

# *Everyday Education: The Vision*

- ❖ Begin with the end in mind (Covey)
- ❖ What is your vision of family life?
- ❖ All paths lead somewhere— know where you want to go, so you can choose the right path
- ❖ When my children remember their childhood, I want them to remember a loving, serene, creative environment that encouraged personal and spiritual growth as part of a warm, nurturing family.

# *The Seven Principles*

1. Create a nourishing home environment
2. Do and be (don't sit and stare)
3. Include children in adult activities
4. Rediscover solitude as a creative tool
5. Use current events as a springboard for life lessons
6. Plant ideas, allow time for knowledge to grow
7. Respect the seasons of family life

# *1. Create a Nourishing Home Environment*

- ❖ Children need nourishment of soul, spirit, mind, and body
- ❖ Time— unhurried, unstructured, serene— is the most important ingredient
- ❖ Books, music, creative tools— if these are available, they can, and probably will be used
- ❖ Silence— and the psychology of noise

# *Nourishing the Mind*

- ❖ Edith Schaeffer writes, “If children haven’t been read to, they don’t love books. They need to love books, for books are the basis of literature, composition, history, world events, vocabulary, and everything else.”
- ❖ “The job of a teacher is to excite in the young a boundless sense of curiosity about life, so that the growing child shall come to apprehend it with an excitement tempered by awe and wonder.” (John Garrett)

# *Thoughts on Noise*

- ❖ “The word ‘noise’ is derived from the Latin word ‘nausea,’ meaning seasickness.”
- ❖ “Problems related to noise include hearing loss, stress, high blood pressure, sleep loss, distraction and lost productivity, and a general reduction in the quality of life and opportunities for tranquility.”
- ❖ This information and more at the Noise Pollution Clearinghouse at [www.nonoise.org](http://www.nonoise.org)

## *2. Do and Be*

### *(Don't Sit and Stare)*

#### ❖ **Active/Productive**

- ❖ Play ball, chess, etc.
- ❖ Read/learn
- ❖ Learn to sew, garden, cook, build, etc.
- ❖ Play a musical instrument or sing
- ❖ Serve others by writing letters

#### ❖ **Passive/Non-Productive**

- ❖ Watch others play
- ❖ Watch television
- ❖ Pay others to do hands-on activities
- ❖ Play computer games
- ❖ Wait to be entertained
- ❖ Expect to go somewhere every day

# *Children Must Learn to Occupy and Enjoy Solitary Moments*

- ❖ “Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, and Abraham Lincoln never saw a movie, heard a radio, or looked at television. They had loneliness and knew what to do with it. They were not afraid of being lonely because they knew that was when the creative mood in them would work.” (Carl Sandburg)

### *3. Include Children in Adult Activities*

- ❖ Children want to grow up and to do adult things— even the mundane can be interesting
- ❖ Children learn what they live— thoughtful, responsible children become thoughtful, responsible adults
- ❖ Balance is key— childhood is short, and daily experiences should contribute happy memories

# *Be the Kind of Adult You Want Your Child to Become*

- ❖ Henri Amiel (1821-1881) states “The inner and unconscious ideal which guides [the parent’s] lives is precisely what touches the child; their words, their remonstrances, their punishments, their bursts of feeling even, are for him merely thunder and comedy; what they worship, this it is which his instinct divines and reflects.”

# *Children Learn by Doing*

- ❖ Aristotle wrote - "Only a blockhead can fail to realize that our characters are the result of our conduct. It is our choice of good or evil that daily determines our character, not our opinion of good or evil. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts... Our moral dispositions are formed as a result of the corresponding activities in each moment and each day."

