Parents- What Are Their Responsibilities

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Parents --

What Are Their Responsibilities

The Privilege of Being Parents

Dorothy Canfield Fisher was once asked to write an article for one of the leading magazines. She was famous for her excellent articles on the home. This one was to be on what parents do for their children. As she reflected on her theme she kept coming again and again to how children help change our adult lives, make us more tolerant, cause us to feel we make a difference to someone, keep us morally straight when we would be otherwise, and give us an interest in all that is good and fine in the community. She ended her assignment by writing on what children do for their parents.

She cited the experience of two young people who had lived very frivolous lives up to that time. They had been reared in good homes, but seemed not to be concerned with serious and important problems. Within due time after the marriage, a baby came into their home. The husband’s job became suddenly a matter of great concern. His child must have everything that any father could give it. The socialite young wife found a new responsibility, one which gave her a feeling that she made a tremendous difference to someone. No, they didn’t overdo it, but the coming of the child had reorganized their lives on a higher level.

Recently, students in three large universities were asked whether they looked forward to a home and children. More than nine out of every ten wanted a home and at least one child. It is interesting, but to be expected, that men wanted more children than the women did. It is evident that young people are looking forward to home building. The question now is: What are the responsibilities parents face when they bring these little ones into the world? This last winter, children of a family in Sioux City, Iowa, were found starving and slowly freezing to death while the parents sought pleasures or dissipations elsewhere. Not all parents take responsibility for even the physical needs of their children.

Such extreme cases of parental neglect receive wide publicity, but there are other kinds of irresponsibility which are often overlooked. Each year more than 100,000 babies are born out of wedlock to parents who, in most cases, do not want them. In a given year 25,000 children are born dead, because of congenital syphilis, according to the American Social Hygiene Association. To this same disease can be traced one out of six cases of blindness and also 60,000 babies who are handicapped for life, or will die prematurely. Some children do not have a chance, not because of anything they have done, but because the parents did not face their responsibility.

Some years ago the famous Jewish speaker, Rabbi Mann, stated in his Synagogue one Sabbath morning that every child had three rights: The right to be wanted in the home, the right to be well-born, and the right to a good home. Parents should take just as seriously the responsibility for bringing one of these little ones into the world as they did their marriage to the right individual.

What are the responsibilities parents face? A successful mother was once asked what she thought the chief obligations were to her children. She replied,
"A good parent prepares his child to walk alone." One can think a lot about that reply. Many times, children, in the midst of an emergency, such as a fire, just seem to know what to do. They are not panicky. In other cases small children manage their food when, for some reason, the parents did not arrive home on time. Likely these young people will grow to maturity, proud of their parents, and still able to face the world on their own because their parents have prepared them to walk alone. It's really not too much different from saying, "We would never need to learn to walk if we were always carried, as infants are." It is a wise parent who teaches his child how to make decisions for himself. It gives him the true form of self-confidence since he is able to find his way through difficulties. Children, just like adults, grow in admiration for people who help them to
discover what they can do. Of course, some parents, as if they were jealous of the child’s affection, try to keep the child depending upon them, and in so doing rob the child of the chance to increase his self-confidence.

The Parent Is Responsible For the Child’s Physical Needs

If the child is “to walk alone,” the first obligation of the parent is to care for his physical needs. Even before the child is born the mother can watch her health. It was once thought that the mother could influence the child in such a way that if she read a lot before the delivery of the child, her child would be a great student. It is known now that there is little of that sort of thing that parents can pass on to the child, which if they think a moment, makes them thankful. The child starts with a clean slate and without any prejudice.

When one thinks of how intricate the body is, he can appreciate the importance of a balanced diet. It is no exaggeration to say that some people spend more time studying how to feed their live stock than they do their children. It is not the amount of food children receive, but the balancing of the diet that is so important.

The extent to which diet can affect a child’s life can be seen in the experience of a school child in a private school near Chicago. Most of the boys were from Chicago. These boys, between the ages of eight and fourteen, lived at the school and were completely under its supervision. A little Polish Jewish lad of about 11 years soon attracted attention. At the table he did not care for fruit, vegetables, and many other foods that were a part of a regular diet. He said that the diet in his home had been beans and potatoes, usually with a cup of coffee. Oh, yes, he had white bread, too.

