

## Bringing up children: what should you do

in terms of the prevention of problems in children

We have been studying the raising of young children and its relationship with stuttering since 2006. We organise a course in the summer during which parents, who have resolved their stuttering problem, are supervised with their children in everyday situations.

Parents are motivated and do not want their children to develop either a stuttering symptom or the emotions and thinking that are linked to stuttering.

*Children the Challenge* by Prof. Dr. Rudolf Dreikurs is the study book that we use.

*Die Individualpsychologie erhebt die Forderung sich um alle Kinder in gleicher Weise zu bemühen und ihre geistigen Fähigkeiten zu fördern, indem ihnen mehr Mut, mehr Selbstvertrauen vermittelt wird.\** (Individual Psychology demands that we care for all children in exactly the same way in order to develop their mental capabilities by giving them more courage and self-belief.\*)

What can we see from the emotions and thinking of a parent who has stuttered?

- An issue is not discussed by arguing but it is handled with emotion and authoritatively
- In order to be proved right, many statements are made with little reality value
- There is little interest in social topics outside the family
- Parents believe that the children are "their children" and that other adults may not have any influence over them
- They believe that they themselves can resolve problems in children's' upbringing and a conversation with other parents is unnecessary
- They want to show how well things are going with them and their children
- They have difficulty in changing the emotional bond to a relationship in which independence and thinking, choosing and doing things for yourself are all realised
- They know that thinking, acting and speaking while emotionally engaged are required in order not to stutter; they let go of this when dealing with their children
- The children deploy their parents for their negative goals such as demanding attention, receiving care, receiving privileges within the family unit and being the boss over others
- Parents like nothing better than to play mothers and fathers and, in the eyes of the children, they are implausible

\* Alfred Adler 1930

What do children show during an educational week?

Which behaviour do we have to deal with on the first day?

- They do not listen
- They speak unintelligibly
- They allow conversations to become stuck by keeping silent
- They do not consult
- They are indifferent
- A lot of crying
- Many fights
- Aggression
- Not sharing
- Bed-wetting
- Picking at their food
- Dawdling
- Making a mess

What do the children ask during their activities?

- They do not want to be coerced by their parents
- They are open to logical thinking and consequences; more than an adult is
- They have more social interest than we believe
- They like to interact with other people, young and old
- They do not think they can resolve a problem themselves; they want to talk about it
- They like to show what they can do themselves
- They want a relationship with their parents but they also want to be independent
- Thinking, acting and speaking emotionally really suits them
- They want to take a decision independently

How were the children able to put these social views into practice?

What did the adults do in this respect?

- We are present emotionally
- We do not make a song and dance and do not go looking for excitement
- A child is given an instant parent and their own parents will see how a problem is created
- We let children nurture children and create situations where adults are not present
- We assess the meaning of a situation and we prepare
- We do not pay attention to disruptive behaviour; we pay attention to the child and we show that we understand his or her goal during a conversation
- We say something once and ensure that it is done

- We continue to feel proximity regardless of the circumstances
- We have surrendered our superiority
- We do not speak using a childish language
- We realise that children are our equal partners

The adults have found a better answer with each other to the behaviour of the children. The context of the community is necessary to raise children within a family. *It takes a village to raise a child.\**

What have been our findings in the *Bringing up children; what should you do* master class?

- Nobody is given the space to behave disruptively
- Every situation with a child is a nurturing situation
- Children expect equality
- We also achieve contact with a child and come to a mutual understanding during a conversation
- A solution is also the result of good discussions, thinking logically and being consistent with a child
- Actions must match words
- We shouldn't think: "we will not say it because they would not understand". Children are more intelligent than we think;
- We start to understand the child's emotional life and realm of ideas during a normal conversation and we have put this to the service of the child
- A remark such as "this is just the way it is with our Timo" is a preconception and it serves no purpose
- Both adults and children live with the question "What can we do?" This is how we find unexpected possibilities and simple solutions
- Children will quickly expand their vocabulary
- Children are good at giving advice

The children will have been able to take a decision in a normal conversation; they will have changed their behaviour:

- They like to talk and are clear
- They collaborate
- They listen
- They show understanding
- They talk without shouting
- They do not need to cry or hit
- They complete their tasks while playing
- They like to eat
- They no longer wet the bed

\* African saying

What have we further discovered in practice?

