Your Child GROWS UP
FOREWORD

It is said that great musicians do not begin their careers after the age of fourteen. There may be exceptions to this rule but, nevertheless, it states an important truth: influences that surround the child during his formative years will remain to color his whole later life. Truly, "as the twig is bent the tree's inclined."

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HOW a child grows up is a matter of serious concern to his parents. The father who suspects that his small son is timid about using roller skates is secretly disturbed, for above all else, he wants his youngster to be a "real boy." If his child had some bodily defect, he would take him to his family physician, but what to do about his timidity he isn't sure. The mother who finds her tiny daughter taking her first faltering steps, perhaps a month or more before an older sister walked, almost bursts with maternal pride and you may be sure her neighbors will hear about this little girl's
steadiness and bravery. These are common, everyday evidences that parents desire their children to grow up as sturdy, normal, wholesome youngsters.

Sometimes this natural parental desire leads the well-intentioned mother or father into unsuspected trouble. Often we hear a father scolding his young son: “You’re much too old to do that! You know better!” But is this father sure that he is not expecting too much of his son? Or we hear a mother excusing the rude behavior of her small daughter: “She’s such a little child she can’t be expected to do that!” Is this mother sure that she is not spoiling a child who is fully old enough to meet acceptable standards of behavior? Parents think they know what their children should or should not be able to do, and what they should or should not have. But do they?

Difficulties arise when parents try to be definite about some particular act of their child or attempt to set standards for the way he should behave at a given age. If such parents are asked to be exact in stating how much better a child of six may be expected to “slick up” his hair than when he was only four, they might not be able to give a specific answer. Or if asked just when he would be expected to wash his ears clean, as well as the front part of his face, they would again hesitate to make a direct statement. This uncertainty sometimes is concerned with more serious affairs and disturbs parents.

Thumb through the women’s pages of journals or the “questions and answers” departments of magazines concerned with home making. You will find many anxious requests for help about what may be expected of children and what privileges they may have. Questions of rewards and punishment are
frequent, too, and these speak volumes about parental troubles. It is not surprising that problems arise, and that doubts about ability to guide their children sometimes plague parents who wish to be just, for at each succeeding stage in their child’s growth, the parents’ relationship to him is changed. As this booklet is chiefly about the school-age child, there is space here to give only passing mention to parental problems concerned with babies and preschool children.

Even during the first year, caring for her helpless infant may present difficulties that seem appalling to the new mother. Though he sleeps much of the time and his needs are mostly concerned with feeding, bathing, clothing, and looking after his safety and comfort, this first year is one when habits are formed which may cling to him through life. The mother who cuddles her baby thinking him only a bundle of sweet and helpless humanity is, in fact, holding a child with an already unfolding personality. We need not enter here upon a discussion of the daily care of the infant, for it has been done in many books on infant care.* Nowadays mothers have learned the worth of expert guidance in these matters and turn for help to the family physician, the consulting child specialist, or the public health nurse. From these authorities, too, the new mother learns what growth developments she may expect during the baby’s first year, and she watches for them alertly.

During the toddler stage, when the youngster makes his first wide-eyed explorations about his strange new world, an

*Your Baby’s Care by Dr. Clifford Grulee is the John Hancock booklet dealing with this phase of the child’s development. A copy will be sent free upon request.
entirely new set of parental problems present themselves. Problems arise involving disobedience, selfishness, jealousy, and falsehoods, any of which may seem baffling to the inexperienced parent. However, the resourceful mother or father will deal successfully with the everyday difficulties. For the solution of the more serious ones, the wise parent will again turn to the family physician or the public health nurse for advice. Moreover, helpful books on this phase of child care can be obtained from the health department or will be found in most public libraries.* In dealing with the child between two and six years of age, parents have one great advantage, that of freedom from serious competition with other persons outside the home. If they set a bad example, new playmates or other associates usually can be kept at a distance, so the child is still largely what his parents make him.