But here he was a child of 11, weighing only about 50 pounds, in the fourth grade, and failing that. Often in class he would ask to lay his head on the desk; he was so tired and sleepy. Because of his small size and physical weakness, the boys made fun of him on the athletic field. He became a discipline problem. The teachers patiently worked to improve his diet. Within two months he had gained in weight. He was less irritable. He actually looked brighter, as well as listened more attentively in school. Many of his discipline problems were at an end. The boys liked him better and even let him play football. He was one of them. His whole problem had been a matter of wrong diet and poor physical care in the home.

One more important physical suggestion should be added. Children should have the privilege of eating their meals in a peaceful atmosphere. They are, by nature, very different from one another. A nervous and sensitive child may sit tensely, listening to a thrilling radio story while trying unsuccessfully to calmly chew and digest his meal. The radio, which is seriously damaging to many homes, has discouraged the fine art of family conversation.

Of course, if table conversation is but an occasion to check up on the various members of the family—summarize the complaints and hardships of the day—then the radio would be a blessing. Loud talking, bickering at the table, criticizing one another, have been found to leave lasting effects upon little children—and let’s not overlook father’s ulcers, or mother’s jangled nerves. Studies on nutrition show that many disorders may be traced, not to the physiology of the child, but to the over-anxiety of the parent. The physical development of the child demands peace and harmony, and that too adds another responsibility for the parent, to help the child feel that he is really loved.

Every Child Needs to Feel He Is Wanted

Several hundred young people were once asked what it was in their childhood which had more to do with their
Parents—What Are Their Responsibilities

happiness than anything else. They mentioned first the happiness of their parents, and then, next, that their parents made them feel that they loved them. One would like to think that all parents love their children, but unfortunately, they do not. The child needs some definite expression of love and companionship in order to be sure. Some parents are like the little girl who was given a big piece of cake by a neighbor. The mother asked if she had thanked her. The little girl replied that she had, but forgot to tell her so. Children are not satisfied to take parental love for granted.

The child feels lonely if he is not sure of belonging. Perhaps you have heard children say many times, “Mother, I love you.” It is often overlooked that the child is trying to get his parents to express their love for him. One time a father spanked his little son until it hurt—two ways. After the spanking the little fellow came and crawled into his father’s arms, and between sobs, said, “Daddy, I love you.” He just couldn’t feel that utter loneliness which comes from feeling his daddy didn’t love him anymore. But he first expressed it for Daddy, hoping Daddy would return it.

Every child wants to be proud of some adult; he wants to look up to someone who is more powerful, stronger, and can go through situations that he cannot. His self-respect is bound up with his pride in his family. But his pride in those adults is seriously hurt if he thinks they don’t like him. Remember the youngster who bragged that his father used such big words that nobody could understand him? To this, the other little fellow, not to be outdone, replied that his dad used words so big he did not understand them himself. There are few stronger loyalties that develop than those of a child for his parent whom he deeply admires and who returns that love. One of the strongest pulls on anyone is the desire to prove worthy of the confidence of the people who trust him. This is important in understanding the discussion of the moral guidance of children just a little later in this bulletin.

One of the workers with juvenile delinquents in the Parental Boys School in Chicago found that many of these boys who had taken the first step toward crime were youngsters who felt they did not make much difference to their parents, or in fact to any other person. Many problem children in school are those who feel no one cares much for them.

Some years ago a Sunday school teacher was asked to take a new pupil into her class. The superintendent informed her that this boy had been a delinquent, and wasn’t just like her other boys. She was willing to accept him since, as she said, “It would add variety to the class.” As time went on, the shy, uncooperative and resentful boy felt the challenge. He came to smile now and then. He became friendly and regular in attendance. Then one Sunday, after the morning class, some parents called upon the teacher. They resented having a boy with a court record in the class with their children. If he continued to come, they would take their children out of Sunday school. Just as they made their ultimatum she saw the youngster standing at the door with the old resentment on his face. He had come back to get his cap, but he had heard what they said. With his cap in hand he dashed away and never came back to that church again.

Twenty years later America’s number one criminal was shot down on the city streets of Chicago, the same boy who 20 years before was driven from human kindness because some parents would take their children from Sunday school if he stayed in it. Children want to feel they make a difference, that they are loved, that they are wanted.

