

## National Assn for the Education of Young Children Rejects Achievement Standards, Demands Anti-Bias

### 'Anti-Bias' Means Anti-Christian in NAEYC Pre-School Curriculum



Janie Martin

DENVER, CO — The author of an "anti-bias" curriculum for young children conceded at recent annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that the educational material she produced is biased — against Christians. "It's because Christians just think they're right," Louise Derman-Sparks said at the session entitled "Is It An Anti-Bias Activity or What?" The influential educator was

responding to criticism from Janie Martin, director of children's ministries for the Faith Presbyterian Church in Colorado, during the NAEYC convention in Denver, November 7-10, 1991.

In her 149-page book, entitled *Anti-Bias Curriculum: Tools for Empowering Young Children* (published by the National Association for the Education of Young Children in 1989), Derman-Sparks advocates an "active/activist approach to challenging prejudice," arguing that "it is not sufficient to be non-biased." According to Derman-Sparks, "it is necessary for each individual to actively intervene, to challenge and counter the personal and institutional behaviors that perpetuate oppression." Prejudice, as defined by the curriculum, includes racism, sexism, handicappism, and homophobia — but not, evidently, discrimination against believers.

In an article published in the winter issue of the *Colorado News Digest*, Janie Martin observed that the "anti-bias" urges educators to teach that homosexuality and lesbianism are acceptable lifestyles (like being left-handed), and that witches are good and are healers." Though acknowledging "the religious beliefs of other cultures," Mrs. Martin continued, the curriculum "has omitted — and even discouraged — any recognition of God.

All children of Christian faith are ignored."

Mrs. Martin urges people "to read the curriculum, to know what is going on," by ordering the Derman-Sparks book from NAEYC headquarters (1-800-424-2460).



"There's an agenda behind this," she insists, noting that the 7,000 homosexual members of the NAEYC are "a very loud and forceful group." At the November convention, they conducted a gay and lesbian caucus for gay and

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Observers who attended the last annual conference of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) are beginning to voice their concerns about the group's new ideological trends. Those trends reflect a significant change in the organization's goals and in the methodology it recommends for educating youngsters.

NAEYC is a 72,000 member group that offers services and resources and networking to those working in the field of early childhood education. Its annual conference was held in Denver, Colorado on November 7-10, 1991, and was attended by 18,000 teachers, principals, daycare providers, and child development professionals.

NAEYC seeks to become the official, national accrediting agency for all those working with young children, including daycare providers, baby-sitters, and teachers of preschoolers, kindergartners, and elementary grades. The achievement of this goal would make NAEYC a major, if not decisive, player in setting guidelines for preschool and early elementary curriculum and personnel.

The conference's major theme in methodology was the shift to non-directive education. That means changing from teacher-directed to child-directed education. This changed role of the teacher from director-initiator to facilitator-supporter was urged by speakers who selected curriculum materials, but the children would be empowered to use them in their own way.

This process involves the elimination of formal benchmarks of achievement and their replacement with a facilitator model, in which the instructor's chief function would be to encourage children to progress according to their individual interests in their own unique time-frame.

Nancy Kael of Early Childhood Resources urged "a reduced emphasis on isolated skill development in the learning approach. What's important," she said, "is whether the child is gaining whole concepts."

Carolyn Cummings of the National Association of State Boards of Education recommended "a hazing of the lock step specific boundaries between grade levels." According to John Gunnarson of Early Childhood Resources, "Learning no longer consists of benchmarks to be achieved, but is seen as a continuum."

Carolyn Cummings explained that the "continuum" philosophy is based on the rationale that "we can't punish the children who come from different environments." Standardized testing was denounced in favor of alternative assessments. A higher priority was based on an individual's learning style than on specific standards of academic excellence.

In this new approach, referred to as promoting child autonomy, youngsters will set up their daily routine according to what they are interested in. The teacher will act as a guide and not dictate what the child will do or at what time.

