

Children's Groups

A first year report of FEA

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Children's groups per se, for youngsters between the ages of five and seven years, are not unique. They exist as organized, structured groups for a specific purpose, such as to explore the multitudinous forms of the arts, religions, sports, ad infinitum. And they exist for the general purpose of socialization and free play. Children's groups are sponsored by well-recognized institutions of our society, and they are sponsored by the initiative of the children themselves.

However, very few Children's groups exist for the sole purpose of exploring goals of behavior, utilizing encouraging educational redirection and process of interpretation, as does the Adlerian Psychology model. Several years ago, Eleanore Redwin and Georgia Greven developed the idea of having discussion groups of small children which had initiated from their counseling work with the Mothers' Discussion groups (Redwin & Greven, 1967). This year, they were reintroduced under the supervision of Eleanore Redwin.

Two Children's groups were established, one beginning in November 1971, and the other in January 1972. Both terminated for the summer at the end of May. Each group met once a week for one hour and consisted of 12 to 15 children between the ages of five and seven whose parents were actively involved in the Family Education Association.

The children were all basically normal, happy, healthy functioning youngsters with areas of behavior which needed redirection. Since the life style of the child is fairly well formulated by the age of six (Dreikurs, 1957) and since the child is extending himself beyond his immediate family and environment more than ever before where he is forming new relationships and meeting new conflict situations, the purpose of the Children's groups is two-fold: it is the most opportune time in which to redirect goals of misbehavior and social interactions in the home, school, and community; and it is the most opportune time in which to assess how the individual child finds his place within his family constellation in terms of the child's own life style.

Through the guidance of a counselor and an assistant in each group who were Mothers well educated in Adlerian psychology, the children were encouraged to disclose and interpret the goals of behavior to one another. Developmentally, within the wide range of behavior and emotional responses typical of this age group (Gesell & Ilg, 1949), within the context of the group, the children were able to perceptively and supportively influence one another in a positive direction, which the following vignettes will illustrate.