

Docia Shares a Story

How many people did you smile at today?

My primary physician at Kaiser recently had a baby girl named Alexandria. She is now four months old. When I asked Dr. Velez what she loved about Alexandria, her face lit up and she said, "Her smile. I love it when she looks at me and smiles. She smiles, I smile, and everything seems right with the world."

Sometimes it is the spontaneous remark of a child that makes us smile. When John told his five-year-old son that he didn't have to make such faces and didn't need to say he didn't like the food, David said, "I didn't say I didn't like the food. I just said, 'Yuck'."

Sometimes it is like the picture of Miriam Mercado Mercado on the cover of the January/February issue of *Child Care Information Exchange*, and sometimes it is answers to a question such as the one posed by Dave La Rocque and friends, "What does love mean?"

Elaine, age 5 *Love is when mommy gives daddy the best piece of chicken.*

Nikka, age 6 *If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.*

Terri, age 4 *Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.*

Karen, age 7 *When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.*

Karl, age 5 *Love is when a girl puts on perfume and the boy puts on shaving cologne and then they go out and smell each other.*

Whatever the reason, whether young or old, a smile wins more points than a frown, or an impatient or angry expression — not a phony smile but a genuine, caring, loving, appreciative, or understanding smile.

"If a child smiles, if an adult smiles . . . if in our daily lives we can smile . . . if we really know how to live, what better way to start the day than with a smile? Our smile affirms our awareness and determination to live in peace and joy . . . our smile will bring happiness to us and to those around us."

— *Thich Nhat Hanh*

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.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEAN BERLFEIN

Known far and wide for her storytelling, she has traveled extensively as an early childhood consultant, lecturer, and adventurer.