Ungraded primary units or portfolio assessments are planned to do away with traditional report cards. Cooperative learning, desk-grouping, and exchange of information among children, with the teacher as observer, are all

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## Study Shows Zero Results For 20 Years of Desegregation

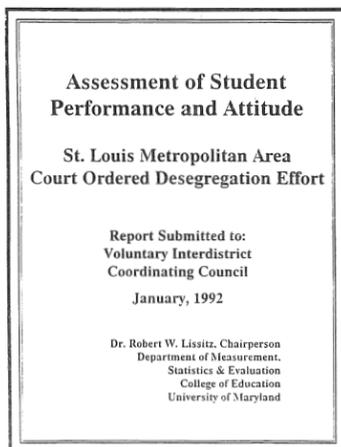
A court-ordered study concluded in January that the St. Louis desegregation program has produced no benefit in terms of academic achievement or attitude among participating students, despite expenditures of \$1.2 billion to date.

The study, titled "Assessment of Student Performance and Attitude: St. Louis Metropolitan Area Report Desegregation Effort," was prepared by Dr. Robert W. Lissitz of the Department of Measurement, Statistics & Evaluation of the University of Maryland's College of Education. Its \$63,000 cost was financed by the Voluntary Interdistrict Coordinating Council (V.I.C.C.) which oversees the two-way transfer of students between St. Louis city and county.

Ordered by the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals in June 1990, the 316 page study compared the reading, writing and math scores of black city students bused to predominately white county schools with the test scores of other black students attending (1) all-black city schools, (2) integrated city schools, and (3) city magnet schools.

The most significant of the many conclusions reached by the Lissitz study is that the number

of months a student participates in the transfer program has no bearing on either that student's academic achievement or attitudes. The study's conclusion #19 states: "The correlation of both attitude items and achievement to months in the transfer program is essentially zero."



In other words, there is no evidence that being in the voluntary transfer program for a longer period of time produces benefits in terms of either attitude or academic achievement.

Ironically, the study found the achievement of the transfer students to be the lowest relative to the other three groups.

These results were "a tremendous disappointment," according to Susan Uchitelle, the \$70,000-a-year head of V.I.C.C. (the transfer program). Minnie Liddell, who led a parents group that initiated the original lawsuit against the St. Louis School Board 20 years ago to force desegregation, said: "We imagined sweeping advances. This has not materialized... It's very depressing. We've missed our goals."

The Lissitz research design involved collecting data from 11,100 black students in the four groups at grades 4, 6, 8, and 10. Math and reading scores were derived from the Stanford Achievement Test, a popular nationally-standardized test, while writing scores were determined by student performance on a Writing Assessment.

A survey of black transfer students was also included to determine if attitude changes correspond with participation in the interdistrict transfer. This attitude survey asked questions about each student's perception of such concerns as the fairness of teachers and administrators,

See *Study*, page 4

## EDUCATION BRIEFS

Professor Edward Zigler gave the keynote address at a conference called "Missouri Woman '92" sponsored by Senator Kit Bond (R-MO) on Jan. 31 in St. Louis. Zigler's theme was one he has been promoting for years, namely, that America's \$2 trillion investment in public schools should be further utilized by having them accommodate children aged 3 and 4, and by keeping the schools open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., 12 months a year. For children younger than 3, a "home visitor" should be there to help, as is currently done in the "Parents as Teachers" program. Zigler was still crying in his speech about President Richard Nixon's 1971 veto of the Mondale-Brademas Child Development bill. (That bill was the original master plan of the child development/social service bureaucracy to take over the raising of preschool children.)

Multiculturalism has triumphed at our nation's colleges and universities. More than half are giving students a dose of multiculturalism throughout the curriculum, according to a new survey. More than a third are forcing students to study issues of race and sex through new multicultural general education requirements on such topics as Women's studies, African-American studies, Hispanic-American studies, Native American studies, and Asian-American studies. "The question is no longer whether students should learn about diverse cultures, but how," according to a spokesman for the Association of American Colleges.

The shocking news about the hundreds of errors in history textbooks published by major U.S. publishers, reported in the *Education Reporter*, Dec. 1991, finally was covered in the *Wall Street Journal* on Feb. 12. The 7th through 12th grade textbooks were published by some of the country's major publishers: Holt, Rinehart; Houghton Mifflin; Macmillan/McGraw-Hill; Scott, Foresman; and Prentice Hall, and involved \$20.3 million worth of sales to Texas schools. The errors were discovered by longtime textbook critics, Mel and Norma Gabler of Longview, TX. After the publishers' experts spent a month cleaning up mistakes, the Gablers found 162 new errors. The final tally was a staggering 5,200 mistakes, and the Texas School Board imposed fines of \$547,000.

