

# VOICE EDITORIALS

## Education Is Power

By Thomas E. Wilson,  
Ph.D.

Last week we discussed the importance of the development of gross motor skills and the development of the proper orientation toward body image. A logical follow-up to the two pre-school skills mentioned above is laterality.

Laterality refers to left-to-right orientation, and is important in learning primarily because all materials printed in the English language is read from left to right.

Laterality must be learned. It is only by experimenting with the two sides of the body and their relationship to each other that we come to distinguish between the two systems. The child must learn right and left and how to detect which side is his "right" and which side is his "left." When a child has learned the left and right sides of his own body he can project these directional concepts to objects in external space.

A discussion of some activities that may be used to promote left to right directionality for the pre-school child seems to be in order. Help the child learn how to maintain his balance on a walking beam. To maintain his balance on a board requires knowledge of the right and left sides of the body. This development of laterality is necessary in such activities as reading which involves left to right progression. The development of directionality is also enhanced by experiences of forward, backward, and sideways as well as up and down.

We may also place a mark (any kind) on the left side of a piece of paper. Have the pre-school child start from the mark and draw a line toward the right side. The child may need some training and some help in this at first, but if help is continued, it will pay big dividends when the child begins his formal education.

Read to the child. While reading, point to the words as you read, always going in the left to right direction. In this way the child will become accustomed to the finger movements in a left to right direction. (There may be some disagreements among educators on this, however, if the child can be helped, it should be used.)

Once the child has learned the above mentioned techniques and is able to balance himself on a board, let him bounce a ball in front of him. Begin with a large ball, such as a beach ball, and progress to a small ball such as a tennis ball. Have the child use both left and right hands also in bouncing the ball. Point out to him that he is bouncing the ball with his left hand, his right hand, etc., and after a while have him continue bouncing the ball with either hand that is more convenient to him. In this way one may determine whether the child is left-handed or right-handed.

Another activity may be to have the child lie flat on his back on the floor, with his arms at his sides and his feet together. Ask him to move his feet apart as far as he can while keeping his knees stiff. Then ask him to move his arms along floor until his hands come together above his head with his elbows stiff. Next ask him to bring his "right arm" down. Then his "left arm" down, move his "left foot" in, etc., until he has completely mastered the concepts of left-to-right and up-and down directionalities. When the child has learned how to move an arm or leg to specific commands, then have him move his legs apart at the same time that he moves his arms over his head. Then have him move his legs together and at the same time bring his arms down to his sides.

It is hoped that the child who is fortunate enough to have parents who will help him with some of these activities will some day consider himself very lucky to have had this type of home care before he began his formal educational experiences.

The list of activities that may be used to help a child develop the proper laterality are many. For further discussion of any area mentioned in this series of articles, please consult your local librarian.



**Benjamin L. Hooks**

FCC  
Commissioner

And now the work to make more complete our recently released Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines to the broadcast industry must begin. Don't get me wrong. I think, overall, this guideline package is a good one. For it spells out in some detail those things we expect our licensees to do in order to be good broadcasters, obey the law and stay in the Federal Communications Commission's good graces.

For alone among the powerful Federal regulating commissions (the ICC, FPC, FTC, FAA, SEC, etc., for example), the FCC has had an EEO program for some time. The others have none.

And this present package merely represents another step in the evolution of a policy that dates back to July 3, 1968. At that time the Commission announced it would henceforth consider discrimination in employment by broadcasters to be incompatible with the public interest - as much as a violation of our rules as, say failure to keep proper logs, violations of power constraints, the Fairness Doctrine, the promise to do one thing and not live up to it in terms of performance, or to engage in (horrors!) double billing.

I believe this new guideline package emphasizes a positive view and that my fellow commissioners' hearts were in the right places in enacting it. Having said that, however, does not mean I am happy with all portions of it. Indeed, I have several serious problems with it in terms of the reporting demands it makes on our licensees and I have so started in a statement that at once concurs heartily with the dissents vigorously from the majority Commission decision.

