-day programs spend considerably more time at home with a relative or caregiver.

The debate over the past four decades about whether children should be raised at home or in child care is now beside the point. Loving parents may both need to work in order to meet the high cost of living, or both partners may want to continue in careers they love, even as they raise a family, knowing that by leading whole, well-rounded lives they can give their children the gift of emotionally healthy parents. Families headed by a single parent or by kinship caregivers need time to care for their own needs as well as the needs of a small child. Each unique situation brings unique requirements for child care. The bottom line is that parents *are* working out of the home and children *are* spending long days, weeks, and years in child care settings. Child care is here to stay for many children from many different walks of life and many different circumstances. Wealthy families, middle-income families, and families living in poverty all use child care for their children. Children developing typically and those whose development is not following a typical trajectory are in child care settings. Middle-income parents stretch to afford care for their children because they know, as many studies show, that quality child care is good for children and that the quality of care is linked to educated caregivers. It is human nature to want what's best for our children.

Instead of debating whether care in the home or out of the home is best for children, the focus should be on identifying and providing quality child care programs for children who will be in group care. Studies show

that although children who complete certain kindergarten readiness programs do well when they start school, they end up falling behind by the third grade. Children from other kindergarten readiness programs show less dramatic gains in kindergarten but dramatically better long-term school and life success. It's important to know what makes the difference. No child will thrive in an "institutional" setting for ten hours a day. It's also true that the child care experience and the elementary school experience should be very different, as the needs and developmental abilities of children at different ages are so different. The challenge is to reinvent child care so that the long hours away from parent figures and out of the home environment are meaningful, rich, and sustaining, giving every child a wonderful experience in the first years of life.

Applying Research to Quality Care

Much is known about what young children need to live and thrive. Great thinkers have studied and written about human development, the ages and stages of growth, and changes in a child's ability to comprehend and adapt as different levels of understanding correspond with the brain's growth and development during the first five years of life. Psychological studies and research on infant attachment and mental health give insight into the reciprocity between a caregiver and infant and the infant's ability to process and regulate, not only through its nervous system but through its entire being. Occupational therapists, physical therapists, and those who work with the body teach early care and education specialists about physical development. Studies in sensory integration and brain development show how a small child tries to regulate the amount of stimulation he receives and how overstimulation is hard on the development of the nervous system. Theories of mental health systems bring forward the importance of the dynamic that works among all these systems as they come together and play out in the structure of families and in the culture of the child care center.

Although much research is being done on what it means to be a developing human being, this research often reflects only the narrow area of the researcher's interest. Early care and education specialists have the responsibility to draw from research in other fields, to understand and

to think clearly and deeply about what is now known about the needs of young children and how to meet those needs, so that all children can thrive, regardless of the care setting they are in. All the related fields of human development inform how the child care environment should look and feel to a young child. A calm, quiet, restful space is actually a more stimulating learning environment than a brightly colored, busy classroom, which is often pictured as the ideal preschool setting. In the busy classroom, the young child must learn to block out input before she can effectively take in important data from the world around her.

Early childhood pioneers such as Harriet Johnson and Maria Montessori thought carefully about how to enrich not only the school experiences but also the home experiences of young children participating in part-day nursery-school programs. Today, directors and providers in full-day child care programs must think equally carefully about how to enrich the child care and preschool experiences of children who are home for only a small part of the day.

Combining the academic knowledge of the early care and education field with the reality of the lives of today's young families can result in high-quality, sustainable learning and a wonderful support system for families. It was not so long ago that zoologists realized that the animals they cared for would thrive if their habitat better met the needs of their species. Zoologists studied everything known about the needs and preferences of each species: physical space needs; whether or not the species is social, and if so, how to create an optimal social group; what foods support growth; how the animal prefers to receive foods; and so on. Bears needed caves where they could hibernate, and water buffalo needed pools of water to stand in, so zoos were remodeled to provide individual species with what they needed to live and thrive in captivity. Similarly, early care and education providers, teachers, and specialists need to ask what a human child needs in order to live and thrive. Teachers and centers are expanding their imaginations to develop child care settings that show a real understanding of how to care for young children so the children will thrive.

