



Newsletter

Council for the Education of the Partially Seeing

MAY 1958

THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another milestone has been reached in the history of the *Council for the Education of the Partially Seeing*. We have just concluded one of our best convention programs and we are ready to put into motion some of the new ideas we have gained and to make inquiry about others which have challenged us.

The Annual Meeting was well attended and the company most pleasant. Once again all the officers were present. Dr. Romaine Mackie brought greetings from the U. S. Office of Education and Miss Helen Gibbons extended the good wishes of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. She also encouraged us to find more teachers for our partially seeing children! Among the other guests were Mrs. T. Ralph Barr and Mr. William M. Eakin of Stanwix House. The Council is indebted to Stanwix House for printing, without charge, our Newsletter three times annually. The clever animal breakfast favors were made by the children in the classes of Mrs. Norvella Thompson and Mrs. Mary Parker of Kansas City, Missouri.

The Nominating Committee, under the leadership of Miss Margaret Stahl of Lancaster, Pa., presented the names of the following persons who will be your officers for the next two years. Miss Hazeldene Ray of Kansas City is your President, Mrs. Fredericka Bertram of Alameda, California is President-elect, Miss Elizabeth Yonge of Pensacola, Florida is Secretary, and Miss Gertrude Ruesink of Hibbing, Minnesota is Treasurer. I am sure that this new Executive Committee will lead our organization in great areas of professional growth during the two years ahead.

As your delegate to the business sessions of the convention, I would like to report that the title of our parent organization has been changed to the "Council for Exceptional Children." We shall retain the international status in the entire organization although the word "International" has been deleted from the title. Mr. Ivan Garrison of Jacksonville, Illinois, formerly the Editor of the Journal, is the new President-elect and Dr. Mamie Jo Jones of Atlanta, Georgia is the new Recording Secretary of the C. E. C. Mr. John M. McCormick Jr. of Kansas, has been appointed as Director of Consultive Services and Editor of *Exceptional Children* effective June 1, 1958.

It has been a distinct honor to have served as your president and Newsletter editor. Without the help of each of you, I could not have given your ideas and suggestions to other educators of partially seeing children. Now as you turn your attention to the "views" of your new officers, may I urge you to give each of them the same wonderful support. Best wishes to you for a pleasant summer, good health, and happiness.

TIME TO RENEW!

Our fiscal year begins in April. Why not send \$1.00 for your NEWSLETTER subscription?

Name _____

Address _____

Position _____

Mail your check to Miss Gertrude Ruesink, Washington School, Hibbing, Minn.

DETROIT'S VISION EDUCATION CENTER

*By Edith Cohoe, Supervisor
Classes for Braille and Partially Seeing
Detroit, Michigan, Public Schools*

April 8, 1958, marked the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Vision Clinic, which is called the Vision Education Center. The Center is located at the Franklin School and operates on Friday mornings from 9 to 11 o'clock. Children seen at the Center have previously had an eye examination by their private specialist or by a clinic physician.

In the main, the children who report to the Center are of two types: those who have visual limitations and may need special placement, and those already enrolled in Classes for the Blind and Partially Seeing. Reports concerning low vision are sent to the Department of Special Education, Board of Education, where appointments are made for the Vision Education Center. Most referrals come to the Special Education office from the Detroit Department of Health, school principals, eye specialists, hospitals, and parents.

The ophthalmologist in charge of the Vision Education Center is employed by the Department of Health. The Department of Health also furnishes a secretary who helps the doctor and acts as a receptionist. The supervisor of Classes for the Blind and Partially Seeing attends all Vision Clinics and takes the eye reports, school and psychological records.

At the Vision Education Center the ophthalmologist reviews the private eye specialist's report and gives the child a vision test. These findings, together with the school and psychological records, are usually enough to make a decision concerning the need for Special services. When there is a doubt, the school which the child attends is contacted by telephone.

When it is determined that a child needs the service of this Department, the parents are informed about the school to which their child will go, and transportation is discussed. In addition, the parents visit a Class for the Blind or Partially Seeing in the Franklin School - depending upon which type their child needs.