Ninety percent of U.S. students are learning below international averages in math and science, according to a recent survey by the Educational Testing Service. The survey shows that American 13-year-olds scored lower in science than top-ranked South Korea, Taiwan, Switzerland, the former Soviet Union, Hungary, France, Italy, Israel, Canada, Scotland, Slovenia, and Spain. U.S. students also scored considerably lower than their South Korean peers on the mathematics tests. American 13-year-olds scored 55% correct against South Korea's 73%.

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# KC's Expensive Desegregation Plan Causes Controversy

Kansas City's extravagant desegregation plan spares no expense as it seeks to attract white students from the suburbs to city public schools. The entrance to Central High, a new magnet school costing \$33.5 million, opens into a high ceilinged circular lobby decorated with stone statues of Greek figures. This formerly all-black school located in a black neighborhood also has an Olympic-sized swimming pool, racquet ball courts, and one of the best high school weight rooms in the nation. The school's fencing coach was a former world champion for the Soviet national team. The computer-to-student ratio in the computer program is nearly 1 to 1.

Another Kansas City public school has a planetarium, and another has a television studio. Some elementary schools have outdoor amphitheaters and greenhouses.

and left the tab for the state to pick up." "They have just gone completely berserk with every bell and whistle," said Michael J. Fields, a Missouri assistant attorney general. "What we are against is the absolute waste of state resources on things that are in our opinion totally unnecessary to achieve compliance with the constitutional requirements."

The Kansas City desegregation program has intensified the state's budget problems. Last year, Missouri had to come up with \$71 million for desegregation that the state hadn't counted on paying.

Because the plan's cost has prompted such sharp criticism, a committee was appointed last summer by a federal judge to monitor whether the dollars for the program have been well spent.



Olympic-sized swimming pool at Central High School. Part of the Kansas City desegregation program. Photo: St. Louis Post-Dispatch

This is all part of the Kansas City School District's plan to rebuild dilapidated city schools and desegregate them at the same time. The idea is to build schools with such outstanding facilities that they will not only benefit minorities in the city, but attract white students from the affluent suburbs. The plan has already cost Missouri taxpayers \$570.7 million and is the most expensive plan in the nation.

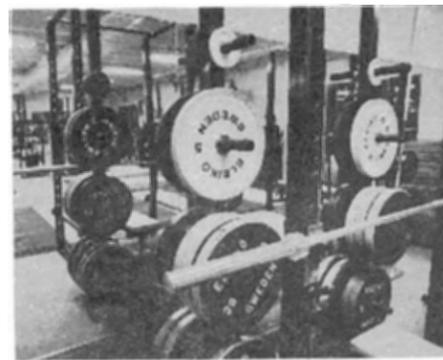
Clinton Adams, whose 9-year-old daughter attends a magnet elementary school, worries that the district has put too much emphasis on good buildings and not enough on good classes. "What we have is a lot of glitter and a lot of glitz, but we're a little weak on substance," said Adams, who is black.

The desegregation goal is to achieve a 40% white enrollment. However, in Central High's first year, only 15% of its 1,029 students are white. Most parents stated "that there was no set of circumstances under which they actually would put their children into the city's magnet schools." Some of the suburban students acknowledge that few of their friends have left their home districts to go to Central. "A lot of people just don't want to leave their old schools," says Matt Sparks, a sophomore.

Taxpayers throughout Missouri are paying for the Kansas City district's desegregation program because, under a court order, the state is required to finance most of the program's costs. A federal judge ordered \$1.2 billion spent on building improvements and development of new programs. The cost could reach \$2 billion by year 2000.

State officials assert that the Kansas City District has "gorged itself on luxurious facilities

The committee charged that the district was irresponsible when it came to managing the program efficiently. The committee said in its



Weight room at Central High. Described as one of the best at any high school in the country. Photo: St. Louis Post-Dispatch

yearly report that "The attitude has been prevalent throughout the . . . program that money is no object, and the court will provide all that is necessary and no one will take any punitive actions if we are sloppy in our work habits."