Supporting Learning and Development on Many Levels

Anthropological studies document the evolution of human beings in small multigenerational communities of forty to fifty people who lived and worked together. Their continued existence rested on mutual support and the interdependent needs that brought them together as a society. They helped each other, took care of each other, and created language to communicate and connect with each other. They were also connected to the world around them, as their existence was dependent on understanding the rhythm of the earth, the migration of game, and the cycles of plant growth. Although most of the world's societies have relatively quickly evolved beyond small, earth-connected tribes of people, individual human beings do not evolve as quickly. Organically, the people who lived in those small communities thousands of years ago were at about the same stage of evolution as the people who live in New York City today. That means the things children need to become whole, healthy, productive adults are in fact very similar to what their ancestors needed thousands of years ago, even though many children today live in a crowded, busy, social world full of fast-moving vehicles and electronic gadgets. Children grow to be smart, kind, thoughtful, creative, disciplined, productive people when they feel, from the beginning, loved, safe, and cared for in a world that offers both stimulation and calm, both surprise and predictability, as well as secure, loving connections.

The age-old question of nature versus nurture has become obsolete, reflecting a simplistic understanding of the way human beings take in information. It is now known that learning occurs in the brain in a proximal zone of development: while a child appears to be focused on learning one task, he may in fact be learning other things as well. Information comes into the brain in many ways. In the mind, the ability to receive and organize is regulated by the way sensory input is managed. The brain grows with use and responds to repetition; new experiences initially attract the brain's attention by their novelty, then become familiar, and ultimately become internal and habitual. Creating a new child care setting that will support the complex and complicated way young children learn requires intentional thought and must include the breadth of information avail-

able from the many fields that study the growth and learning of young children.

Psychologist Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs informs and expands on the responsibilities of the full-day child care teacher. Physiological needs are at the base level: human survival requires food, shelter, warmth, and so on. A level of security follows, then love, affection, and community; respect for oneself and others; and finally, self-actualization. Optimal development occurs when all these needs are met. Each level is attainable only after the more basic needs before it have been fulfilled. Clearly, children who spend most of their waking hours in child care need far more than food and safety in order to thrive.

Meeting Multiple Needs in Different Settings

While there is of course some overlap, the following chart, which is from an earlier era, shows a young child’s needs for optimal growth, along with where those needs are expected to be met under the “traditional” part-day model of child care or preschool.

Needs of a Whole, Healthy Preschooler	Met at Part-day Preschool or at Home?
Attached relationship with an adult	Home
Human touch, intimacy	Home
Caring and nurturance (loving support)	Home
Empathy and understanding (reflection)	Home
Challenging motor-development activities	Preschool
Security, ease	Home
Social connection with peers, friends	Preschool
Mystery, joy, beauty	Home
Cognitive/intellectual awareness	Preschool
Change and unpredictability	Home
Opportunities to explore and experiment	Preschool

Today, children in a quality child care setting need to receive all of the “home” experiences listed in the chart both at home *and* in their child

care setting. And, since this chart describes a preschool experience only for three- and four-year-olds in an earlier era, it does not even consider infants and toddlers, who in those days had no formal experiences outside the home. Child care is reinvented and redefined when the needs of the working family *and* the needs of the young child are met, when all that is known about the human mind and about what children need is incorporated into the care offered to children and their families. In the past, three-hour programs viewed issues such as attachment and trust as skills a young child developed from an attached relationship with a parent, skills that could then be transferred to the child's relationship with her teacher. A child in a part-day program who goes home for lunch and a nap and who spends most of his day with a parent does not require the same level of teacher attachment as a child in a ten-hour program. But neither infants entering care at the age of two or three months nor toddlers can be expected to have developed a strong enough parent attachment to easily transfer it to a teacher. A teacher in a full-day program must develop the ability to form attachments with young children by making full use of information from studies on infant mental health and by developing a sensitivity about gaze and touch in order to build a secondary attachment that will support the baby and the family. In a three-hour program, teachers don't have to take on as many of a parent's nurturing roles as they do in a full-day program, since, for example, no lunch is served and there is no naptime. Part-day teachers also don't have to pace themselves for an eight-hour day working with children, nor do they have to think about what to do to help a tired toddler at 4:30 in the afternoon or how to toilet train a toddler.