Early School-Age Years

When the toddler stage passes and the child approaches school age, parents face an entirely new situation. Incidentally, they will discover that they have few trustworthy guides to help them in meeting their parental duties, and it is to fill this need in part that this booklet is published. Consider for a moment what it means to a child to go to school to sit for what seem long hours at a desk each day doing things totally unlike what he has ever tried before. Indeed, the rule that he must be quiet, applying his mind to tasks assigned to him, not

*From one of these mothers’ guides written by Dr. Richard Smith, the booklet Between Two Years and Six was adapted. This booklet, like others of the John Hancock health series, will be sent free to any one upon request.

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following his own sweet wishes, may be a hardship for a normally active child. This is not criticism of any school; it is intended only to reveal an actual condition to parents. Neither does it take into account those school departments which have adopted certain new educational principles which allow youngsters more freedom of movement and a wider choice of activities than did the schools when the parents themselves were youngsters. But, because a child in school does spend so much of his time at mental work, often limiting his normal hand-occupations to apply his brain to new and unusual tasks, it does impose a duty upon parents. What is done for the child in school is the joint concern of parent and teacher, but what the child does outside school hours is chiefly the parents' responsibility. And these "free" hours are the ones which may have a profound effect upon the child, for if they are employed wisely, they help children greatly to grow up into normal, wholesome youngsters.

It is natural for a child to want to do things—make things—with his hands, so during the hours that the child is home from school, parents can see to it that their children have all the opportunities possible to indulge in these normal activities, even if they sometimes leave a "mess." Does this boy long to

Parental interest in a child's undertakings creates a lasting bond.
build things? Then, Dad, see to it that he has simple tools; don’t discourage his efforts because his creations may seem not quite sensible according to your grown-up ideas! Is this small girl happy making dolls’ clothes? Then, Mother, encourage her rather than let her know, all too clearly, that her calls for materials and sewing things are a great nuisance! If any child shows an interest in a garden or in raising pets, it is an enthusiasm to be fostered, not by doing things for him, but by making it possible for him to do for himself and by showing the proper interest in his plans. Truly, the years of the child’s life when he is in the elementary grades of school and before he goes away—almost a grown-up—to high school are eventful ones in the life both of parent and youngster.

These early school years are a time of change in another respect. Now the youngster must go out from the shelter of the home and be “on his own.” This is a time when he must learn to become safely and sanely independent. If parents can guide their children through these years into a sturdy self-sufficiency, if they can help them grow up sensibly, the children will be the better prepared to avoid the pitfalls that come with the greater freedom of adolescent years. To sum it all up, the child accustomed to wise freedom from parental supervision in early school years will be less likely to demand unreasonable freedom later.

Understanding Your Own Child

So much, then, for the ever-changing problems of parent-child relationships. What principles shall guide you in dealing with the problems of your own child during his early
school years? There are several. First and foremost is this: he must learn early that being a member of a household involves assuming duties as well as receiving benefits. This may seem so obvious that it scarcely needs mentioning, but it underlies all successful relations between parent and child. When the whole household is made to revolve about the whims of a self-centered child, it is evident that he is not growing up satisfactorily in the matter of sharing responsibility. On the other hand, some parents are inclined to put more burdens on the child than are good for him; his duties should be graded and suited to his age. The child in his early school years should be happy, but not irresponsible. He is a real "person" and should receive from you the consideration to which he is entitled and without which he cannot help but feel inferior and insecure.

Here is another principle: your child's interests are very real to him. If they are not given sympathetic attention, it will discourage him from coming to you and confiding in you. Because at six he wants to make things, his desires must not
be dismissed as silly and he must not be forced to conform to your grown-up ideas of what a child should do. If he is repressed, he will find ways of hiding his plans from his whole family, thus breaking the indispensable bond between you and him. Your child, too, has a valuable sense of his own dignity which is to be encouraged. To himself he is a real man. If you make fun of his attempts at doing things, if he is ignored, or if he is punished by you for what seems to him a perfectly reasonable act, by just so much are you retarding his growing up. Your attitude should be one of wise concern without the appearance of constant coddling and "fussing" or over-anxiety.

Another important factor in dealing successfully with this child of yours during the transition period of his early school years is a clear understanding of the way in which the normal child grows up. Like most parents, you know vaguely what a child should be, how he should behave, and what he can or cannot do, but actually you will discover, if you question yourself closely, that you have but hazy ideas about normal child development. The chief purpose of this book is to set forth the milestones which measure the normal child’s growth. This information comes from a study that was made of the things a child may be expected to do at each age-period of his development. To gain this knowledge, a very large number of normal, wholesome children were observed and their progressive accomplishments at each age were recorded in a schedule of child development. This scale* has been applied to a sufficiently large number of other normal children for us to be sure that it

*The Vineland Scale of Social Maturity, from which the one used in this booklet is adapted.