But children can get, not too much love, but the wrong kind. A mother once refused to let her daughter marry a certain young man. He was one of the finest boys in the community, but the mother was afraid he wouldn’t be good enough
for her daughter. She had forgotten what that wonderful mother, quoted at the beginning of this bulletin, said. She was not willing to help her daughter "to walk alone." It has been found over and over in the study of marriage problems that parents who are having trouble in their own marriages are less willing to trust their children in the plans for their marriage.

It is more than that, though. Many parents want to keep the child depending upon them. This makes the parent feel important to the child. Many a parent says to the son or daughter, "Now if you ever need anything, just come home and we'll help you out." This is such a big temptation for all parents to resist. The reason is that people sincerely want to make a difference to someone, especially their children. By encouraging the child to come back to his parents whenever he needs something, they are robbing him of one of his greatest birthrights, a feeling of self-confidence and faith in himself. That's important enough to give it more emphasis.

Parents Can Contribute the Priceless Gift of Self-Confidence

Parents may overlook the fact that the boastful child may be very lacking in self-confidence. So may the child who stands aside, afraid to play with the other children. The boastful child is not satisfied with himself, so he tells a lot of things about himself: His rich uncle, his grandfather in California, and his sister in Hollywood, only so that others will be impressed that he is somebody important. By contrast, adults know how humble, but inwardly at peace they felt,
Parents—What Are Their Responsibilities

after they had done some very worthwhile task. Most parents have noticed how proud but happy children are after they have done some good deed around the home. Children who feel they are loved and accepted are not boastful, on the one hand, nor are they extremely timid, on the other.

Before this discussion gets too involved in the topic of self-confidence, it is important to add that the child likes his mother or father better if he feels he can do something for them which they like. A small boy made a rather crude Christmas gift for his mother. The wooden table which a five-year-old would make out of an orange crate would not challenge the art of any woodworker. On Christmas morning, the first gift that was given to anyone was the table for his mother. It was something he had made for Mother. When one does things for those who really appreciate kindness he increases his love for them. Parents will never know how much they guide the ideals of their children by the way in which they appreciate the little things youngsters do about the home.

Parents often grow impatient with the immaturity of the child. If Daddy is using a hammer to repair something around the home, Junior is sure to appear, with insistence that he also pound something. If instead of demanding that, “You get this child out of my hair, if you want this thing fixed,” a parent would reflect a minute, he might do something to help the child. He thinks it looks big, mature, grownup, to do such things. It’s what big people do. He can do that much to appear grown-up. Rather than let his desire to pound go undirected—and frankly he cannot see too much direction to what Daddy is doing, at least yet—it would be much better if he were given some simple task which demanded his degree of ability. There are numerous tasks around the home which most parents care for, but they are so simple a child could do them, if he had a few directions. Yet as he does the tasks he gains self-confidence, one of the most priceless lessons parents can ever teach children.

And one knows how easy it is to neglect this. A young mother, washing the kitchen floor, was soon followed by her three-year-old daughter. Unknown to the mother the little girl had secured a pan of water, the bath towel, and was in the act of pouring water over the clean linoleum, and wiping it up with the bath towel. When the mother discovered what was taking place, she turned on the beaming, happy little girl, “No, no, you naughty girl. You’ve got my floor all wet again.” The child ran from the kitchen crying, when a few minutes before she had visualized herself as mother’s little helper. Similar incidents have occurred in many homes. It takes a lot of patience to teach children but it might be well if parents would all remember how long it took them to learn—and maybe they are not quite through learning yet. A mother who says that her children “are so good about the home” is usually a mother who has been patient in those tender years. Why not put in a plug for Dad too? If the family appreciated a little more what he did around the home perhaps he would be more willing to help.

Self-confidence is so important that further suggestions should be made. Sometimes parents suddenly take away the self-confidence of their children by some unintentional comment. One mother often remarked to the neighbors that her one daughter was so much more clever than the other, better around the home, and better in her school work. The “less brilliant” child, who was also a little younger, said little, but the mother’s remarks hurt deeply. All through life, she found herself depending upon her older sister, “the more brilliant one.” Another child was made very self-conscious because the father, unaware of what he was doing to his child, remarked on various occasions about the boy’s long ears. The boy blushed in pub-
lie, never chose any activities where he would be before people, refused to play any musical instrument, and went into a type of work he did not particularly like, but one which had the advantage of being away from people. All of this was because his father made him feel he was different from other boys.