Achieving Predictability and Consistency in Quality Programs

No teacher could ever replace a parent; a parent's level of intimacy and emotional engagement will always be much deeper than that of the teacher. Attachment with a teacher is more about predictability and the level of safety the child feels. A good full-day program must make it safe for children to explore the world around them, not just physically but emotionally: safe to get into trouble, safe to get mad, safe to try new things,

safe to take a break and rest in the sunshine, safe to understand one's feelings, and safe to learn how to manage oneself in relationships with others. A child must trust that she can express her full self and still be accepted and supported. In a full-day program, the deep yet objective attachment of teacher to child, along with consistent teaching, creates for the children a feeling of safety. A parent's activities and a teacher's activities may become blended unless conscious thought, academic rigor, and creativity come together to redefine the role of the child care teacher.

It is challenging to engage and sustain teachers who understand the complexity and importance of consistency in supporting children's healthy development. For example, it can be difficult to achieve consistency in full-day care, where rooms are commonly staffed by two shifts of teachers who take vacations throughout the year. In a part-day program, on the other hand, it's common for a few teachers to cover the entire half-day, and to vacation when the program is closed for holidays or summer break. Creating a center culture that offers children a consistent philosophical approach as they are cared for throughout the day is made more difficult when teachers bring into their classrooms diverse cultural beliefs about child rearing. Recognizing and working with these challenges are key steps toward creating quality child care.

CONSISTENCY IN PHILOSOPHY AND TEACHING STYLE

In a small family, most of the rules and information about life come from one or two adults. A child in such a family quickly learns to "read" those adults, who usually have closely aligned philosophical approaches. A child in group care has many more adults interacting with him; if he has to spend a lot of time understanding their meanings and motives, he'll have no time left to devote to his own growth! Thus, a quality setting ensures that teachers are thoroughly grounded in a common philosophy and teaching style. In such a setting, the teachers all

- learn to use positive language with the children, even if they themselves were spoken to harshly as children;
- learn to set firm but friendly limits, even if they themselves were raised permissively;
- agree to common procedures for various activities, so that children hear the same instructions from all teachers.

This continuity helps children understand their world and it supports children's cognitive and language development.

Growing up in a home, or in a tribe, children know what to expect of all the adults. At a school where there is a focus on the importance of consistency, all teachers will have agreed on the way they will talk to the children. For example, whenever a child attempts to climb on a table, the teachers will say something similar, such as "Keep your feet on the floor" or "Here's a place to climb over here." If a child begins to run in the classroom, a teacher will say, "Use your walking feet." If a child throws sand, a teacher will say, "Keep the sand down." If a child starts yelling at another child, a teacher will remind him, "Use a talking voice." Throughout each day, children receive messages about what they can do and how they can do what they want in an acceptable way. A teacher's ability to convey optimism in her language helps children develop optimism in themselves, for they will then trust that they are good learners and will do better the next time a similar situation comes up. Making negative statements such as "Get down!" "Stop running!" "Don't throw that sand!" or "Stop yelling!" conveys a message that the child is not doing what he *should* do, and the child will therefore likely stop listening to the teacher's comments.

Teachers match their expectations to a child's development, so that a child never feels more is being asked of her than she can manage. The unique, positive, constructive stance of the early care and education teacher builds an ambience for the child's day; it is the teacher's goal to communicate to the child over and over and in every circumstance that she believes the child is a wonderful human being who is doing his best and is capable of learning and managing his world. Teachers develop a kind of "ECE speak" as they learn to turn negative statements into positive ones, and to coach a child to be the best person he can be.