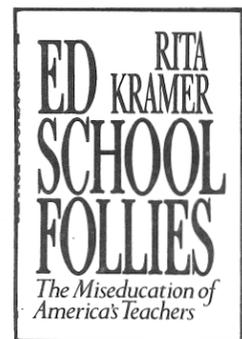
The committee also found that the test scores of district students in the 1990-91 school year "were abysmal at grades above grade three."

Kansas City made national legal history when the U.S. Supreme Court in *Missouri vs. Jenkins* (1990) upheld the power of the federal district court to double the local property tax, despite voters' disapproval, in order to finance this extravagant desegregation plan. ■



## Book of The Month

**Ed School Follies: The Miseducation of America's Teachers** by Rita Kramer, The Free Press, New York, NY, 1991, 222 pps., \$22.95.



The state of American education has been a topic of controversy and concern for many years, but could it be that the trouble with America's schools is closely tied to the current state of teacher education?

Rita Kramer, author of *Ed School Follies*, not only asked that question, but she actually went out into the ed school world to find out for herself the answer. She went to all parts of the country visiting schools, colleges, and departments of education. She was there not only during class, but before and after class as well, watching and asking questions of everybody — students, faculty, and administrators.

*Ed School Follies* describes what is really going on in ed schools. It is filled with actual conversations and details of what prospective teachers and their teachers look and act like.

In her visits to the various schools, Rita Kramer asked many of the students basic questions like, why did you go into teaching? What do you think schools are for? What is the teacher's job?

She found a striking degree of conformity among schools across the country — whether public or private, urban or rural. "Everywhere I visited," she said, "in new concrete structures and old stone halls of ivy, among undergraduates or older students, I heard the same things over and over again." What she found was that our schools of education are actually contributing to the "dumbing down" of America. She says that "nowhere in America today is intellectual life deadlier than in our schools — unless it is in our schools of education." Competition in school is greatly discouraged and standards are considered elitist. Teachers are taught that their goal is to "promote self-esteem in everyone in equal measure" and to achieve equality among the students. Therefore, "no one can be tested, because no one must fail."

She also found that teachers are being trained to see their role as agents of social change, preparing students for a new multicultural America where they are to be "racially sensitive" and "socially aware."

"Everywhere, I found idealistic people eager to do good," she states in her book. "And everywhere, I found them being told that the way to do good was to prepare themselves to cure a sick society. To become therapists, as it were, specializing in the pathology of education. Almost nowhere did I find teachers of teachers whose emphasis was in the measurable learning of real knowledge."

The emphasis today, she notes, is much more on the method of teaching than on knowledge of

See Book, page 3

# Clay County School Stonewalls Parents about *Pumsy*

CLAY COUNTY, FL — The curriculum board of the Doctors Inlet Elementary School has reapproved the Pumsy self-esteem program twice in the last five weeks, despite growing opposition from concerned parents. The curriculum is on the school board's agenda for April, but in the meantime school officials are giving parents the run-around and dodging calls from the media. Doctors Inlet Elementary Principal Fred Fedorowich and guidance counselor Leah Jenks, both refused to accept, or return, numerous calls from the *Education Reporter*.

## 'Something weird is going on at school ...'

Candy Johnson, whose two sons attend second and third grade at Doctors Inlet, first found out about the Pumsy program five weeks ago, when her 7-year-old came home one day and told her, "There's something weird going on at school, and you're not going to like it." Her son had been told that he had three parts to his mind — "his spark, his mud mind, and his clear mind." He had also been told that "his peace came from his clear mind." Johnson's son told his mother, "I know that's not right, because that's not where I get peace from. I get my peace from God."

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson opted both their sons out of the Pumsy program "the first day we found out about it" and immediately began investigating the material. The more they found out about it, the less they liked it. An article in the *Florida Times-Union* of Jacksonville detailing Johnson's concerns was picked up by the Associated Press and carried in papers nationwide, including *USA Today*. Soon Mrs. Johnson was flooded with calls from reporters across the country. She is scheduled to appear on an upcoming installment of the television news magazine *A Current Affair*.