All pupils enrolled in these Special Education Classes report to the Center at two-year intervals to determine whether they need to remain. Every

child and his parents are given individual attention and consideration.

The following are among the values of the Vision Education Center:

1. The personal contact with the parents and pupils by the ophthalmologist and supervisor helps the family to understand and co-operate with the decisions made.
2. Parents, by visiting the Classes for the Blind and Partially Seeing located in the Franklin School, learn about the special methods and procedures used in these rooms.
3. The Center helps the child's own eye specialist to become better acquainted with the program of Special Education since the ophthalmologist confers with him when there is a question.
4. The Center is a quick referral agency where parents, teachers, and others may come for information on such subjects as eye hygiene, care of glasses, need for periodic eye examinations, reading habits, and lighting.

The supervisor of Classes for the Blind and Partially Seeing sends the findings of the Vision Education Center to the school from which the child comes, issues transfers into the Special Classes and releases children no longer needing the services. In addition, she makes monthly reports to the Detroit Department of Health concerning the number of children seen at the Vision Education Center and the disposition of each.

During the last five-year period a total of 1520 children have reported to the Vision Education Center. Of this number, 829 were new referrals and 698 were rechecks of children already in Classes for the Blind or Partially Seeing. The following is a yearly record of the numbers who reported:

Year	New	Re-Check
1953	206	159
1954	152	136
1955	187	149
1956	144	125
1957	140	129

During the ten years which the Vision Education Center has been in existence we have been most fortunate in having Dr. Horace L. Weston as the consulting ophthalmologist. Because of his great patience with the children he gains their

fullest co-operation as well as the confidence of the parents. Dr. Weston's efficiency and his deep concern for each child make him an outstanding person for the work.

The principal of the Franklin School, Mr. Oliver B. Healy, and his staff have assisted and co-operated with the Vision Education Center in every possible way. Mrs. Mildred Drake, Miss B. Elaine Demetral, and Miss Kathleen McCredie, teachers of Classes for the Blind, and Mrs. Lucile Mesner and Miss Shirley Gustafson, teachers of Classes for the Partially Seeing at Franklin, have given numerous demonstrations and information concerning Detroit's program for the visually handicapped to parents and visitors.

LANGUAGE ARTS FOR THE PARTIALLY SEEING

Section Meeting - April 12, 1958

The final panel session of the I.C.E.C. convention was of special and practical value to teachers of partially seeing children. Miss Lorraine Galisdorfer of Kenmore, New York presided. Dr. Robert W. Ridgway, Director of Elementary Education, University of Kansas, opened the program with his presentation of a "Language Arts Program." He stressed the use of the functional approach based on actual *experiences* of children in their living rather than the supposed *interests* of children. The teaching of language arts are not to be confined to a particular segment of the day but are to function in the total school program during the entire day. Some examples are vocabulary work in science and expression in oral discussions. Some teaching devices were described in the teaching of Navaho Indians. With common experiences as a basis for the program these children were taught to use our language skills in about five years. Experience charts provided materials for practice and repetition of vocabulary, sentence development, spelling improvement, discussion of implications, and reading experiences.

Various changes are emerging in our language, according to Dr. Ridgway. There are fewer inflections, more dependence on word order, tendencies to change the meanings of words, and to drop punct-

uation. Four recommendations were made for the teaching of the language arts:

1. The functional or psychological approach is best for children.
2. The test-study-test method is best for spelling although each child learns spelling in a way that is "best" for him.
3. More time needs to be spent in teaching vocabulary.
4. Better results are secured in creative writing with brief stories, written frequently on a few, limited topics.

Dr. Ridgway concluded his presentation with an expression of the utilization of some cautions in teaching. A teacher cannot overlook the examination of her own teaching techniques in order to improve both the quality of teaching and learning.

Other program participants contributed ideas on the teaching of various aspects of the curriculum to partially seeing children. Elizabeth Hughes, of Normal, Illinois, discussed some speaking and listening activities which she found helpful with her pupils. Good opportunities for the development and improvement of these skills are made possible through the utilization of experiences to introduce people, the technique of role playing in the classroom, the practice of telephone conversations, the enjoyment of poetry and literature, and recordings to be reproduced later for an audience.

