

Docia Shares a Story: On Beginnings and Endings

by Docia Zavitkovsky

We were sitting around the dinner table, talking as we often do, about how young children put things into words that make us chuckle and at the same time amaze us with their insight.

June Patterson remembered how a teacher of a group of four year olds was going to have a baby and the children had a surprise party for her. In the midst of it, one of the children came up to her and whispered in her ear, "You better get some clothes for him — they come out naked, you know."

I remembered a one year old playing in the backyard in his playpen, *sans* clothes in order to get the full benefit of the sun. Two neighbor boys came by and stopped to watch for a few minutes. Then one of the boys turned to the other and said, "This one just arrived."

This reminded Betsy Hiteshew of the almost five-year-old boy whose father was a minister. Henny Penny, the child care center's favorite pet (a chicken) died. The children held a meeting and decided to bury Henny Penny and have a small service for her. Any child who wished could say a few words. One child said that Henny Penny had pretty feathers. Another child said that Henny Penny laid lots of eggs. Then it was the minister's son's turn. He stood up, spread his arms out, and in his best preacher voice said, "Henny Penny died, but she will rise victorious on Easter day. Amen!"

Just goes to show that in the minds of young children, big thoughts grow. What a great way to start a parent-staff meeting on beginnings and endings, birth and death.

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.



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