The Importance of Fulfilled Teachers

Teachers in full-day programs need deeper nurturing than teachers in part-day programs. Teachers working forty hour weeks need to replenish themselves while on the job so that they can keep giving of themselves to the children. The pleasure of watching and guiding the emerging development of the human beings in their care is enhanced when teachers are

given the opportunity to grow professionally and to intellectualize their teaching and learning every day. Fulfilled teachers believe in their work, trust each other to contribute thoughtfully to the community, and trust their ability to guide and support the self-righting nature of child development. Teachers who are stressed and unfulfilled cannot give children the optimistic, trusting environment that will enable them to feel safe and be able to grow.

Parents who entrust most of their children's waking hours to a child care center must likewise trust that the teachers are educated and thoughtful in their work, and are putting the children's best interests at the forefront of their planning. Parents learn to trust teachers by developing their own attached relationships with them. Ellen Galinsky's phrase "the new extended family" describes this model of relationship-based care for the entire family. Whereas part-day nursery schools developed around a young child's need for enriched group experiences outside the home, quality child care settings today need to serve the entire family. They need to allow parents to go to work or school each day with the knowledge that their children are having a wonderful experience—not the same experience they might have at home, perhaps, but one that is rich, nurturing, developmentally appropriate, and sustaining. During the first days of transition into child care, when a parent watches the teachers' interactions with all the children in the group as well as with her own treasured child, the teachers begin to earn that parent's trust by responding respectfully, thoughtfully, and appropriately to the children's needs. When a parent's natural inclination to be distressed about leaving her baby with strangers for the first time is met with compassionate support from the teacher, more trust is built. Over time, a teacher's opportunity to build trust with parents is much more limited than her opportunity to build trust with the children, so the teacher should make the most of every opportunity to help parents understand that she is an educated, thoughtful, caring partner working to sustain and support a healthy family dynamic.

Quality child care settings give children the message that they can be themselves, accepted as they are but also challenged to grow at a pace that is right for them. In spending days with teachers who understand child development, children learn that the world will support their efforts to succeed. The teacher works within the child's development to

help establish constructive habits, patterns of self-management, and social interaction that will serve him throughout life. The teacher holds a common goal in her mind, toward which each individual child can move in process with the other individuals in the group. While responding to each child's unique developmental process, the teacher also guides. She holds the expectation that each child will mature and develop when given the tools to do so.

When there are difficulties in a classroom, the teacher's response is based on three key assumptions:

1. The child has formed a trusting relationship with the teacher.
2. The child is not able (rather than not willing) to conform to expectations in the current situation.
3. The teacher is responsible for making the classroom work for the children.

A relationship with the teacher provides an incentive for the child to moderate his behavior because he cares about what is important to that teacher. If such a relationship has not yet been formed, the teacher does not expect the child to be as able to self-manage, and she puts a priority on building that relationship. The teacher also truly believes that a child who makes a social mistake has made a mistake and needs more coaching and support to do better the next time. Some aspect of the situation, either internal to the child or part of the external environment, interferes with his ability to manage what the other children can manage.

Most of all, the teacher believes it is her job to adapt the classroom, teaching practices, routines, or schedules to best support the needs of the children. Operating on these beliefs, the teacher accepts responsibility for using all her education, skill, analysis, and ingenuity to create a day that works for the children.

An Extended Home

The new child care serves not just as an extended family for children, it also serves as an extended home. While the relationships among children, teachers, and parents are paramount, the physical space is also important to consider. Children whose lives are largely lived in a child care

facility need to experience all the warmth and interest of a home while in that facility. In most homes, rooms are painted different colors and the functional furnishings are augmented with knickknacks, photos, plants, art, family treasures, and so forth. Classrooms in child care centers also need diverse adornment. Each classroom should feel unique, just as the rooms of a home are unique. The learning experience in the child care center is holistic; the message a child receives from growing up in a child care setting where the environment is varied is that the world is interesting, fun, and full of things to think about and learn about. In contrast to children in full-day child care, elementary school children are in a school setting for less than half their waking hours; the focus of their learning is intellectual development. The elementary school environment is also very focused on intellectual stimulation, and on teacher-directed learning.