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represents sound growth. Now you really can know what your child may and may not be expected to do.

Mark this well: a child grows up in various ways. He grows up in matters of self-help: he dresses himself at a certain early age; he takes a bath acceptably and alone at a later one. He grows up in matters of self-direction: he can be trusted with small sums of money at one age; he makes perfectly practical purchases at another. He grows up, quite obviously, in ability to get about: at an early age he goes freely in the house unattended; when older he roams the town. He grows up in regard to communication: as a little child he prints simple words; later he writes very long letters. Finally he grows up in matters of his relations with others and in what he tries to do.

Let us turn to the "growing up" scale to consider the steps by which he develops in these several respects, bearing always in mind that the child does not progress by sudden jumps and that the maturing processes do not always follow in what would seem to be the logical order. For instance, a boy may be able to dry his hands before he can wash them. A girl may be able to sew before she can thread a needle, or knot the thread. Children may read before they write, and write before they can spell; they count by fives before they can count by twos. Though the child's progress in growing up may seem hit-or-miss to his parents, be sure it is the perfectly logical way so far as the youngster is concerned.

It must be clearly understood that the milestones represent much more than the mere activities that are named, for the activities themselves are the outward expression of inner development in matters of responsibility and independence.
SOME MILESTONES
Along the Way to
Growing Up

Before the 1st Birthday

SITS UP unsupported and steadily. Pulls self up to standing position, holding on for support; balance may be a bit "wobbly," but stands alone on firm surface.

MOVES about floor by crawling or creeping; plays with rattle and simple objects for quarter hour or so. Does not need constant watching, but likes attention; "asks" to have parents pick him up.

IMITATES sounds and attempts to say words which only his parents understand. Follows such simple instructions as coming when called, pointing out pictures or objects when asked.
CLIMBS up stairs without help, gets about house and yard with only occasional oversight. Gives up baby carriage to walk, or ride in go-cart.

EATS with spoon from bowl or cup, without help or too much spilling. Chooses between suitable food and substances unfit for eating. Removes wrappers from candy.

PERFORMS useful little errands such as bringing named objects from nearby places. Opens closed doors, climbs up on chairs to reach, removes simple obstacles from his path. Uses basket to carry things.

“Helps” with undressing by removing socks and shoes (if untied). Uses short sentences, and has vocabulary of twenty-five words or more—not mere “parrot talk.” Names familiar objects for practical purposes.
OCCUPIES self without "looking after" at own play such as drawing with crayon, building with blocks, dressing dolls, looking at pictures. Uses blunt-end scissors in cutting paper and cloth—is not destructive.

USES fork without much spilling, and eats solid food that does not require cutting. Can get drink of water unassisted, turning water tap on and off. Dries own hands if washed.

GIVES simple account of own experiences and tells stories that can be understood. By action or speech makes known desire to go to toilet—seldom has daytime "accidents."

AVOIDS simple hazards. "Comes in out of rain." Is careful about falling when on stairs and high places, avoids sharp edges, broken glass, etc., and should keep out of streets.
**Before the 4th Birthday**

Washes hands acceptably without help and dries them without soiling towel. Puts on and buttons coat or dress, but may need help otherwise in dressing.

Walks down stairs without help, one step at a time. Runs, skips, marches, and shows some sense of simple rhythm.

Takes part in such group activities as simple kindergarten games; joins in simple play tea parties, and activities requiring no skill. "Performs" for others, upon request.

"Helps" in small way about the house, such as running short errands, picking up things, feeding pets, dusting.
Dresses self except for tying laces, ribbons, or ties. Does all own buttoning, but clothing is laid out. May need help with muffler, rubbers, or overshoes, and with specially difficult or close-fitting clothes.

Washes face, except ears (!) acceptably and dries his face without help. Goes to toilet alone and without help; unfastens own clothes: no daytime "accidents."