There is at least one other way in which parents can effect the self-confidence of their children. Each child has his own type of ability, although many times it takes effort to develop them. On the other hand, parents often have ambitions which they would like to see their children realize. This may result from the parents being unable to realize these ambitions. Many students are in college not by their free choice. Some parents want to make of them doctors, lawyers, merchants, or something other than what the father was. This would be a most admirable trait if it did not so often harm the child. On the good side, one of the finest things we can say about a parent is that he wants his child to achieve more, and be a better person than the parent was. The harmful side is that they so often make the child feel he is lacking in any ability, and that he is doing the wrong thing for his life, unless he takes up work they have dreamed for him. Would it be too much for parents to realize that maybe from the time he was a little child he has been building dreams too, dreams of the kind of person he wants to be? He gains faith in himself to the degree that he can feel he is reaching some of his goals. That would suggest that parents are very important in a third way. They are responsible for building the goals and ideals of their children and for helping them learn how to reach them.

Children Need to Learn How to Reach Success

A little four year old boy was asked what he wanted to be when he grew up. Without hesitation he said, “I want to be a junk man like Grandpa.” Grandpa was not a junk man, but a very successful farmer. At that age the child saw only the “junk” which his grandfather had around the place. As he grows older he will learn what grandfather does with all that “junk.”

It has been found that very few children ever become delinquent if they have been steadily employed at a respectable job during their adolescence. It is often overlooked that a criminal does not steal anything that other persons do not want. In fact, that which makes him a criminal, in many cases, is not that his wants are evil but he goes about getting them in the wrong way. Parents need to teach their children not only what they should want but how to get the good things of life in such a way that they can be proud of themselves.

This is very close to self-confidence. The first money a child earns helps to give him self-respect, but it also makes him want to try harder. A criminal who had never earned an honest dollar until he was over 40 was so happy when he secured a regular job and got a legal check that he wanted to have it framed. He was proud that somehow he could earn money on his own.

Maybe people ask for “pulls” because they don’t know how to succeed in the right way. Maybe students cheat because they are really unprepared. Perhaps they have not learned that there are times in life when one stands alone, and at that time, it’s just what he actually knows that will help him to succeed.

But there are so many times when the child does not learn the honest way to get what he wants. He may learn from adults who are not too careful, that there are other ways. For that reason parents are obligated to their children to give them definite moral and religious guidance for testing their goals and methods, and a conscience which will be sensitive and alert.
Children Need a Moral And Religious Guidance

When husband and wife are members of different religious faiths the common experience is that the children are less concerned about religion, if not antagonistic to it, than where the parents are both active in the same faith. Very few great religious leaders come from homes of divided faiths.

A college girl once remarked that her father and mother belonged to different churches. They thought they solved the problem by telling their daughter she could join any church she wished. This was so confusing to her that by her third year in college she was still a member of no church. A child’s faith in definitely inspired by his parents.

Even more important than belonging to the same church is that the father and mother have the same moral and religious values. Many a couple has faced the problem of belonging to different churches but have been devout in giving their children the finest moral and spiritual guidance of which they were capable. It is still true that love for parents is strengthened when it is sustained by faith in the same common values, and renewed by the quiet talks within the home. Memories which children mention most are of the times when the entire family shared in some of the same deep experiences.

Parents do not know what their children will encounter in the years ahead. There may be many times when they will need to repeat in a more meaningful way than their parents have ever been called upon to do, “Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I shall fear no evil.” Once on the battlefield of Europe a young Catholic boy lay dying. There was no priest to answer his anguished cry for the last rites. But a Jewish boy, trained in the religious values of his faith, struggled across the barren waste. There, over the dying boy, he held two small sticks so that the shadow of a cross fell on the boy’s pallid face. Parents owe it to their children to give them a faith that will keep them steady when the going gets hard out there—somewhere, sometime. They deny their children one of the most priceless birthrights if they fail to give them a faith that overcomes despair, steadies them when moral values are in doubt, and provides a feeling of oneness with the good people of all times. Parents need to give their children a faith in their Creator.