ENVIRONMENTS THAT NURTURE AND SUPPORT GROWTH

In a child care setting, children need to see beauty around them, interesting artwork on the walls, growing things in the rooms, a variety of fabrics in the play areas, vases of flowers, and so forth. Children's bodies are growing and their minds are organizing themselves; they need room for quiet and for peaceful solitude. The child care environment should support a child's ability to slow down and just be. It is in quiet that new thoughts arise and creative ideas bubble up. Building quiet into a child care environment and establishing a daily pace for children that supports it is vital. In creating a learning environment that supports the wholeness of what it is to be human, a new concept of child care takes form.

Most homes are organized and orderly. Teachers step back and look at their classroom, their work area, and the children's living space, taking notice if hundreds of play materials are jammed too tightly on the shelves or if children's artwork hangs from every surface. Such situations are overstimulating and are not conducive to providing a quality learning space. Teachers also review furniture placement, making sure play spaces are protected from traffic and that children can move around comfortably. It doesn't take a deep understanding of the needs of human beings and their development to imagine what impact long days in cramped or cluttered spaces can have on a developing human.

An infant room must have soft fabric elements, even though such elements will require washing. If everything in a room can be sprayed or

wiped, the room will fail to meet the tactile needs of infants. And spaces for children should be kept small, more like a room in a home than like an elementary school classroom.

An outdoor play space offering exposure to the natural world augments the indoor space. Fresh air and a place for noise to escape shifts the classroom dynamic, refreshing children and teachers alike during a long child care day. Nature brings unpredictability and wonder to children's experiences. The weather changes, the seasons change, plants and animals grow and change. One day there is a bug under a rock or a snail on a leaf; the next day there is not. One day there are fluffy clouds in the sky; the next day the sky is dark and full of rain. While the teacher can plan a science curriculum, there is no curriculum so interesting as that which children discover in the course of outdoor play. The support and sustaining qualities of nature can be intentionally brought into the classroom as well—autumn leaves in the fall, flower blossoms in the spring, and rich loamy soil to dig in during any season all bring the human connection to the earth to the children and support their feeling of belonging.

A DIFFERENT PACE

The pace of life for children is different in full-day settings than in part-day settings. Children in part-day programs may to some extent be there for excitement in an otherwise quiet day. They have only a few hours to play with the toys, make friends, and learn to get along in a group. Part-day programs commonly operate on a school-year calendar, closing for a few weeks in winter and spring, and for several months in summer, resulting in about 500 classroom hours per year. Contrast that with over 2,500 annual enrollment hours for a child who attends full-day child care fifty-two hours per week, fifty-one weeks of the year. The child in a full-day program spends five times as many hours there as a child in a part-day program. If a full-day program offered the same stimulating schedule as a part-day program but for five times as many hours, a child would become overwhelmed and exhausted. Such a child would have lots of time to play, lots of time to be with friends, and lots of time to learn about being in a group. But a child needs time to pace herself more than she needs a flurry of activity over a few hours. She needs to know that during her long days in a group, she will always be able to find a quiet corner where she can play alone, just as she might at home. As she begins learning about the reci-

procity of friendship, she needs to know that the teacher will respect her need to play with just one other friend, as she might at home. She needs to know that the teacher will help her learn to build rhythm into her days, by balancing activities and creating a predictable schedule, just as she might experience at home.

Life itself becomes a major part of the full-day curriculum. Along with playing with toys, a child's basic body and self-care functions are activities through which relationships are built. Unlike a parent at home, the teacher in a child care setting is never in a hurry to run to the store, start the laundry, or pick up a sibling at school; she is in the classroom to meet children's needs. Ideally, if a toddler wants to sit and work at putting on his own shoes for thirty minutes, the teacher can let him, since that activity is every bit as challenging as putting together a puzzle. The teacher in a part-day program might worry that a child who spends extended time putting on shoes is missing out on chances to play with other children, but in the full-day setting the child has plenty of other time for play.