Goes about neighborhood unattended; may be restricted as to areas or "deadlines" so that his whereabouts are known, but is "on his own" within this limitation. Plays in small groups of children of same age such games as tag, hide-and-seek, jump-rope, hopscotch, marbles, etc.

Draws with pencil and crayon simple, but recognizable forms as man, house, animal, landscape.
TAKES care of self unsupervised, outside own yard; manages roller skates, sled, wagon, velocipede, scooter, or other play vehicle.

PLAYS simple table games with others that require taking turns, observing rules, attaining goals, and does so without undue squabbling. (Games include tidledywinks, parchesi, dominoes, etc.)

GOES to school unattended. He may go with friends, but no one is in direct charge of him. "On his own" outside his neighborhood. Learns to print simple words of three or four letters without copy—and his own first name. Does so without direction.

IS TRUSTED with small sums of money to make clearly-stated purchases. He carries out directions in returning purchases, but he may not be able to make change.
AT TABLE: uses knife to spread butter or jam on bread. At play: cuts, folds, pastes paper toys. Sews crudely if needle is threaded. Cannot tie knot. Enjoys making simple figures in clay.

WRITES (not prints) legibly with pencil a dozen or more simple words, correctly spelled. Does so at own desire, or from dictation, but does not need copy.

TAKES bath without supervision; but may be assisted in preparing tub, washing ears, drying hair, and “touching up.”

PERFORMS bedtime operations without help: goes to bedroom alone, undresses, attends to toilet, turns out light according to routine. May be “tucked in” as a matter of sentiment, but requires no assistance.
USES table knife for cutting meat. He may need help with tough or difficult pieces such as on bones, or joints of poultry.

READS ordinary clock or watch correctly to nearest quarter hour and actually uses clock for practical purposes.

BRUSHES and combs hair acceptably without help or "going over" when dressing, going out, or receiving company.

TAKES part in group play: boys prefer games that do not require much skill, such as unorganized baseball, or basketball, follow-the-leader, fox and hounds, hiking and bicycle riding. Girls prefer playing house, school, nurse-doctor, and other imitations of home and social affairs.
MAKES practical use of common tools such as hammer, saw, or screw driver; uses household and sewing utensils; handles simple garden implements successfully.

HELPS with such routine household tasks as dusting, sweeping, setting table, washing dishes, making beds, attending furnace, raking lawn. Assumes responsibility for share of household chores.

READS independently comic strips, movie titles, simple stories, elementary news items for own entertainment or information.

TAKES bath acceptably without any help: undresses, prepares tub or shower, washes and dries self (except the hair) without need of touching up.
Looks after all his own needs at table; helps himself, ordinarily prepares such items as baked potatoes, boiled eggs, difficult cuts of meat.

Buys useful articles and exercises some choice in making purchases. Is responsible for safety of articles, money, and correct change. Does this independently or can be relied upon to follow directions.

Goes about home community freely, alone or with friends. There may be forbidden areas, but the restrictions do not confine the child's activities to his nearby neighborhood.

Runs useful errands; is trusted as a messenger, or to carry out orders to or from not too distant points, and under clear instructions.
WRITES occasional short letters to friends or relatives on own initiative, or following mild suggestions. Does so without help except perhaps in spelling unfamiliar words. Addresses envelope and makes ready for mailing.

USES telephone for practical purposes; looks up number, makes call, and carries on sensible, purposeful conversation. Does not attempt long distance calls and automatic dialing may be difficult unless in long usage.

DOES occasional or brief work on own initiative about the home or neighborhood, for which small sums are paid or merit payment, such as "odd jobs," housework, helping in care of children, selling magazines.

RESPONDS to magazine, radio, or other advertising by mailing coupons, requesting samples, sending for literature, and ordering from catalogues.
MakES useful articles or does easy repair work. Cooks or sews in small way; does a little gardening; raises pets; writes brief stories; produces simple paintings or drawings.

Is SOMETIMES left alone at home or at work for an hour or so, and is successful in looking after his own needs or those of other children left in his care.

Reads for practical information or own enjoyment stories or news items in papers, magazine articles, library book stories of adventure and romance.

