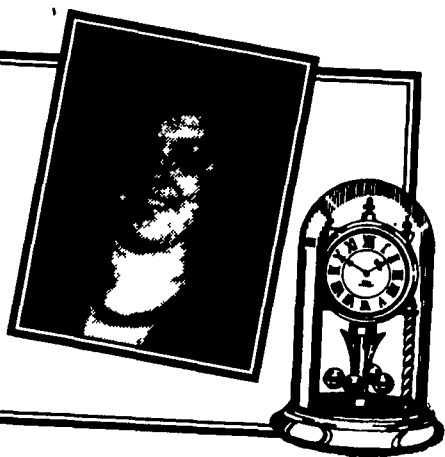


Taking Time by Rebecca Escott



This past year has been an incredible adventure for me. My husband and I became parents of a wonderful little girl in March 1997, and for the last year we have been scrambling to acquire the skill we need to care for her. Businesses often employ the concept of "Just in time" training. Well we are doing "Just in time" parent education. Of course, we did have advan-

tages over some new parents. Our combined families include 12 nieces and nephews, a maternity nurse, a parenting educator (me), siblings, friends, and co-workers who were willing to provide advice when needed and a home library filled with references. We are fortunate. With all that in place, we still feel like we're floundering some times. For that reason, I have

become a real follower of the Missouri motto - Show me! Here I am.' Parent educator, assertive woman. Capable, right? I was so grateful when the pediatric nurse at the hospital reviewed with me the way to change a newborn's diaper. She didn't just tell me. She slowly showed me, step by step. And then she asked, "Is there anything else you'd like me to review with you." Of course my next question was, "Could you just go over one more time what to do about bathing her."

Then the pediatricians joined my "Show me" team. Was I supposed to know how to put ointment in the one-month-old's eyes? Could you show me? I loved how the nurse practitioner nonchalantly demonstrated the importance of holding a child's leg with one hand while she is lying on a table. She said, "She may not roll over now. But it won't be long. It's good to hold her just in case." She didn't just

tell me, she modeled the skill for me.

Having these experiences where I felt like I "should" know what I was doing, but I really needed a refresher/introductory demonstration, reminded me that many people need to SEE an example not just hear directions.

If you are asking your child to complete a household chore, do you take the time to show him an important step? Do you take the time to let him practice with your encouragement? When you ask your partner to run an errand, do you show him the items he needs to find?

Of course, there is a fine line between casually demonstrating and dictating. The same pediatrician who carefully showed me how to put ointment in my child's eye also advised me to go in another room when my husband changed my child's diaper so I wouldn't interfere too much.

I guess it may be easier to receive the examples from an outside party (where you don't lose face by admitting your inadequacy). But ideally, we should be able to offer to and receive from our family and friends these same helpful demonstrations. "Do you want me to show you that part?" or "Do you want me to walk you through it?" is one way to model behavior.

The other way is as effective. Live the appropriate behavior. You can show other family mem-

bers how to resolve conflicts, how to treat people respectfully, how to organize yourself for a vacation, or how to balance a checkbook regularly by allowing them to see your actions and hear your comments.

I'm sure there will be times in the future when I will be embarrassed because my daughter is mimicking one of my less flattering behaviors. That will be one more reminder that children and adults show new skills after they have seen them. Some people need the encouragement of a real live example before they grasp a new idea. Professionally and personally, we all need to take the time to show others behavior that is healthy, behavior that we would be proud to have copied.

VEGGIES FOR BREAKFAST? WHY NOT!

If fried potatoes or a veggie omelet are the only breakfast vegetables you know, it's time for another look. Here are some ideas for adding vegetables to breakfast menus. Try steamed or broiled veggies on an English muffin or bagel; a grilled vegetable breakfast sandwich; fresh salsa on eggs or on a baked potato; stir-fried veggies and rice; mashed potato patty; baked potato with cinnamon. Before dismissing these ideas as "not quite breakfasty," remember that vegetables are low in fat and packed with vitamins and minerals. We need three to five servings of vegetables a day.

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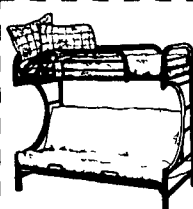
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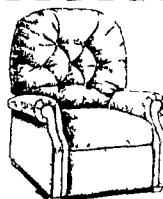


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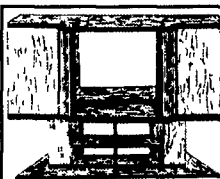
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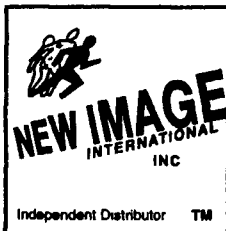
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