

Docia Shares a Story

FUN AND LEARNING

We always say that young children can have fun and learn at the same time. This can be true for adults, too — even at staff meetings.

Rose Honda is supervisor of a preschool children's center. Because the center is open 10 hours a day, it is impossible to schedule a meeting during hours the center is in operation. She solves the problem by having potluck supper meetings. Everyone on the staff can attend — cook, nurse, housekeeper, aides, teachers, and supervisor.

There are no interruptions, no demands, no need to follow an activity schedule, no children needing special attention — just eating, meeting, and enjoying the companionship of fellow staff members.

Inevitably, stories about children in the center are told. Many of them are humorous. All of them are original. All have meaning. All provoke much laughter.

Miriam and the children in her group were talking about where their legs, ankles, toes, wrists, hands, arms, and elbows were. Which was their big toe and which was their thumb? When she leaned over to help Billy put on his sock, he said, "Teacher, I can see your lungs!"

Mark was standing at the toilet. He looked worried. Rose asked him if she could help him. He said, "I can't find it."

Becky, the cook, was sitting on a stool in the kitchen chopping vegetables. Dwayne, a four year old, came over to her, looked at the stool and then at her, and said, "You don't fit."

When the meeting begins, problems on the agenda no longer seem so big. Issues are defined and clarified; and decisions are made. Discussion is lively and everybody participates. Lines of communication are strengthened; and, as Rose says, "It is just great to be together. It's special and fun. We have so little time to talk and laugh and share during the day. We go home better informed and feeling we are an integral part of the staff."

How true. How true.



Photograph by Jean Berlfein

Docia Zavitkovsky has furthered the cause of young children as a practitioner in the field for over 50 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.