Mrs. Johnson was able to obtain a copy of a letter in which Timberline Press, publisher of the Pumsy books, explains to school officials how to respond to complaints from parents — particularly Christian parents — regarding the program. "They followed the letter to a tee,"

she says of the Doctors Inlet school personnel. Mrs. Johnson describes the initial reaction of school officials to her complaint as one of "complete shock. They told us we were the only ones who have ever complained about this program," she says. "We've since found out that's a complete lie. This program has been questioned many times before in our school. But we've never told all along that we're the only ones who ever complained."



Leah Jenks, guidance counselor at Doctor's Inlet Elementary School in Jacksonville, Florida teaches the second-grade class using Pumsy the Dragon, a hand puppet.

Photo: Florida Times-Union

Mrs. Johnson and a friend met with guidance counselor Leah Jenks to discuss the Pumsy program. Jenks was "very offensive," Johnson recalls. "She defended the program wholeheartedly and openly admitted using guided imagery. When she admitted it, she was extremely angry." Mrs. Johnson told another mother about what she discovered. The second woman called the school to find out if Pumsy was being taught in her child's class. "She was told there was no such program," Mrs. Johnson said.

School officials at first refused Mrs. Johnson's request that the Pumsy program be suspended.

"After getting a lot of calls over the weekend, they suspended it for one week," says Mrs. Johnson, noting that the suspension began "on Monday after Pumsy class — and it's only once a week anyway!" The "suspension" ended on Friday of the same week, after the program was reviewed and reapproved. Pumsy thus returned as scheduled the following Monday, without interruption.

As a result of her research, and the inform-

posted people at the door to make sure that no one entered once the meeting had begun. "A lot of parents outside were very upset that they couldn't come in," Mrs. Johnson recalls.

From her research, Johnson has learned that techniques used in the Pumsy program are identical to those used by highly trained psychiatrists to those used by disturbed children. She considers these tactics an invasion of family privacy and objects in particular to the fact that "nowhere in the program do they tell the kids to talk to Mom and Dad. They're told to look inside themselves," she complains.

Though she has not noticed any personality changes in her own children, in wake of the recent publicity are wondering if changes in their offspring are linked to the program. "People have called who have 8- and 9-year-old children who are going back to wetting their beds," Mrs. Johnson relates. "Some kids are having nightmares in which they hear voices telling them to kill their parents."

Mrs. Johnson opposes the whole idea of self-esteem programs for children. "Children get a lot of self-esteem when they accomplish something," she observes. "They don't get good self-esteem by sitting around trying to change their thoughts." Mrs. Johnson is considering switching her children to a private school or homeschooling, but would prefer to stick with the public school system if possible. She notes with irritation that school officials have encouraged dissatisfied parents to consider homeschooling. "I think it's very unfair that we have to worry now for our children's safety and what they're being taught in school," she says. "I don't send my kids to school so they can meditate." ■

## Book *Continued from page 2*

the subject taught. So many undergraduate programs are turning out classroom teachers who learned methods of teaching without learning the subject matter they are to teach. Future teachers are being taught that "what matters is not to teach any particular subject or skill, not to preserve past accomplishments or stimulate future achievements, but to give to all that stamp of approval that will make them 'feel good about themselves.' Self-esteem has replaced understanding as the goal of education." ■

# George Washington Deserves His Own Holiday

The official switch from the observation of Washington's Birthday on February 22 to "Presidents' Day" on the third Monday in February coincided with the period when it was popular to debunk our heroes. That is most unfortunate because our nation needs heroes and our young people need heroes.

By any standard, George Washington is a hero worthy of his own national holiday. The reputation of the man whom his contemporaries called "first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen" has stood the test of time. With George Washington, what you saw was what you got. The public man and the private man were one and the same.

When sensational journalists of his and succeeding generations scraped the countryside for revelations, they did not find even one tale of a trust behind a haystack or a plundering escapade with the boys. Item-by-item scrutiny of his cash book and ledger, which were the disclosure records of his generation, do not reveal even one entry that hints of a financial or moral impropriety.

The definitive biography of Washington is the seven-volume work by Douglas Southall Freeman. He faithfully recorded the details of Washington's life without embellishment, censorship, or psychoanalysis.