# *Play is a Child's Work*

- ❖ “You can do anything with children if you only play with them.” (Prince Otto von Bismarck, 1815-1898)
- ❖ Playtime develops creativity, relationship skills, and problem-solving skills
- ❖ Play can rehearse real-life situations and strengthen family ties
- ❖ Play can develop confidence, coordination and concentration, provide opportunity for exploration, and provide a healthy outlet for energy

## *4. Rediscover Solitude As a Creative Tool*

- ❖ Daily quiet time alone is essential for serenity and growth
- ❖ “Many hours of solitary occupation and enjoyment, will lead to the development of the highest intellectual and moral traits of character; in fact, his mental resources may be considered entirely unknown and unexplored, who cannot spend his best and happiest hours alone.” (Jacob Abbott, c. 1850)

# *The Quiet Hour*

- ❖ Use “the Quiet Hour” as needed, depending on the season of life– nap, reading, prayer, writing, meditating, etc.
- ❖ Remember Biblical examples of those who sought solitude and quiet
- ❖ Resist the intrusion of noise, even “good” noise
- ❖ Thomas Edison stated, “The best thinking has been done in solitude. The worst has been done in turmoil.”

## *5. Use Current Events As a Springboard for Life Lessons*

- ❖ Carefully choose current events with which to open discussions about why things happen, life principles, and choices
- ❖ Learn to thoughtfully discuss ideas, understand various points of view, and disagree agreeably
- ❖ In order for a genuine discussion to take place, there should be an atmosphere of safety for any person to discuss a unique viewpoint without fear of personal attack or censure
- ❖ A lecture is not a discussion

# *Choose News Sources Wisely*

- ❖ Choose sources that provide news from more than a single ideological perspective
- ❖ Sources: newspaper, NPR, [www.iht.com](http://www.iht.com), etc.
- ❖ Avoid repetitive, graphic news coverage of traumatic events— home should be a peaceful place of refuge
- ❖ Avoid strident talk shows that teach that rudeness and ridicule are acceptable means of discourse— if you wouldn't allow your children to talk to one another this way, don't invite it to your home

# *Consider Other Viewpoints*

- ❖ “The first to present his case seems right, till another comes forward and questions him.”  
(Proverbs 18:17 NIV)
- ❖ Remember, “Every man...should periodically be compelled to listen to opinions which are infuriating to him. To hear nothing but what is pleasing to one is to make a pillow of the mind.”  
(St. John Ervine)

# *Finally—Hold Fast to That Which Is Good...*

- ❖ Remember that eternal standards do not change with changing current events
- ❖ “We should treat our minds, that is, ourselves, as innocent and ingenuous children, whose guardians we are, and be careful what objects and what subjects we thrust on their attention. Read not the Times. Read the Eternities.” (Henry David Thoreau, 1817-1862)
- ❖ Balance is the key

## *6. Plant Ideas, Allow Time for Knowledge to Grow*

- ❖ Classical stages of learning, grammar, logic, and rhetoric are based on physical reality
- ❖ GIGO– the quality of what goes in affects the quality of what is produced
- ❖ This is best observed in writing– children who do not read widely rarely write well, though strong auditory learners who have listened to a great deal of quality literature may write well.

# *Learning Through the Years*

**In the early years, education consists primarily of absorbing and processing information-- reading, listening, observing, playing, etc. (Classical grammar stage)**

**The second stage of education is concerned with processing and responding to information. (Classical logic and rhetoric stages.)  
Until a great deal of high-quality information has been absorbed, a student is unlikely to produce high-quality ideas.**

# *7. Understand the Seasons of Family Life and Do What is Best for Now*

- ❖ Physical needs should influence levels of outside activity
- ❖ Babies and young children thrive on a relaxed, home-centered schedule
- ❖ A well-rested mother can offer her serene best to those who are in her care
- ❖ Exhaustion eliminates excellence
- ❖ Children remember atmosphere more than activities— stress affects everyone

# *Once More: The Seven Principles*

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3. Include children in adult activities
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5. Use current events as a springboard for life lessons
6. Plant ideas, allow time for knowledge to grow
7. Understand the seasons of family life

# *Resources*

- ❖ *For the Children's Sake and For the Family's Sake* by Susan Schaeffer Macauley
- ❖ *The Charlotte Mason Companion* by Karen Andreola
- ❖ *Sink Reflections* by Marla Cilley or [www.flylady.net](http://www.flylady.net)