Grace S. Helm of Jackson, Tennessee and Nita Rogers of Fort Worth, Texas confined their discussions to the field of reading. Mrs. Helm discussed the developmental reading program including pre-reading experiences and the various activities that help to build reading skills in the primary grades. Mrs. Rogers discussed the extension of these and other skills in the intermediate grades. At this level the reading activities widen to include recreational reading and reading in the content subjects.

Miss Evelyn Eisnaugle of the Ohio State Department of Education summarized the ideas expressed on the place of language arts in fulfilling the needs of partially seeing children. The experiences provided in the language arts for these children are similar to those experienced by their normally seeing classmates. Modifications in methods and the use of special materials help to adjust the learning experiences to the particular needs of the visually handicapped. Much under-

standing and skillful guidance enable the special teacher to use these curriculum adaptations in teaching the language arts.

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

I. C. E. C. Convention Highlights

There were four excellent section meetings in the area of the partially seeing at the 36th Annual Convention of the I.C.E.C. in Kansas City, Missouri.

With Dr. Franklin M. Foote, M.D. as Chairman, the panel on "Medical Advances in Vision" was of particular value to educators. Dr. Desmond Curran, M.D. discussed the "Recent Progress in Eye Surgery and Treatment." Some of his high-points were: - Patients are better informed today on early diagnosis of such conditions as glaucoma and cataracts; there are many new drugs available to ophthalmologists for treatment; the finer surgical instruments of today make more delicate and finer surgical procedures possible with fewer complications; there are newer and better anaesthetics; antibiotics help in inter-ocular surgery; the progress in retinal detachment surgery is most outstanding as evidenced by the fact that before 1920 with no surgery there was 0% success and in 1950 there was 80% success.

Dr. James E. Lebenshon, M.D. of Chicago discussed "Newer Optical Aids for Children with Low Vision." Although we have read and heard more about such devices in the past five years, medical men have been interested in this field for many years. The children who have a visual acuity of 6/200 or more, are amplyopic and of normal intelligence can be fitted with optical aids. Children can adjust to close focus and have greater accommodation. The simple, less expensive aids are usually effective. The child must have an interest in the aid to secure the best results. Prism glasses may be of help to the hospitalized child.

Dr. Larry Calkins, M.D. discussed "Current Knowledge about Myopia". Dr. Calkins suggested that many "Old Wives Tales" concerning myopia should be overcome. Although a child has achieved 75% of his growth by age 4, some children are still myopic at age 8. During the ages of 9-10-11 many children are not aware that they are myopic. As for treatment, Dr. Calkins suggested that since there is no prevention, we must

make the best of it and give the child his full correction in glasses. Usually no bifocals are prescribed and although contact lens reduce myopia temporarily by flattening the cornea they are best suited for a conical cornea. In conclusion, Dr. Calkins stressed that for myopia, exercises are of no value, drugs are of no value, just use the eyes.

During the panel discussion on "Vision Screening and Follow-Up" with Ruth Hawkins as Chairman, many different aspects of the problem were presented. Mrs. Freda House, a P.T.A. President told how her organization answered a two-fold need of service and help to children by establishing a vision-screening program in a small school. Miss Freda Parks, R.N., Pediatric Nursing Consultant of the State of Missouri served as the Consultant for the screening program. Miss Virginia George, the school principal, discussed how the school administration can help with follow-up by personal parent interviews and contacts with the various Service Clubs to assure refractions and glasses. Miss Ethel Anstaett, R.N., Supervisor of Health Services of Kansas City, discussed the role of the nurse in both the original screening, training of lay volunteers, and the necessary follow-up. Dr. Truman Schertz, M.D. stressed the fact that ophthalmologists are not concerned with over-referrals because the parents are usually pleased to have their child's eyes checked and happy to know that no correction is necessary at this time. The program of public relations is important and much value is gained in the development of a close school-community-medical team. The program was concluded with the film, "Betty Sees a Bird" which is a new film of the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. The film clearly indicates the focal points of training of volunteers, administering the Snellen Test, and follow-up of a good vision screening program. During the section on "Services for Partially Seeing Pupils at the Secondary Level" with Mrs. Dorothy Bryan as Chairman, the various ways of administering such a program were discussed by Joyce Bromley of Knoxville, Tennessee and Kathleen Heaton of Waukegan, Illinois. Among the subjects discussed were the "resource room", the services of an itinerant teacher and the various mechanical aids which proved most useful in this variable type of program. Since this subject is treated in many different ways throughout the country, the discus-

