

Docia Shares a Story

Just As I Was Wondering . . .

Just as I was wondering what was being done that was creative and different in early childhood centers, two events captured my attention and reassured me that even in troubled times, imagination and ingenuity are alive and functioning.

First

An article in the *Los Angeles Times* titled, "For An Aspiring Trash Hauler, Cake and Crafts At The Dump" by Wendy Thermos, told how Michael Wong Sasso celebrated his seventh birthday at the Sunshine Canyon Landfill where Browning Ferris Industries set aside a pile of clean dirt away from bulldozers and out of range of odors for Michael and his friends to play. Recycled cardboard, colored paper, flour dough, and other materials were available for creating toys to use with assorted play dump trucks. According to his mother, Michael has been interested in being a garbage collector since he was two years old. Michael said he liked big trucks, liked putting trash where it belonged, liked making the world cleaner. A family friend, Piedad Velasquez, thought it great that the parents supported Michael's wish to be a trash hauler and said, "We really need kids who think that way. Not everyone can grow up to be a nuclear scientist."

Second

I visited the Seattle Central Community College Parent/Child Center's weekly two hour class on campus with my friend Lis, her six month old daughter Ellie, and her three year old son, Dillon. I sat and watched parents play and interact with the children for the first hour and attended the parent meeting held in a cozy section of the room for the second hour. I kept thinking how wonderful it would be if all families had the opportunity to participate in programs like this, where teachers, parents, and children are involved together in growing, developing, learning, and having fun experiences. As I was sharing my thoughts with Karin Watson, the instructor for the parenting class, I noticed a child climbing into what looked like a little hideaway space. I watched her cover herself with a blanket and look up at the roof where there was a big mirror. When I asked Karin about it, she smiled and said, "Oh, that's what we call our Womb With A View. A child can go into it at any time."

It is amazing, and yes, sometimes amusing, how a choice of words can change one's perspective. "Womb with A View" rather than space in a cabinet for example. I'm going to put my mind to work to see if I can come up with some ideas that are novel, inventive, inspiring, motivating, and refreshing that will brighten our programs. Won't you join me? As you think of them, send them to me, in care of *Child Care Information Exchange*. Happy putting your mind to work!

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.



PHOTOGRAPH BY JEAN BERLFEIN