Of course that means moral guidance as well. Once a son was heard to complain bitterly to his father. The boy had done something which he had discovered to be wrong. The son said, “Dad, you knew better, why didn’t you tell me?” It is never known what station in life children may eventually achieve, how much they may be called upon, in places of authority, to make far-reaching decisions. Many political problems of today might never have occurred if, within the homes, the children had been given the proper moral guidance.

Note too how far this may go on the positive side. In one of the most responsible positions in the United Nations today is a man who was reared in a somewhat obscure home in Ohio as the son of a minister. Heads were bowed before mealtime and the Bible was very familiar in the home. The father never knew that he was helping to prepare a statesman, and the mother was unaware of how far her influence would reach in the decisions of nations. Rearing children is a very important task, indeed.

The experience of Cecil B. DeMille further illustrates the parental influence in shaping the moral and religious character of children. Such movies as “The King of Kings,” “The Ten Commandments,” and others center around themes taken from the Bible. A reporter once asked DeMille how he came to use these biblical themes. Then he told this story. As a child he loved to listen to his father read, and he was an excellent
reader. He would read one chapter from the Old and then one from the New Testament. It was a family custom. The children would listen very attentively as the father made the words and stories come alive. DeMille was the youngest child. The father had one very real weakness, as the children early discovered. He liked to have the back of his neck stroked. So by prearrangement, Cecil was delegated by the other children to sit on the arm of his father's chair and stroke his neck. So pleased and relaxed was he that he read on and on. From this simple practice in the home came the influence which brought to millions of people the heart-stirring movies concerning the Bible. When parents fail to give their children this moral and spiritual guidance in the home, there is nothing that can quite make up for it later in life. Who knows how much the child may accomplish if parents have done their task well. It will not only guide them in their judgments but will help them live agreeable lives with their fellowmen.

**Children Need to Learn How to Get Along with People**

Children do not just unfold, like a flower, into beautiful personalities. They learn charm and gracious manners by coming to admire people who have these characteristics. Parents must also watch for the early development of undesirable traits. The little girl who lies on the floor and kicks her tiny toes in the air, holds her breath, and refuses to do anything unless she gets her way, is already learning how to get people to do what she wants. Of course it is not a very admirable way to do it. It is all the more tragic if that fault is not corrected as she grows to adulthood. When she is not able to get what she wants, when she wants it, and in the way she wants it, she makes a scene. People have difficulty getting along with her, and because they don't like her she is often moody and sullen.

Husbands and wives should feel indebted to those parents who reared so well persons who eventually become excellent life companions. Marriage counselors suggest that the most important guide for children in their marriages is that their homes have been successful. Parents are thus helping to build their future homes. A family counselor once said that the most frequent problems brought to him resulted from parents not helping children learn the fine art of getting along with others. Friends are willing to do many things for others when they feel genuine appreciation for their kindness. They lose interest when rights are demanded.

Personnel directors have stated that people who succeed in large industries, in business, in the professions, and elsewhere, are not always the most brilliant persons, but those who know how to work with other people. Parents spend thousands of dollars to send their children to school, where they will learn the essential ways of doing their jobs. Does it not appear just as reasonable to spend some time in the home, attempting to give them guidance in what will be just as essential to their success? This guidance is probably more difficult to give than what they learn at school.

Parents can do so much to help their children learn sympathy for other people. A little girl often accompanied her parents to visit a person in the community who was chronically crippled and ill. Although she could not understand much, she always came home happy that she was able to run and play. Some children once thoughtlessly ruined a neighbor's flower garden. The same little girl heard her mother tell how long that woman had worked to have nice flowers. She felt sorry for her.

Children can be told about the good things which are done in the community, not merely the negative gossip. In a certain community lived a neighbor who, although she had been to the hospital a number of times, still was one of
Parents—What Are Their Responsibilities

Some parents neglect teaching their children that it is impossible to always have one's own way. Children often wish they were grown up so they could do as they please. It doesn't take long to find out otherwise. Some parents will do about anything just to keep the peace, but lasting peace cannot result by giving in to the child's every demand. It's like the budget; the demands always get larger the next time. Children learn

the first to bring flowers and food to any unfortunate family. Despite her own suffering, she was a very happy person. The child soon learns that there is a great joy in doing something for people, when such acts make them happy, and they really need help. Some people do kindness for others only if they think it will put them in good with the “right” people. But this does not bring lasting satisfaction.
early in life to develop a nuisance value, such as to refuse to do a task unless they get paid, to make so much noise that the parent is glad for them to go to the movies, or to refuse to play a game unless they are "it." But the child will get along so much better with people, and will thank his parents for guiding him, if he has learned in the home to give and take. It can truly be said that a good home is one in which the children grow in appreciation for their parents as they become older and see how well their parents prepared them for life situations.

