

## INTRODUCTION

We seem to be reaching for a new level of understanding of the interconnectedness or wholeness of our work. The themes of three recent major conferences were: *Creating A Balance: A Wholistic Approach to Child Care* (Canadian National Conference); *Whole Days, Whole Lives: Building Competence in the Child Care Environment* (Inaugural Conference of the Albert E. Trieschman Center); and *Expanding the Center of Child Care: Systems, Cycles, Teams and Careers* (Midwest Regional Conference for Child Care Workers). Recent publications and conversations have also supported this intensified effort to understand the cultural, familial, professional, organizational and social systems of which we and our clients are a part.

In this issue of *Child and Youth Care Work* we attempt to make a contribution to the search for wholeness. Each article, special feature, review, and story has a specific point of view, but each is also couched in such a way as to suggest that this is just part of the total picture. These are pieces that must be fitted into a larger framework — the readers developing philosophical and systemic framework for understanding child and youth care work.

Four articles focus attention on us — professional workers. Lisa Biemann encourages us to take better care of ourselves by developing support groups (“A Support Group Model for Child Care Workers”). NOCCWA’s research and study committee presents the results of their survey of nearly five hundred youth care professionals from throughout the United States and Canada (“Professional Child and Youth Care Work in the United States and Canada”). Melinda Butler analyzes struggles and successes encountered in forming a professional association (“The Kansas Association of Child Care Workers”). Eileen Sheahan, Tim Garber, Dennis Graf, Bob Hoffman, Linda Mitchel, JoAnne Stingley, and Beth Taylor outline the stages of development that many of us go through as workers (“The Development Stages of Child Care Workers”).

As always, this issue also addresses several practice issues and techniques. Lorraine Fox challenges us to throw aside our focus on techniques in favor of a more complete understanding of discipline (“Teachers or Taunters: The Dilemma of True Discipline for Direct Care Workers”). Kathy Williams gives us some practical information about psychological testing (“1-2-3 Testing”). Patti Ransom shares the method of activity planning she was taught while in college in Canada (“Format for Writing Effective and Accountable Therapeutic Activity Plans in Child Care”). Penny Parry introduces the captive audience approach to research and gives a brief report of the results of a survey conducted at the Inter-Association Child Care Conference (“A Note on Child and Youth Care Research: Looking to Ourselves”).

Plans in Child Care"). Penny Parry introduces the captive audience approach to research and gives a brief report of the results of a survey conducted at the Inter-Association Child Care Conference ("A Note on Child and Youth Care Research: Looking to Ourselves").

In the last section of this issue, Sue Nault's short story, "Maybe I'm Not Cut Out to be a Child Care Worker After All," addresses a familiar struggle. Then we close with two reviews of our colleagues' work. In child and youth care fashion, Al Mayotte and D. Scott McLeod offer support and constructive criticism for two important contributions: *When Living Hurts*, by Sol Gordon and *Working With Children: Effective Communication Through Self-Awareness*, by Dana Lewis.