

FROM THE EDITOR

Maurer suggests that we learn how to work through a sequential developmental process that begins in childhood. These stages include identifying with work, learning about work, getting along with peers, developing basic habits of industry, developing a self-concept and translating it into work terms, and learning to adjust to authority.^{1,2} She notes that the rate of learning and the age of achievement of various stages may vary among individuals. Since this is a developmental process, programming to assist the child must begin at an early age. The introduction of activities to foster career awareness and to encourage the exploration of vocational capabilities and interests needs to be part of *both* the home and school environments. Although such awareness and exploration must be reinforced with children who are "normal," it is particularly critical for children with special needs that programming be presented in a *functional* developmentally appropriate manner and initiated at an early age. In many cases these children receive limited exposure to the world of work, have limited career expectations set on them by parents and society, and may take longer to incorporate a new skill/behavior into their repertoire.³

This issue of *WORK* provides a small sampling of work practice with the child, adolescent, and young adult. These articles are authored by a variety of individuals: occupational or physical therapists, a speech and language pathologist, and educators. Taken as a whole, they provide a snapshot of current work practice within these age groups.

Adelstein has written "Perspectives." She provides the reader with a foundation of historical attitudes and current issues in work-related treatment for youths. Costello, an educator, discusses school-based supported work/supported employment and provides us with an innovative model used in the Boston Public Schools.

As the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) becomes a reality in July 1992, we find that the therapist has an important role to play in preparing adolescents to enter the work force under this act. Kornblau, an attorney and an occupational therapist, assists us to rally to this challenge. Bluestone, a speech and language pathologist, describes the integration of computers in cognitive rehabilitation pro-

grams with the young adult. Three comprehensive case studies have been incorporated into her article.

In Gordon's article she indicates a lack of age-appropriate vocational tests and work samples for the older child and adolescent. She introduces the Perceptual Motor Assessment for Children—Emotional/Behavioral Screening Program (PMAC-ESP), an instrument that may have enormous potential to provide comprehensive vocational programming for this age group.

Cermak and Murray describe learning disabilities in their article. Although they focus on the adult, they weave the foundation for developing work programming for the child and adolescent with learning disabilities.

Two articles discuss the introduction of prevention with school-age children. Olsen describes her innovative APPLAUSE: Body Mechanics for Children; Schwartz and Jacobs' article discusses a cognitive approach to body mechanics training in elementary school.

Atwood provides ethnographic research on part-time work for adolescents. Her in-depth article encourages therapists ". . . to step into the world of work with the adolescent so that our impact can be relevant and long lasting." I agree! Finally, "Sounding Board," authored by Pratt, provides a provocative perspective on what happens when the child finishes school.

On a personal note, this is an especially exciting issue for me since I began my occupational therapy career working with children with learning disabilities in a "prevocational" and vocational setting. The eight years I spent at the Little People's and Learning prep schools were extremely gratifying and productive for both the children and myself!

Karen Jacobs

REFERENCES

1. Maurer P: Prevocational activities and evaluation for the child and adolescent. *Phys Ther* 1968; 48:771-776.
2. Reed KL, Sanderson SR: *Concepts of Occupational Therapy*, 2nd ed. Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1983, p 48.
3. Jacobs K: *Occupational Therapy: Work-Related Programs & Assessments*. Boston: Little, Brown & Co, 1991, pp 138-140.