Children are governed by emotions: they live based on their emotions and they develop their intellect. Adults have a developed intellect and suppress their emotions. In order to fit in with children, the adult must open up to emotions. Adults and children will then produce an attractive programme in which they use their possibilities and shift the boundaries.

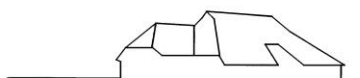
Children will notice when parents have different views about raising children and will become confused.

If the mother has an interest in keeping her child dependent, the father will usually go along with the mother. He does not choose the development of his child.

If parents want to be the flavour of the children's month, the children will eventually have enough of this. Children do not find this interesting and the intimacy of the relationship will be less.

If parents go for equivalence, the relationship will be spiritual and will not end.

Children have the future and adults can collaborate in this.



### Conversation with Lisa who is 3 years old

Me: You are now a big girl and yet I hear you cry every now and again. This isn't necessary any more. You can simply tell us what you find difficult.

Lisa nods.

Me: If you think that you want to cry, you can say to yourself "I no longer need to do that". Minou is allowed to cry because Minou is younger and cannot yet say what she wants.

Lisa nods.

Me: There is also a different kind of crying. Minou cries when you have done something that was not very nice. I have noticed this.

Lisa: What have you noticed?

Me: I won't say. What can you then do for Minou?

Lisa: Give her a kiss and say sorry.

Me: You can say "I have hurt you and I won't do it again". And then a kiss and say sorry.

Lisa grasps her chair and walks away. She says that she will go off and play again.

Me: Maybe you can ask me whether I've finished.

Lisa: Are you done?

I say "No" and ask whether she will come back in a little while.

Me: If I hear Minou crying this week, I'll come downstairs.

Lisa: Minou sometimes cries about other things.

I: If Minou is crying about something that you've done, I will certainly know.

Lisa keeps quiet.

Me: Have we come to a good arrangement like this?

Lisa: Yes.

### Conversation in the pizzeria with Chiel and Nick who are 5

Chiel and Nick want chips. I point out that we are at the pizzeria.

They are being overactive. I ask them not to shout. Other people want to eat in peace, which they can see for themselves. The pizzas look good and are tasty. The parents cut up the pizzas for them. Chiel and Nick enjoy the pizza. They are less overactive when eating. The mother and Nick do not eat the whole pizza or the crust. I suggest that we take what is left home. When the children have finished eating, they again become overactive. We ask them what they did that day. The parents say it for them: "You have indeed ...". Chiel and Nick no longer participate in this conversation. They want to leave the table to play.

Me: If you have nothing to tell us, I do have a question. I've noticed that when one of us talks about what we did today or asks a question, you no longer listen. Is that the case?

Chiel: Yes.

Me: Why is this not so smart? You are smart cookies, right?

Chiel and Nick: I don't know.

Me: What do you think of the following answer?

- You don't know what someone says;
- You don't know what someone wants; and
- You don't know what you can learn from someone?

In other words, you don't become smarter. Is that the case?

Chiel: Yes.

Me: What is another reason why it is not smart?

Chiel and Nick: I don't know.

Me: Do you want to know this?

Chiel: Yes!

Me: If you tell Nick something and he doesn't listen, what do you think of that?

Chiel: Well, I don't like that.

Me: What do you have to do to get Nick to listen?

Chiel: Well, I tell him to listen.

Me: If Nick asks you to do that, do you do it?

Chiel: No, I don't do that.

Me: Such a remark is not smart because it doesn't work. What is the smart answer?

Chiel and Nick: I don't know.

Me: Well, to listen properly. If you listen properly to Nick, he'll listen to you.

Mother, indignant: They don't understand this.

Me: What do you think of the idea? It is something you need to think about.

Chiel: A good idea.

Me: What do you think about hearing this again?

Chiel and Nick think it's a good idea.

Me: Listen carefully because then you'll understand it better. If you listen carefully to Nick, Nick will listen to you.