One last word should be added. If a child feels secure in his home, if he feels that his parents love him, he is likely to be more tolerant of other people. The lonely, uncertain, disappointed child who is afraid of people, is usually not the friendly and gracious person. Even adults are more tolerant of one another when they feel they are not put on the spot. The child feels the same way. Parents help develop in their children patterns of adjustment by teaching them the pleasure of working with others and living accordingly.

Children Must Be Taught How to Release Their Tensions

One rarely gets along well with people if they know he is the kind who is "always blowing his top." A small girl, after a long struggle with her arithmetic problems, placed her book on the floor and stamped on it. She was just using the wrong end of her body to solve her problem. Unfortunately, such actions do not solve the problem, and the person feels ashamed of himself.

Parents shouldn't always blame the child. A mother, who should have known better, once said to her little girl when she bumped her toe on a chair, "Kick the naughty chair." What will she kick when she grows up and things get in her way?

A student had failed his master's examination in a university. He was telling another student of his plight. The second fellow said, "Why didn't you go out and get drunk?" But the first fellow was wise enough to know that problems aren't solved merely by avoiding them or trying to wash them away.

More than parents are aware of, children follow their methods of releasing tensions. Just check up on this a few days. A parent may see his own actions coming back in ways he hadn't recognized, and probably wouldn't want to admit. If adults talk loudly, children do too. If parents call people names, youngsters soon learn to do the same, and sometimes they add some new ones. If words are said over the car when it doesn't start, children assume it is part of the ritual. What is more serious, these releases may handicap the child in some future situation.

Mrs. Harriet Mowrer, author of a book on family problems, indicates that adult drinking is often a form of release for people who are tense or in trouble. Many of these persons had not learned how to meet difficult situations, or discuss problems without getting angry. People can often get as much release by laughing as crying. There is still some truth in the old statement, "When angry, go for a walk." It is surprising how often a crying baby in the night has stopped a family quarrel. Parents get interested in something which is important and forget their petty differences. Every family needs to keep a sense of values, needs to laugh together once in a while.

Help Children Develop A Sense of Humor

As much can be told about a person by what he laughs at as in any other way. Children need to learn what is humorous. It isn't amusing to do something which makes others suffer. Good humor releases tensions. A small child once expressed it accurately when unexpectedly, at the table, he remarked, "What's wrong with all of us? We haven't had a good laugh for a week." He had ob-
served that the family had been going through some unusual strains and no one seemed happy. A pleasant story just before the child goes to sleep, even with a bit of humor to it, is relaxing to him. People who learn to laugh at the right times live longer and are less likely to need a visit to a mental hospital.

Children Need to Learn How to Hold Both a Job and Their Money

Dr. Henry C. Link, a practicing psychologist in New York, told the following story. A father complained that he had given his son every advantage: a college education, an automobile, a generous allowance, and yet it apparently meant nothing to him. He held his jobs only a short time since it always seemed that either he got tired of his work or the employer got tired of him. The poor father finally, in desperation, said, "What am I going to do with him?"

This boy, like so many, had a father who had already done too much for him. As has been pointed out, one of the most precious contributions which a parent can make to his child is to teach him self-respect, which comes from being able to do something well, on one's own. This son had learned to rely upon his father, not himself.

Contrast the above situation with one in which the father was often out of work, although apparently through no fault of his. The family was eligible for relief many times. But this is what they did. The older children secured small jobs. The younger children helped
around the home. Each one grew up to have not only confidence in himself but in other people. The parents were devoted to one another. Parents can give their children too much financially if in doing so they do not learn how to solve their own problems.

Every parent raises the question some time or other about an allowance for the children. Some go to one or the other extreme. In one family, the children secured a definite allowance each Saturday morning. As soon as they had it they rode down town on their bicycles and spent it. The rest of the week they begged money from the parents for movies or other items. In another family, the parents gave the children money for all their needs except food and shelter. Then the father took many evenings trying to show the children how to arrange budgets and buy their clothing and other necessities.