WaSHES and dries own hair; is responsible for a thorough job at cleaning hair, but may need reminding to do so.
Between 12th and 15th Birthdays

Takes part in games requiring skill, such as card games, basketball, baseball, tennis, pool. Understands scoring and sticks to the rules. Is an active member of athletic team or literary organization. Attends parties, dances, and other activities with children of own age without adult direction.

Takes complete care of dress; seldom requires help in care of hair, nails, etc. Makes proper selection of clothing according to occasion and weather.

Selects and buys minor articles of clothing with regard to appropriateness, cost, and fit, such as ties, underwear, shoes, but not suits, dresses, coats. Authority may come from parents.

Performs responsible routine chores without prodding, doing his share of such recurring household work as waiting on table, house cleaning, caring for garden or furnace, washing windows, cleaning the family car.

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Between 15th and 18th Birthdays.

Writes business and social letters that are more than a matter of routine; gives serious information, significant news, and acknowledges instructions. Among friends discusses general news, sports, events, and follows these matters.

Goes outside limits of his home town, and makes his own arrangements. Is "on his own," and able to find his way about unfamiliar places. Is given responsibility for all daytime movements without accounting in advance for his plans.

Uses money with common sense. Plans for future needs rather than spending all for mere immediate enjoyment, so is ready for own spending money (either allowance or earned). Usually purchases clothes, including dresses, suits, overcoats, hats. May receive advice, but makes own sensible decisions.

Shows personal interest in the opposite sex; is interested in a boy or a girl, as well as in all boys or girls. Calls or receives callers; but "dates" may be restricted as to time, place, or circumstances.
In comparing your own child's performance with these evidences of growing up, it must be remembered that the scale represents the average development. Each single item in each milestone is placed at the age at which half or more of the children of that age were found to have reached that particular marker. During the study, it was found that some perfectly normal children might have reached any item as much as two years before the average; in other instances, some equally normal children were retarded as much as two years in achieving the same accomplishment. For instance, in an item omitted from our scale because it is not particularly important, it was found that most boys and girls of eight years could believe no longer in a living Santa Claus who drops down the chimney to leave presents. About a quarter of all the observed children had given up belief in Santa before they were seven, and no ten-year-old boy or girl could be found who still watched the chimney on Christmas Eve. Incidentally, it will come as a surprise to many parents that there is no great difference in the rate at which boys and girls reached these various milestones of the schedule. In fact, the milestones were selected particularly to avoid these differences, for they are relatively unimportant until adolescence, except in kinds of games played, and occupations undertaken.

So if your child achieves a single item in the scale a year or two before the average, it is not a matter for excessive parental pride. Neither is it a cause for undue fear should your child be late in reaching a single item in the schedule, for a normal child often fails to reach an item or two below his age, and may pass some above his age. But if your child does not achieve most of the items in his milestone by more than a
year from the time the average child has met them, then it may be a matter to which you should give serious thought. It calls for a review of all your relationships with your child, and if his development is several years below the level for his age, it may be well to seek the advice of a specialist in child care.

To what use can parents put this scale in their relations with their children? Let us assume that a mother among our acquaintances decides that her six-year-old daughter ought to help regularly with the family dishes. The daughter does the chore reluctantly, poorly, and is unhappy about the task. She may even “accidentally” break a dish or two to make her attitude known. Our scale tells this mother that most children cannot be expected to do this job well and willingly before the ninth year and that her daughter probably is too young to be made to assume this household task on an everyday basis. As a rule, it would be better to wait before making this request of a child.

Time goes by, and this same daughter has now passed her eighth year. Again it appears that she is unhappy about help-

Parents with unreasonable fears set a bad example.
ing with the family dishes. But now the scale tells us that the normal child may be expected to “help with routine household tasks.” As it is the willingness to help in some part of the housework that counts, not in doing one particular job, this mother may find that drying dishes is especially distasteful to her daughter, but that she would willingly do some other chore, like setting the table, dusting, or sewing, which might prove just as great a help in the housework as drying the family dishes, and equally valuable to the child.