Full-day children learning to use the toilet have their own baskets of clothes handy, so they can quickly change if they have an accident. A child who loves clothing may spend a lot of time changing from one outfit to another just because he enjoys it. Children learning to serve themselves at lunch are given dishes they can manage, such as a two-cup pitcher to pour from rather than a half-gallon milk carton. Children set the table and then clear dishes after they eat, and they prepare snacks for themselves as they are able. These are all examples of how the pace of the program slows, balancing home and school experiences throughout the day.

AN INCLUSIVE FAMILY

Every type of family constellation participates in the child care center. Children with parents of different race or ethnicity and children with different cultures and belief structures come into the program. There are children with physical challenges growing right alongside children being raised by single or same-sex parents, aunts or grandmothers; and children from more typical family structures. All children love their families and are proud of them, which is important to their healthy development. This love is unconditional, regardless of circumstances. When the teacher and the school set a standard that is open and inclusive, all children and families feel respected, cared for, and accepted as they are.

Classrooms are stocked with books about all kinds of families, affirming for the children that who they are and how they look can be found in the stories they read. Seeing Chinese writing helps with the concept of reading even if the primary language in the school is English, because if the child has a grandma who reads the Chinese newspaper at home, the characters have the same meaning to the child as our English letters. Similarly, putting African gourds in the dollhouse will have meaning if there is a child in the group who has family members who cook with gourds and if the teachers show all the children how to cook with gourds.

Young children first need to play with and learn about real things from their own experiences. Later, the teacher can introduce difference, but for the difference to be valuable, it must link with the real and known. To a young child, a wheelchair is not very different from a stroller unless the child understands how important a wheelchair is to someone she loves who cannot get around without it. When a toy wheelchair is introduced in the doll corner, children will play with it as a stroller unless they have an understanding of the difference between a stroller and a wheelchair. Thoughtful teachers keep these subtleties in mind as they introduce new and different objects to the classroom; a wheelbarrow in the play yard in a farming community will have a very different meaning and value from the same wheelbarrow in the play yard at a city school. While a wheelbarrow, a wheelchair, Chinese writing, and a cooking gourd are very different objects, they all need meaning to be valuable learning toys for young children, whose understanding of the world is so concrete and literal.

When developing an open and inclusive curriculum for the children, one that represents diversity and multiculturalism, it's important to shift away from adult thinking. Adult thinking has been influenced by years of experience, so it can be challenging to put that aside and experience the world as a baby does, without thinking in words, or to recall what it's like to react impulsively, without thinking about good or bad consequences. Standing in the child's world, thinking with the child's mind, and keeping pace with the child's life experience are not easy accomplishments for adults, but they do inform adults about how to understand the child and meet her needs. It's easy for adults to think that children understand more about the world than they actually do, because children learn language from adults and use the same inflection and tone as adults do when they speak, even though they may actually have no idea what they're saying.

An astute mother shared a conversation she had with her three-year-old on the way to school one day:

We were coming down the hill into town and Russell, strapped in the backseat in his car seat, said, “Mom, I see a bad guy! He’s over there hiding in the bushes. He’s a black guy! He’s peeking in the window of that house. Now he’s looking in the other window!” I was so distressed. My mind was going all over the place wondering: Should I stop? What should I do? What is he seeing? Why did my child automatically think a “black guy” was a bad guy? Just as I was looking for a place to pull over and turn around and talk to him so I could get some more information, he said, “Yep, he’s black all over and has a waggy tail and says woof!”

