

the tension in the home can improve dramatically. Where the parents were relying upon the child's symptoms to support their own difficulties, the improvement can be disruptive. Hence the physician must have some understanding of the family's interactions to adequately predict the outcome of drug administration, and the family must be alerted to the probable changes.

Considering all of the above, giving a tranquilizer becomes a rather broad and complex act. A variety of observations must be taken both

before and during the drug administration. It becomes important not only to know the drug and what symptoms will be affected by it, but also to gain some insight into how the child views the medication and to observe what interaction develops within the child's family.—JOEL P. ZRULL, M.D., *Assistant Professor in Department of Psychiatry, University of Michigan Medical School; Director, Out-Patient Services, Children's Psychiatric Hospital, University of Michigan Medical Center, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104.*

## A New Attitude Needed in Public Education

**T**HAT the male and female mature at different rates should give us pause for considering the appropriate method of coping with educational processes. Studies in child growth and development show that in intellectual development boys have a lag of six months to one year at the time they enter school. Consequently, what are the results of insisting that we teach boys at the same rate and in the same manner? Some results may perhaps be observed by taking a sample of boys and girls who are in high school. We observe such phenomena as four-to-one ratios of boys to girls in terms of recommendations for remedial reading; in terms of boys to girls referred for problems of juvenile delinquency and other behavior difficulties; in terms of dropping out of school.

Knowledge of human growth and development tells us that there are optimum times for us to learn. That a child may or may not be able to learn to read at age two or age three is, to me, irrelevant; just because he is able to does not mean that he should. Many studies indicate that an attempt to speed up the learning process only results in frustration and in a tendency to develop antipathy toward this activity.

May I also suggest that we look at some of the newer educational methods in relationship to learning, with a prime example of this being the

"new math." It is interesting to note that the "new math" gives few problems to the students but many to teachers and parents. It is always evident that the so-called dead hand of the past lies clammily upon the present.

In our understanding of a changing society we should be more flexible. That society is constantly changing tends to introduce feelings of misgivings within all of us. The world that our children will grow up and live in will be different in many dimensions from that of today.

Our role in the public school is to provide the kinds of tools and knowledges essential to coping with a complex industrial society. It is highly improbable that factual knowledge can be provided in terms of present understandings which will enable one to do this. There are no cookbooks for the future. Instead of worrying about cramming isolated facts into our children's heads, we should worry about building within them attitudes, feelings, emotions, and skills in basic learning skill areas, so that they will be able to cope with any of the forms which the society of the future may develop into.—LEONARD T. CURTIS, Ed.D., *Associate Professor of Education, Education for Exceptional Children, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Va. 22901.*