It may be worth while to discuss briefly another example. The schedule tells us that the ten-year-old child goes about his home town freely. Most of us can recall among our acquaintances a mother who won’t admit that her children are not babies still, and in need of constant watching. This one has an eleven-year-old son who wants, quite naturally, to go about with his friends who are boys of his own age. His “fussy,” over-anxious mother, seeing nothing but the possible dangers her vivid imagination brings up, refuses permission. Not only must such a youngster miss the fun his chums have, but he must bear the stigma of being called “sissy.” To her sorrow, this mother may some day find that she has tied her apron strings too tightly about her child. If he is not allowed reasonable freedom when he is growing up, all too frequently she will find the strings violently broken when later he demands the ending of all restraint.

Among the playmates of this eleven-year-old boy is a youngster of eight whose parents, either through thoughtlessness or lack of understanding, pay little attention to their child’s comings and goings during the free hours of his day. Wherever his “gang” of older cronies go, he will be found far out in front. He roams the town and has had some narrow
escapes from what might have proved to be serious accidents. Our scale would tell this boy’s parents that they are taking grave chances in neglecting to keep informed of the whereabouts of so young a child.

So, we get some inkling of what a scale of growing-up values may mean to us as parents: (1) the scale tells parents, what, in general, their children will want, and do, or be unable to do, at any year during this growing-up period of the child’s life; (2) it guides parents in imposing reasonable duties, in setting certain restrictions, and in granting privileges; (3) it suggests an important educational principle that there is a “right” time for everything, that guidance and training are most effective if applied at just the proper time. When duties or privileges are applied too early, the child is not ready to assume them. If delayed until too late, he may be found unwilling to shoulder his duties and unappreciative of his privileges.

Indirectly the scale makes clear another point in parent-child relationships. It indicates that the normal child sooner or later willingly “pulls his own weight” in the family boat. Let us suppose that the nine-year-old daughter whom we discussed earlier and who didn’t want to wash dishes, refused to do the other household chores that it was suggested she might be willing to do. What then? Her mother had better look well into all her relationships with her daughter. Has she appealed to her daughter’s sense of fair play? Has she made it a custom to do whatever her daughter demands without expecting any return services? It is high time that this child learns to give as well as take. Has she made her daughter understand that assuming a share of responsibility is a part of the growing-up process? At the age of ten the normal child should have a sense of family loyalty to which a strong appeal
often may be made. If this daughter is to be required to do her daily stint in the housework, will the result be pouting, reluctant compliance, or cheerful acceptance of her share? It will depend upon the parents to a great extent. If she is treated wisely, she will do her part without having to be bought, bribed, or bulldozed. This can be brought about by giving the child a reward in satisfactions after her contribution to the household work. In this case she should be told that her help is appreciated; she should be made to feel that she is now an equal in the family partnership; and that she is doing what all grown-ups expect to do. This appeals to her sense of family loyalty, her dignity, and her feeling of responsibility. This works better and the results last longer than being paid in nickels and dimes.

When we study the scale, we come again to the fact that before adolescence the child likes best the things he can do with his hands. Before five he draws; before nine he uses tools successfully; before twelve he makes useful articles. This stage of boyhood and girlhood is the psychological time to develop manual skills; and note well, the things your child learns to do may add pleasure to his whole later life. Hobbies are, as a rule, the grown-up’s return to the interests and occupations that he learned to do and liked to do in his youth. The adolescent and the young man (and woman, of course) in business usually has neither the time nor the inclination to indulge himself in hobbies, but the day will come later when a hobby may prove a life-saving escape from otherwise crushing business or family cares. The man who never had learned to do things in his youth will find it hard to succeed with a hobby in his mature years. Don’t handicap your child.

Finally the scale suggests to parents the wisdom of encouraging a sense of wholesome self-sufficiency. The understand-
ing parent allows his child to assume responsibility as early as he can be trusted to take independent action. The scale tells the parent when he may assume that his child is ready to be responsible and independent. The parent is wise who allows his child in the early school years the self-direction he is capable of managing, because thereby the child is much less likely to make unreasonable demands for too much independence in the often stormy years of adolescence.

The child who has tasted a degree of freedom from parental supervision is the more willing to come to his parents for counsel and help when the independent road proves rougher going than he expected. On the other hand, over-solicitous and domineering parents cannot avoid creating antagonisms. High school, college, or business, one or the other will take each boy and girl sooner or later out from under the parental roof-tree. To the child who has not known earlier independence, the new freedom from restraint is apt to spell dangers ahead. Actually the parent who encourages his child to be “on his own” will find the time of wholesome parental influence generously prolonged. For these reasons, we commend this “growing-up” scale to all thoughtful parents.