The mother realized that *her* mind had jumped to all kinds of conclusions that had nothing to do with what her child was thinking, and she realized that if she had responded, she would have been completely out of attunement. It is this lack of attunement that makes adults laugh at children’s misunderstandings—something teachers are careful not to do. Children perceive and discuss difference in accordance with their developmental ability to take in and process information. When children are interested in sorting (by about their fourth year), they sort everything. They will sort people by color, size, shape, and gender. The experience has very little to do with anything but sorting, even though it may look like race awareness; depending on the child, he or she may or may not have an understanding of racial differences (as in the scene between Anne and Bea’s grandma found in chapter 7). Adults think carefully about their reactions because children pick up on the emotion behind words or actions before they listen to or even care about the words. Helping parents understand this point and respond appropriately builds the parent-child relationship and can set in place and strengthen trusting family relationships.

A child care center can give children the opportunity to learn about and enjoy all kinds of people with many different needs. Children with special needs are carefully enfolded into the group, with a thoughtful eye toward what is in the child’s best interest. Children with processing

issues need environments that are quiet, orderly, and predictable. Young children with Asperger's syndrome need a more rigid classroom structure in order to manage in their mind the chaos that is inevitably created by so many unpredictable children. The needs of children with hearing, vision, or mobility impairment must be met in special ways so they, too, can experience the world as an interesting, joyful place to be. The child care center director and teachers must ensure that all the children in their setting get what they need. This may include helping a family to find more appropriate placement for a child when the center cannot provide what he needs, and recognizing that meeting each child's needs means that one or two children cannot require all of the teacher's attention. If there are children who require a high level of support, the center has an obligation to make adjustments until all children are receiving what they need.

The Hybrid Setting as a Second Home

The new hybrid child care, which mixes the best of a thoughtful child development center with the nurturing support of a home, truly is a haven for children. The following story illustrates how nicely the concept supports a child.

One night as mom is settling three-year-old Ruth in bed, Ruth confides, "I was mad at naptime today."

Mom asks, "Why were you mad?"

Ruth says, "I didn't want to take a nap."

"What did your teacher do when you didn't want to take a nap?" inquires Mom.

Ruth answers, "She patted my back and I yelled and I kicked my feet. I made a lot of noise while the other kids were trying to go to sleep."

Mom asks, "And did your teacher get mad?"

Ruth bursts into laughter at such a question and answers, "Teachers don't get mad!" in the tone that implies "You must not know anything."

Mom can't resist asking, "Do mommies and daddies get mad?"

*Ruth's eyes get big as she says, with the certainty born of experience,
"Oh yes, they get mad!"*

What a wonderful thing it is for children to have such confidence that they can be as aggravating as they can be, and their teachers will go right on giving them loving support and guidance so they won't need to act that way! What a gift to parents it is to know that their children are held in the care of teachers who can maintain a professional stance in the face of their children's tantrums!

The child care center that successfully creates the new extended family creates a culture of gentle caring and guidance for everyone: parents, staff, and children. Just as in a family home, day in and day out everyone counts, everyone plays an important role, and everyone speaks kindly to one another, assists one another when needed, offers positive suggestions, and accepts one another's strengths as well as their need to grow in some areas. The utopian world that is modeled for young children in such a setting becomes the child's expected model for the world. Though, of course, the "real world" lacks some of these qualities, teachers who convince each child to expect utopia are setting the stage for a world in which children will use their power to make it so.

Incorporating the best qualities of a loving, supportive, attuned home with the enrichment and wisdom of a wonderful early education setting, the hybrid child care setting is described in the chapters that follow. Teachers in this hybrid program teach thoughtfully and intentionally. They are aware that since the human mind is always learning, all hours of the day are equally valuable: what happens at ten o'clock in the morning is as valuable as what happens at five o'clock at night. They recognize that each experience builds the proximal zones of learning, whether that learning is about mommy, how to manage feelings, how to be in a relationship, about oneself, what is allowed, when it's good to get help, how to count, how to wait, or how to start and how to stop an activity. These teachers respect the way a child spends her time throughout the day. They meet the needs of the whole child, developing the mind, body, and soul in a full-day, year-round child care program.