

# WE ARE ALL TEACHERS:

In this issue we begin a new series of articles, written by Norma McCormack for SPEAK. These articles will interest all mothers with young children. Mothers are the most important teachers of their children during the first six years of their life. These articles will try to help mothers as teachers.

## BEING A MOTHER IS IMPORTANT

Motherhood is an important part of our lives. A lot of our love and time is spent on young children. But in today's world being a mother is often a lonely and difficult thing. Most of the time we are left to make decisions about our children's lives. Other people offer us very little help with this task.



Psychologists, teachers, doctors, social workers, and others are always talking about how important mothers are. People expect women to just know how to be a mother, but this takes a lot of time and effort.

## CHILDREN LEARNED ALL THE TIME AND FROM EVERYBODY IN THE PAST

In the past when women had the help of the whole community a mothers' job was much easier. Early education of children was

done by all the adults. A long time ago teaching children was part of everyday life. Children learned from the world around them. They learned through listening, talking, and imitating all the adults around them.



The adults made small tools for the children to take part in all the communities work activities, like cooking, ploughing and planting and fishing and children also made their own toys. Children also learned from an early age about making clay pots, washing clothes, sewing, herding cattle and other activities. The lives of the children and adults were not separate. There was also time to learn from playing, singing and stories. All adults, and older children as well, shared in teaching younger children to become useful people in their communities. In those times this is how early education took place.

## TODAY THINGS ARE DIFFERENT

But in townships we have lost the solidarity of small villages. Now our communities have been broken and destroyed in many ways. Life in towns, and even in the country, has become more

# EDUCATION BEGINS AT HOME

and more frustrating. Our small children are often separated from us. They live in small overcrowded houses, often with no adults or just an old woman to look after them. There are no trees to climb, no water to swim in, no birds or animals to watch. Our children have little to play with and little to learn from. The lives of adults and children are now separate. Early education does not happen as part of everyday community life, as it did in the past.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

As mothers we face a difficult job. How do we make our children's early years a time of learning by being active and happy?

These articles hope to give you some ideas on how to make your child's day one of learning.



## THINGS TO DO AND TALK ABOUT

Children learn all the time. They do not always need classrooms. They learn from taking part in everyday living. Next issue we will discuss how even things like washing clothes, setting the table, helping to cook, and so on are times for

children to learn. We will discuss ways of using these times to teach our children.

Meanwhile, fill in this chart to show how your child spends her or his day. (Look at the example that has been filled in already and then do your own.) Start thinking about how many chances there are during the day for your child to learn something new. Talk to other women and see what they think about the idea that mothers are the most important teachers of their young children and that your community is their first and most important classroom.

If your child is looked after by a creche or anyone else ask them to help you fill in the chart.

### your child's day (EXAMPLE)

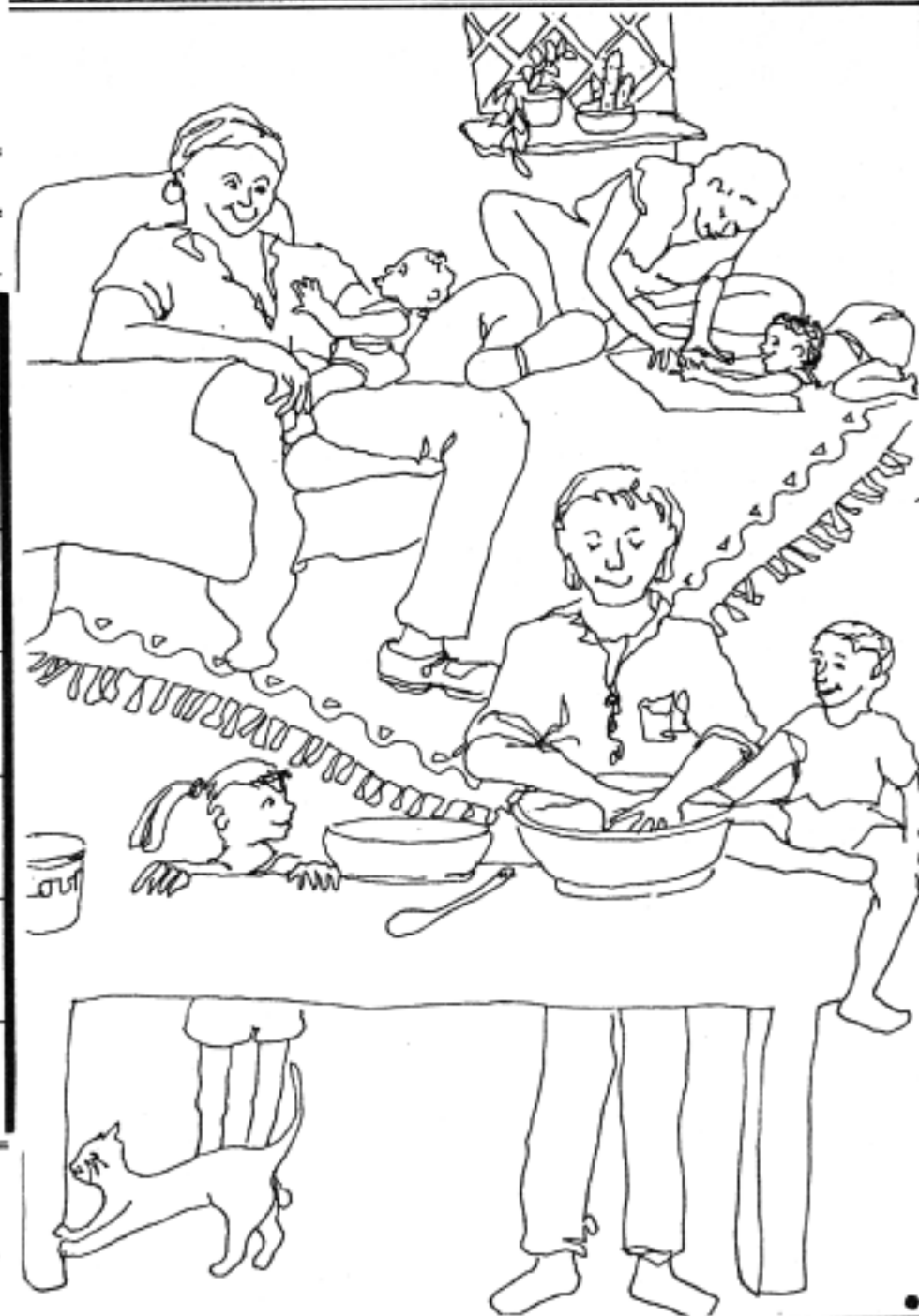
TIME	ACTIVITY	TIME	ACTIVITY
6.00	Getting up and getting dressed.	9.00	Going to shops with older sister.
7.00	Helping to make beds. Playing with dolls. Breakfast.	10.00	Playing with washing-up water
8.00	Playing in the sand.	11.00	

Turn over the page for your own chart to fill in.

# WE ARE ALL TEACHERS....

Fill in the chart below to show how your child spends her or his day.

your child's day			
TIME	ACTIVITY	TIME	ACTIVITY
MORNING		AFTERNOON	
6.00		1.00	
7.00		2.00	
8.00		3.00	
9.00		4.00	
10.00		5.00	
11.00		6.00	
12.00		7.00	



We look forward to the next article, and to a time when both mothers and fathers play an active part as teachers at home!