It is clear that both of these went to extremes. Children whose parents discuss with them the financial program of the entire family are usually the wisest spenders. A child should learn that money represents so much labor and the allowance is not just a gift. It isn't necessary to discuss the national debt with the four-year-old, but a child of 12 has reached the place where he can understand something about values in clothes, cars, and household equipment.

Every family has to develop its own financial program. Children should understand that although a neighbor gets a new car, a television set, or takes a trip to the ocean, it does not mean that his family needs to do the same thing. They should be able to understand that their parents are paying for their home, putting them through school, and taking care of insurance for them. Children will understand this better if the parents are not constantly comparing themselves with the neighbors.

A young man once remarked that he always thought his parents were poor. Every time he wanted something costing very much they reminded him that they could not afford it. When he was in college, his mother mentioned that she would like to have something for the home which cost around $250. He remarked that they could not afford this, they were poor. The mother was somewhat surprised at the impression that the son had secured all through the years. The mother reminded him that they had a good salary, but there were so many things to buy all those years. It's difficult for children to understand how many places there are to spend money in a family and how soon it can all go.

**Parents, Not the Gang, Should Provide Sex Education**

Perhaps no child remains entirely ignorant of sex until he reaches adulthood. If parents fail to give him the proper information, he gains some kind from others. If it were correct and wholesome, there would be no objection to it. But so often it is not only incorrect, but actually harmful. The first impression the child gets of sex is very important.

First of all, a parent should be honest with his child. If he gives him an answer which causes him to be embarrassed when he repeats it before those of his own age group, he will not be sure of the parent's answers on other questions. Maybe one doesn't know all the technical words; maybe he cannot explain everything in medical language. Don't worry. The child doesn't want that anyhow. He just wants a simple question answered in a satisfactory manner. What is more, a parent can tell him that there are many things, like this, that are talked over just as a family. He knows this is true, because he is aware that his family doesn't talk over their finances with all the neighbors. This may prevent his talking too freely with children whose parents do not agree with his parents' method of teaching.

There is so much that is good and wholesome in the God-given way in which life takes place. It is tragic if par-
Parents—What Are Their Responsibilities

Parents fail to give this impression to their children. There is no greater adventure than when two people who love each other agree to bring into the world another little life—a life which properly guided can bring them countless joys and unending happiness, or, misguided can bring heartbreak and tears. Parenthood is truly a great responsibility, but, like all wonderful tasks, the rewards always outweigh the hardships.

Additional Reading
There are many excellent books on the subject of child rearing. The home or county agent has a list of suggested readings.

The Children's Bureau, Department of Labor, Washington, D. C., has a number of excellent pamphlets which are also distributed through the State Department of Health, State House, Pierre, S. D. The Department of Labor's Infant Care, Guiding the Adolescent, and Your Child From One to Six are among the most widely read publications in the United States. There is a small charge for most of the government booklets. Write to the Department of Labor for their folder describing available pamphlets.

A Self Examination for Parents

Let's make a check on how good we are as parents. Our examination papers are our children and our grade is already recorded in their personalities. The neighbors have written some remarks across them, but the chief contributions have come from us.

1. Are my children happy because our home is relatively free from tensions and conflicts?

2. Have I given my child that calm security that comes from his knowing that I love him so much that I would never knowingly do anything which would harm him?

3. Does my child constantly do more and more things for himself, or does he depend upon me for solutions to his problems?

4. Does he calmly accept the results of his own acts, or does he blame some other person when things go wrong?

5. Have I taught my child how to test what are the good things in life and then shown him the proper ways by which to reach them?

6. Have I prepared my child to face disappointment and hardship, as well as pleasure and happiness?

7. Am I sincere and honest in my answers to him, admitting that all of us are constantly learning?

8. Do we, as a family, enjoy laughing together, visiting together concerning mutual interests, and find pleasant an evening alone together?

9. Have I been so fair in the guidance of my child that the older he grows the more he will see the wisdom of my teachings, or will he be critical of me because I knew better and did not tell him?

10. Am I convinced that building a good home is one of the greatest adventures of all times, and that noble children are the supreme reward a man or woman can ask?

11. Have I prepared my children so well that, when the time comes, they can walk alone and not stumble?