Late in life, Washington himself told an old friend his own explanation of his remarkable success in accomplishing what seemed impossible in the American Revolution. He said he "always had walked on a straight line." As a youth, he acquired a positive love of the right and he developed an iron will to do the right.

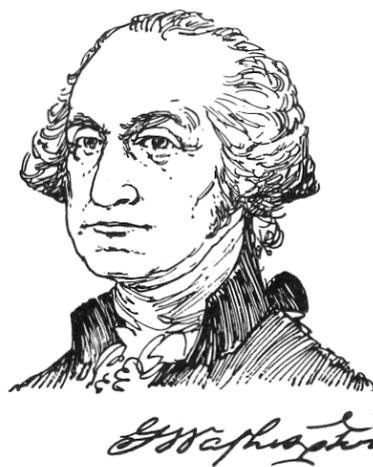
Washington was not a great intellect or an eloquent speaker. He had no special facility with words or his generation's equivalent of the 20th century sound-bite. But among the many great men of his time, he was the acknowledged leader. His support did not come from stirring the emotions of men but from earning and retaining their enthusiasm and loyalty based on his daily adherence to sound judgment, justice, and zeal for duty.

Washington's code of living was built on the principles of conduct he regarded as the code of

gentlemen. That code's foundations were not love and compassion, faith or sacrifice, but honesty, duty, truth, and justice exact and inclusive, which demanded that he do his utmost and in return receive what he had earned. With Washington, "Justice never could

ation sent to her from people "all across the United States" who had read the wire story, Mrs. Johnson was able to make a strong case for terminating the program. "We were able to show them that this was not just families here picking on the school, that this program was being disputed all across the country," Johnson observes, "but that didn't matter at all." School officials were unimpressed. "They simply said that was everyone else's opinion, and in their opinion it was a very good program."

School officials banned the media from the curriculum review meeting. They told the press that it was a private meeting. School officials



walk with Compromise."

Washington's total dedication to the duty assigned to him to win our war of independence gave him personal peace of mind. His will and self-discipline were his rod and staff, and he could better war against Britain because he was not at war with himself.

During the American Revolution, Washington came to believe that a personal God had intervened to save America and that our Revolutionary cause could not have succeeded without the direct intervention of Divine Providence. Washington's years in public life after the Revolution were filled with references to his deep religious faith and its necessity in our public and private lives.

In the 1990s, when there seem to be so few heroes, George Washington is a man for all seasons. What he was, he made himself by will, effort, self-discipline, ambition, and perseverance. He had the strength he needed for the long and dangerous journeys of his incredible life because he always walked that "straight line." ■

# Mother Objects to NAEYC 'Anti-Bias' Prejudice

BERKELEY, CA — Dr. Mary Davenport wanted only the best for her two-year-old son. That's why she went to such lengths to select just the right preschool for him — asking for recommendations from friends, and visiting all the schools personally. Having settled on the Step One School, "among the most expensive preschools in Berkeley," she was, for the most part, pleased with her selection, until she received the premier issue of the school newsletter in October of 1990.

That first edition of *News & Views* announced the introduction of an "anti-bias curriculum" endorsed by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). Though she had originally found the cultural and ethnic diversity of the staff and students at Step One appealing, Dr. Davenport was shocked by what she read.

"We are proud," the newsletter asserted, "that our community now includes staff and families from different cultural, religious, class and racial backgrounds, lesbians and gay men,

people with physical differences and disabilities, and people from varied family structures." Specific targets of the "anti-bias" program included "homophobia" and "discrimination on the basis of family composition."

A recent convert to Christianity, Dr. Davenport feared that the fine line between tolerance and proselytism had been crossed. Her concerns were confirmed at a subsequent curriculum meeting when she received a copy of guidelines for "nonhomophobic parenthood," which included the following recommendations: (1) Don't try to "prevent" homosexuality, (2) Don't worry about homosexual "conversion," (3) Don't react intemperately to children's questions about and interest in the subject, (4) Don't worry how to raise a heterosexual child; worry about how not to be a homophobic parent.

Dr. Davenport also discovered that the March 1990 issue of *Young Children*, the NAEYC's "journal for early childhood educators," carried an article entitled "Working

with Lesbian and Gay Parents and Their Children" by James W. Clay, director of the School for Friends. He argued that "sensitivity training" may be necessary for preschool teachers uncomfortable with gay or lesbian parents. "Staff members may need help in examining their fear of homosexuality," he observed.