sion which followed the presentations were most interesting. In summary, it seemed to follow that the situation which is *best* is the one that fits your school curriculum, your case-load, your physical facilities but most important of all the one that *best* educates your partially seeing high school child!

Each year the programs presented at the convention are of the highest quality. This year was one of the best. It was difficult to make a choice for each session of the four days. Congratulations to our fine Program Chairman and President, Dr. Lloyd Dunn of Nashville, Tennessee!

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT 1957-1958

During the past year the activities of your president were many and varied. Following the directive of the members present at the Annual Meeting in Pittsburgh in April 1957, a letter was sent to more than 500 persons who are interested in the education of partially seeing children. These persons were invited to join the Council for the Education of the Partially Seeing and to participate in the Council by furnishing our *Newsletter* with articles of interest to all in this field. The list of names for this mailing was furnished by the National Society for the Prevention of Blindness. With this special effort and the members who joined during our Annual Breakfast Meeting, we had a membership of almost 200 this year. As you recall, Mr. J. Knox Milligan, publisher of Stanwix House books, printed our *Newsletter* this year and we owe him a sincere vote of thanks. Your president served as Newsletter Editor and also did the mailing because of the time involved in remailing them through the various area chairman. Two editions have been mailed thus far and the third will be published in May with complete coverage of this convention.

As you may have noticed, an attempt was made these two years to formulate a broad editorial policy. Among the things we tried to do were these; a professional article discussing an area education program, parents program or medical advance; a section on the activities of N.S.P.B.'s Consultant in Education, and the schools where courses in the education of the partially seeing are to be offered; a President's Message which

tried to keep you posted on announcements and the business of the Council; a column on new publications; and a pre-view of our convention meetings in the field of vision. As your president, I appointed Miss Adelyn Dwyer, a former teacher of the partially seeing in Akron, Ohio, as our Journal representative. We had one series of articles printed in "Out of the Classroom" in the December issue. Our new officers will appoint some new person to succeed Miss Dwyer in this position.

On July 1, 1957, I was honored to represent you as a panel member at the N.E.A. Centennial Convention in Philadelphia, Pa. This I.C.E.C. section meeting discussed "Changing Trends for the Physically Handicapped." In March, I participated as a member of the Advisory Committee on the Education of Partially Seeing Children of the N.S.P.B. During the year I also spoke at several P.T.A., Service Clubs, etc. explaining our work with partially seeing children and encouraging these lay citizens to take an active part in the solving of vision problems of all children.

The I.C.E.C. has increased its influence and services each year. We are kept informed of new legislation, new developments in such areas as the gifted and other activities through frequent letters from our Executive Secretary, Mr. Harley Wooden. I have passed these along to you when they were of general interest.

Now as we look at ourselves in retrospect, we have traveled far in the six years since 1952 when the Council was formed in Omaha, its first Constitution adopted, and Rosalie Calone elected the first president. In 1954 when Wilma Schneider was elected, work was begun toward establishing the Council as a Division of the I.C.E.C. In 1956, we were officially accepted and in 1957 we received our Charter in Pittsburgh. During the past two years we have made a sincere effort to stabilize and develop our *Newsletter*, and now we look forward to another group of officers who will lead our organization to fields of greater service. My sincere thanks to my fellow officers and to the staff of the N.S.P.B. who have rendered me invaluable consultive service. We have a great obligation to give greater service to all children and in particular those who are partially seeing.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth D. Hawkins, President