In my statement I said, "I dissent from the majority's Order raising the exemption level

to 10 full-time employees where five or more previously had to file" written equal employment reports every three years at renewal time. The majority pointed out that under the 10-employee exemption, 91,889 full-time work force would be covered.

But this country has 8,506 broadcasting stations and before we issued the present guidelines, only 1,809 were exempt from filing EEO written reports at three-year renewal time. This new threshold of 10 or more exempts another 2,789 broadcasters for a total of 4,598 (figures compiled from employment forms 395 for 1975)! At this rate, we could continue to issue EEO guidelines and by the year 1984, cover 90 percent of the work force and only 10 percent of the broadcast stations!

The present exemptions mean that about 70 percent of the nation's broadcast stations, including most public stations, will not have to file written EEO statements at renewal time.

Similarly, the majority Order exempts stations with fewer than 50 full-time employees from filing job title information. I strongly dissented here also, for I wanted this provision to apply to stations with only 25 or more.

The job title provisions is highly important for it requires broadcasters to present an annual program on recruiting techniques and source, training efforts, etc. It will require analysis of the broadcaster's promotions and hiring and reasons for disparities that may exist between the percentages of minorities and women on the station's staff and their presence in the community.

This shying away from making smaller stations file both the written reports at renewal time (10 or more full-time employee stations) and the (50 or more) requirement for filing annual job titles, etc., does grievous injury, I believe, to our whole concept of equal justice under law.

And it seems, ironically, to treat the filing requirement as if it were a penalty that big stations should alone carry, rather than a positive affirmative national effort to alleviate inequality and injustice that all in the industry should shoulder.

## To Be Equal

by VERNON E. JORDAN, JR., Executive  
Director National Urban League

### Finding The Problems

One of the problems with being poor and powerless is that a lot of people assume they know what's best for you and don't ever bother asking what you want, what's on your mind, or what you need.

That's why a recent survey by the Washington, D.C. Urban League is so important. That community organization designed a questionnaire and conducted a survey of selected poverty neighborhoods in the nation's Capital to find out what the people themselves think about their situation.

It's true that poor people have been studied to death, most often by scholars trying to prove that something's wrong with the poor. Remember all of those pseudo-scientific studies purporting to show that black families are disorganized, that black IQs are low, that schools don't matter, and all the rest?

Such studies made the poor into objects, things to be studied the way scientists study lab animals. They didn't treat the poor as people whose opinions counted and whose perceptions were valuable and worthy of consideration.

The Washington study treated people with respect and, further, was action-oriented. It tried to pinpoint areas of concern that could be followed up with sound action to improve people's lives, not blame them for what's wrong.

Some of the findings are interesting, and applicable to other communities. I don't have the space here for a comprehensive report, but here are a few of the findings that ought to get some attention.

A basic community problem was found to be the high cost of food, in part a reflection of the

lack of competition in the ghetto economy as large markets and chains have abandoned inner-city neighborhoods. Many people reported they had to travel far from their homes to buy food and other necessities, and four out of five said such goods are available cheaper in other, more affluent neighborhoods.

The answer to this situation, supplied by the people themselves, are for more and better consumer education and for establishing better shopping facilities in their neighborhoods. Co-op arrangements and putting markets on city-owned land would go a long way toward making this a reality.

Not surprisingly, lack of jobs and a decent income are continuing problems. The inter-relatedness of social problems is demonstrated by the fact that half of the unemployed blacks in the survey lost their jobs because of health problems.

The popular assumption that unemployment is effectively cushioned by jobless benefits was disproved; only about 16 percent of the out-of-work blacks surveyed were receiving such benefits.

A majority said they needed job-training and even those who were working indicated they were looking for another job, probably because of the low pay scales. All of this suggests that training programs, with jobs at the end of the line, are desperately needed in urban areas. And consumer-oriented health facilities are tied to the job issue since they're needed to assure the better health that enables people to work.

Child care ranked high on the list of citizen concerns, with four-fifths of the people calling for more day care centers. Existing child care services are a drain on their low incomes, but are necessary if adults are to be free to work.

There's a lot more, but the essential point is that we as a nation have to stop berating the poor and start listening to their needs, their solutions, and their aspirations.