At a second curriculum meeting in March of 1991, parents who attended seemed nearly unanimous in their support for the program. Dr. Davenport noted, however, that members of the school's board "limited the discussion so that other views could not be heard" and that many of the parents seemed "overly preoccupied about hurting the feelings of the gays and lesbians at the meeting." She was labeled homophobic for expressing her objections.

By that time, Dr. Davenport concluded that the anti-bias curriculum was "not just an experiment, but an agenda," and so she withdrew her child from Step One School. She had familiarized herself with the anti-bias curricu-

lum enough to know that it "blatantly promotes homosexuality under the guise of supporting the children of homosexual families." She also considered the program "overtly anti-Christian, promoting witchcraft and pagan holidays with the aim of preventing Judeo-Christian 'bias.'"

Having done her duty as a parent, however, Dr. Davenport remains troubled by the fact that the anti-bias curriculum in use at the Step One School in Berkeley "is endorsed by the NAEYC. Many Christian schools are members of this organization," she observes, and "someone ought to warn them."

According to Dr. Davenport, parents of children in preschools should "ask if the schools are members of the NAEYC or if they are using the anti-bias curriculum." She also believes that pressure should be brought to bear upon the NAEYC "to repudiate the objectionable portions of the curriculum," perhaps by making it "an issue in the election of NAEYC officers." Barring that, individual schools and members should be encouraged "to withdraw from the organization." ■

## Anti Bias *Continued from page 1*

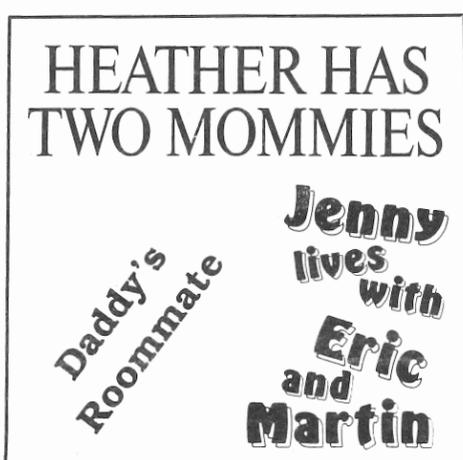
lesbian early childhood educators, as well as various gay workshops.

According to Mrs. Martin, the homosexual activists are asking that the anti-bias curriculum be made mandatory for all schools seeking NAEYC accreditation. "They want NAEYC to publish posters that depict homosexual lifestyles," she adds. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, officials at Martin's own church, Faith Presbyterian, have discontinued their efforts to obtain NAEYC accreditation and have instead joined the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

Mrs. Martin acknowledges that homosexual activists "have gotten their foot in the door because nobody's paying attention. We've just been asleep," she says, "not realizing how subtly this has crept up." She is convinced that recruitment, not tolerance, is the ulterior motive. "Teaching about sexual preference is inappropriate for early childhood education," she insists.

In a section of the "anti-bias" curriculum entitled "Expanding Children's Understanding of Gender Anatomy and Gender Identity," Louise Derman-Sparks observes that the purpose of the recommended activities "is to enable preschoolers to develop a clear, healthy sex identity through understanding that their being a girl or boy depends on their anatomy, not on what they like to do."

Activities recommended in the curriculum include studying books "with excellent photographs of children's bodies," having children



"fill in all the body parts" on an outline of a body, and making "anatomically correct dolls available" for children to play with. Teachers are also encouraged to read to their students "books about boys and girls that contradict gender stereotypes" and "books about different ways families are organized" (including "gay and lesbian families").

Conceding that "anti-bias materials" may be hard to find in "established commercial educational supply catalogues and stores," the author recommends investigating alternative bookstores, women's centers, gay/lesbian centers, and support/advocacy groups. "People who work in these groups want to share their information," writes Derman-Sparks.

Among the books recommended for children

is one translated from the Danish, entitled *Jenny Lives with Eric and Martin*. The story, accompanied by photographs, depicts a young girl enjoying a Saturday morning breakfast in bed with her father and his barechested male companion. Another book recommended is *Lots of Mommies* by J. Severance, featuring a child with lesbian mothers.

