

Docia Shares a Story about Birthdays

Deane Phinney was having a conversation with one of her grandchildren about birthdays and he said to her, "Now, let's get this straight. I go to bed and I'm four and I wake up and I'm five." "Right," she said.

Whether young or old, every 365 days one has a birthday and becomes a year older. There is something universal about birthdays. I love them. They are one's very own to treasure and enjoy. I think young children share that love. All one has to do is watch their faces as others sing to them and watch their response to being special and getting extra attention.

On my mother's 87th birthday, she went with me to a child care center to celebrate the day with Maegan, who was also having a birthday. That my mother was 82 years older than Maegan made no difference to the children. They put a birthday hat on my mother's head, sang Happy Birthday to her with gusto, laughed at her trying to blow out 87 candles, served her ice cream and cake, and told her in great detail all the happenings of their day.

When Marcia, the children's teacher, asked them if they wanted to tell my mother anything, David, whose mother was a nurse, said, "You walk funny. You should get a shot in your bottom so you walk better." Letitia said, "You sing good, but I sing better. You hafta practice." Anthony told her she should come again and bring more cake.

My mother and I left the center laden with children's drawings and the warm glow of

having experienced a wonderful, heart warming happening. How nice to be remembered and even pampered.

I hope that whoever and wherever you are, if it is your birthday, it is as happy a one as the one the children and adults shared with my mother, 87, and Maegan, 5.

Docia Zavitkovsky has furthered the cause of young children as a practitioner in the field for over 45 years and as past president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children. Known far and wide for her storytelling, she has traveled extensively as an early childhood consultant, lecturer, and adventurer.

The Perfect Birthday Gift — Docia's Stories

Our new book, **Docia's Stories**, shares insightful stories of Docia Zavitkovsky from past issues of **Child Care Information Exchange**. It was a big hit at NAEYC and will be an even bigger hit with your teachers and parents.

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