Too frequently discussions of the parents’ problems in child guidance have dwelt upon serious and repeated offenses like theft, and truancy, which may have a lasting effect upon the child’s character. Fortunately these difficulties seldom arise to cause parental anxiety, and when they do, no booklet of general advice can solve the parents’ needs for help. Again, the parent faced with so trying a problem is urged to turn to dependable sources of help, for in larger communities, some school departments or special agencies employ advisors who can help parents with the solution of these difficulties. But few parents escape minor problems in guiding their children.
through the growing-up period. And for these common problems there are helpful hints.

Children's Problems, Not Problem Children

In these days, parents read and hear much about “problem children.” One would assume that children were either all good, or all bad—which is far from the truth. As a matter of fact, all children have behavior difficulties at one time or another, during their growing-up years. Certain kinds of misconduct and emotional difficulties seem almost normal at various stages of development. It is when youngsters fail to grow out of these emotional backwaters in the river of child growth that parents need to be concerned. What is natural at one age may be far from normal at another later one.

Parents must not expect rule-of-thumb guides which will help them solve all the problems that arise in relations with their children. For one reason, children are not alike. Some children are word-minded; that is, they learn easily from books and take kindly to the usual schooling. Others are more hand-minded and find their happiness in dealing with things. For them reading may be an unpleasant chore. Some children are at their best when dealing with others; we say they are natural-
born politicians. Others seem destined by nature to get along most successfully when working by themselves. It must be clear to parents that their relations with one type of child must be entirely different from those with another. Hence, parents must first learn to see their children as individuals, to see them as an outsider would. This will make them better able to plan ways of helping their children to grow as they really are, not to make them into what nature never intended them to be.

Until within recent years the public schools were organized solely for the benefit of the word-minded type of child. The hand-minded youngster was at a great disadvantage. But in most places the present generation of school children are better off, for the hand-minded children are now given the type of training that they most enjoy and need. As these modern educational advantages are extended, the parents of all but "book-worm" children will find their lot made easier.

**Children Learn By Trial and Error**

Parents usually are happier when they forget how they behaved in childhood; but when dealing with their own youngster’s difficulties, it is well for them to remember their youthful experiences. As they once did, their children are now growing up by trying out all sorts of ways of getting along with the world as they find it. Some of these attempts are so painfully impractical that parents often wonder if their child is quite bright. But as children grow older their adjustments become more suited to their difficulties. Children who stamp and cry in rage, who may reach the stage of temper tantrums, later find more reasonable ways of solving childish problems. Sometimes, however, the boy of ten acts like one of six and parents begin to despair. It is then that calm judgment is needed to help the child find a satisfactory adjustment.
to his difficulties. For instance, the boy who gets lost trying to find a “better” way home, and who worries his parents by failing to appear at supper time, should not be punished because his parents are upset or angry (which is the real reason many spankings are given) but he should be made to see the possible consequences of taking foolish chances. Indeed, the child’s attempts to find new ways of doing things should be wisely encouraged rather than repressed, for even though they are not successful, they may indicate growing initiative and self-reliance.

Unreasonable fears, day-dreaming, obsessions, occur among most children from time to time. Children, lucky in their home surroundings, overcome these unfortunate tendencies. But for a few the mental quirks become fixed either because too much attention is placed upon them or because the unwholesome situation that produced them originally is not improved.

The quiet child is not always a good child; neither is the active, forever-under-foot child always a bad one. Parents will do well not to make the mistake of judging a child’s conduct by the trouble he causes them. A youngster may be quiet, not because he is happy and busy, but because he has learned to keep out of trouble by withdrawing into himself and living in fantasy. The active child, on the other hand, is forever trying new things, eventually making mistakes that get him into scrapes, and frequently annoying his parents. Rather than forever punishing, the wise parent will try to guide and direct these boundless energies in order to create a wholesome youngster, sound in his mental life. Through such wise guidance parents can do much to develop sturdy, successful, happy children, with many incidental rewards to the parents themselves in a harmonious, happy home life.