Such material "is not appropriate for early childhood," Janie Martin insists, "so why is it in a curriculum that the NAEYC is pushing?" She emphasizes that "some of the anti-bias ideas are helpful," particularly those that encourage understanding of, and respect for, racial differences. The problem, she says, is that "the gays and lesbians have attached themselves to this minority cause."

In an article in the January issue of the NAEYC journal called *Young Children*, Derman-Sparks acknowledges that a "surge of interest in anti-bias and multicultural education at all levels is provoking a strong backlash."

However, Derman-Sparks revealed her own bias by describing the opposing sides in the controversy as "those who want to press forward toward creating a more open and equitable society and those who are desperate to maintain the status quo." Opponents are motivated by "fears and frustrations," she says. It's because they "do not want to yield their power to others" or because they "are afraid of the unknown" that they stand in the way of the "progress" that Derman-Sparks is determined to impose upon them.

Janie Martin isn't "afraid." She is determined to "actively intervene" for the rights of Christians and try to persuade NAEYC officials to remove the anti-Christian bias from their "anti-bias" curriculum. She wants an anti-bias curriculum that will teach justice and fairness for all from a biblical perspective. ■

## Standards *Continued from page 1*

considered elements of an appropriate curriculum.

The second major theme of the NAEYC conference in Denver was multiculturalism and anti-bias. Speakers urged that the schools develop "a bicultural identity for each child with a whole sense of their ethnicity and background."

Conferees were trained in how to promote multicultural awareness, build a culturally sensitive classroom, and bring diversity into the classroom. Speakers suggested that children need to be taught to recognize stereotypes or images in books, posters, or puzzles.

This priority appears to rank higher than teaching reading, writing and arithmetic to achieve measured levels of proficiency.

One activity for young children recommended at the conference was to give every child an apple and describe how each apple is different from all others, what it looks like, how it smells, etc. There was no suggestion that it might be helpful to use apples to teach something useful like counting. ■

## Study *Continued from page 1*

homework, making new friends, and support from home.

Data from earlier achievement tests were also collected and their results, along with "socioeconomic status," were used to adjust each student's "raw" performance on the Stanford test. In this way, the study could control for initial differences in the groups that had nothing to do with the differences among learning environments.

A statistical analysis was then applied to the data to determine how much the extent of a student's participation in the transfer program influences that student's academic achievement and attitudes. In point of fact, it was a test designed to measure school desegregation as a remedy for the low achievement of disad-

vantaged minority students.

The conclusions of the Lissitz study came as a surprise to St. Louis Public School administrators because the old, pre-transfer test scores suggested that transfer students would demonstrate greater achievement than all but the magnet school students. This lower achievement may reflect the many hours lost in transit each day by transfer students, as critics of school desegregation have contended for years.

The apologists of St. Louis school desegregation put their own "spin" on the results of the Lissitz study. St. Louis Public School Superintendent David J. Mahan pointed to the failure of transfer students to excel academically as evidence that "our students are getting effective instruction in the city."

His interpretation is disputed by conclusion #20 of the study, which states: "The median [middle] level of performance of the total group of students, relative to the national norm group, indicates a very low level of performance. Half the students scored in the low twenties in terms of their national percentiles on most of the achievement variables."

In discussing the Lissitz study at the January 28 meeting of the St. Louis Board of Education, the Rev. Earl Nance Jr., president of the St. Louis Board of Education and a defender of school desegregation, remarked that he was "delighted" with the results of the study. On the other hand, anti-busing school board member Earl Holt III said, "Not only is the emperor naked, he's engaged in obscene acts in public

and someone should tell his tailors!"

It is the intention of the Court that this "longitudinal" study be repeated for several years to ascertain patterns of student achievement. The Lissitz study, however, states that "The truth may be that additional large increases in school development as indicated by achievement gains of students are not obtainable through a transfer program approach."

The St. Louis desegregation program is now entering its third decade. When it started, the city's school system had 103,000 children; today it has only 43,000, as a result of white flight to the suburbs. The federal court order not only requires busing of black city students to the white suburbs, but also required all taxpayers in the state of Missouri to finance much of the cost. ■