This article describes a cooperative enterprise carried out in Elizabethton, Tennessee. An assumption was made that parents are interested in working with the school faculty and administration in improving the school program. This concept of cooperative work was followed and parents participated effectively and vigorously. *Helping Our Children Grow* is the title of the bulletin which they developed in cooperation with the school. Parents have varied interests and abilities which, if used, can have important implications for curriculum research.

On a hot day in late August a small group of parents, a principal, superintendent and supervisor met in Elizabethton, Tennessee, to discuss plans for a better educational program for the Harold McCormick Elementary School. A questionnaire was prepared by the group to identify what the parents expected from the school.

More than a hundred parents and teachers at the first open meeting responded to this questionnaire. A summary of their replies showed that all of them wanted to understand the child better and to help him grow. Parents and teachers felt a need to work together for character training, healthful living and the development of important skills. To attain these goals, faculty study groups, parent study groups and PTA programs were planned and continued for a two year period. The cooperative project included: the director of the local county health department who worked with the group on problems concerning a child and his environment; the supervisor who secured films and reading material and planned activities for the group; a reporter from the local newspaper who published regular accounts of the project; and representatives from a local state college who conducted studies on the citizen child and on the meaning of education.

Visits and conferences were encouraged. When parents visited in the classroom they became acquainted with the teacher, observed the learning process and learned the status of their child. When teachers visited in the homes of their children they learned the educational facilities and socioeconomic status of the family. Then, as a result of parent-teacher-child conferences, relationships, understandings, appreciations and expectations improved. One mother became interested in collecting reading material on understanding the behavior of boys and girls, another listed the materials which had been collected, while another prepared a reading room for patrons at school.

Through their reading, parents and teachers became interested in the needs of children and decided that a study of emotional needs was a logical next
step in understanding and helping their children. At the beginning of their study, a supervisor and a principal gave a brief review of Rath's list of emotional needs. They mentioned the need for belonging, the need for achievement, the need for economic security, the need for freedom from fear, the need for love and affection, the need for freedom from guilt, the need for self respect, and the need for understanding. The parents listed ways of meeting each of the eight needs. Their suggestions for meeting the need for belonging, for example, may well illustrate their work:

1. Make your child feel that he is an important person in the family. Reward him with your approval for his contributions in the areas of work, worship and recreation.

2. Maintain a firm but kindly attitude toward your child when you correct him. Be sure that he knows that he still has your affection, even though you disapprove strongly of what he has done.

3. Let your child share in family decisions according to his age and ability.

4. Respect your child's personal property.

5. Encourage him to share his possessions.

6. Help your child grow up. The emotionally immature child is rarely accepted by other children.

7. Let your child's personality grow. The popular child is somewhat aggressive, and he is usually happy and friendly.

8. If you always take your child's part, he will be unable to learn to accept small defeats and unfairness as a part of living. Help him learn not to sulk or feel sorry for himself. The child who plays fairly is usually liked.

9. Help build up your child's belief in himself. Each time he succeeds in developing a skill, his ability to succeed at other things is strengthened.

10. Boys need a place where they can gather, where no one will interfere. Parents can see that there are safe, constructive activities for "the gang."

11. Don't let business or pleasure form a barrier between you and your child. Be sure he feels included in the family life.

12. Be sure your child knows you are glad he is a boy (or she is a girl) and help him to be glad. If you have a boy and he knows you want a girl, make it clear you do not want a girl instead of him.

In sharing the lists, parents were impressed with the difference in children even in the same family. The differences were evidenced in many manifestations of the same unmet need and in the various reactions to treatment for that unfulfilled need.

Parents and Teachers Study
Child Growth

A representative from the University of Tennessee served as consultant.

Maude Burchfield is principal of the Harold McCormick School, Elizabethton, Tennessee.
He helped guide the parents and teachers as they joined forces to study
the emotional needs of children, ways of recognizing these, and ways of meeting them. A questionnaire was prepared to secure additional information about child behavior. The information was to be used as a basis for determining the extent to which children's needs are met. Other aids for the identification of child behavior recommended by the consultant were: the continuation of home-school visitation, the observation of a child's activities, the knowledge of the characteristic reactions of the child's age group, more frequent parent-teacher-child conferences, and the application of the needs tests. Through the identification of behavior some unmet needs were determined.

The study revealed that twelve percent lacked self confidence, sixteen percent feared new experiences, and ten percent were easily discouraged. Thirteen percent of the parents felt their standards for their children were too high. A close correlation was found between the way the parents had analyzed the fears, worries and behavior of their children and the way the children had identified their own problems through the use of the needs test, "A Story About Me," and "The Wishing Well." For the 300 boys and girls tested, the foremost needs revealed were those for freedom from guilt, for achievement, and for freedom from fear. The needs for economic security and for love and affection were less evident.

To help children with their problems, parents and teachers studied ways for understanding and helping children with each particular need. Parent meetings were held once a week at school. Teacher meetings, for a study of needs, were held at regular intervals and were attended by representatives from the parent group. Both groups listed successful techniques to be used in working with children on their various needs. These lists became lengthy as people shared ideas from hearing lectures, analyzing films, reading and discussing a wealth of material, and thinking of their own experiences. The ideas were put on the chalkboard, discussed and recorded. Lists were prepared for each of the needs. The attendance for the 69 meetings varied from 7 to 190 with an average attendance of 48. The average time spent in each meeting was approximately two hours. There was growing enthusiasm within the parent group.

At one of the sessions a mother said, "The experience of studying emotional needs has meant so much to us as parents that we should have the results of it in permanent form to be used as a reference and to share with others." As committees met in the homes and worked on different parts of the bulletin, they decided that there should be sections for pre-school children and for adolescents. Parents of these two groups then prepared the needed material. Charts and diagrams were drafted and illustrations prepared that clearly and effectively expressed the ideas that each child should be free of adult anxieties and pressures.

4 "The Wishing Well." Columbus, Ohio: Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University. 1945.
that each reveals his unmet needs when
others listen to him and observe him,
that the process of meeting needs is
a continuous endeavor, and that adults
should expect of a child only what he
is capable of doing at his stage of de-
velopment. Such concepts seemed to
be the major ones which parents
acquired.

A committee of parents organized
the material into a booklet containing
three parts. The first section gave some
developmental characteristics of early
childhood, middle childhood, later
childhood and early adolescence.

Emphasis was placed on (1) physical
development, showing growth patterns
for each age; (2) development of in-
tellectual skills, showing some special
and scholastic skills for each age; (3)
development of security, showing some
stages of emotional maturity which
children of each age are capable of
attaining. The second part of the bul-
letin showed the symptomatic behav-
iors, or manifestations of unmet needs,
described in the Needs Theory.5 These
behavioral manifestations are aggres-
sion, submission, withdrawal and psy-
chosomatic illness. For this section one
list of behaviors was prepared for each
symptom. Emphasis was given the need
for observation of any one of these
behavior patterns appearing in excess.
The third section of the bulletin con-
tains definite suggestions for meeting
each emotional need. The interest of
the planning committee was contagious
and reached many people who gave
valuable suggestions as to format, de-
sign for the cover, and as to the title.

5Louis E. Raths. An Application to Educa-
tion of the Needs Theory. Bronxville. New

Members of the Elizabethton Board of
Education examined and approved the
material. They appropriated funds for
the printing of the booklet so that it
might be made available to all parents
and teachers in their city.

Distribution and Use
of the Booklet

During the summer parents planned
the distribution of the booklet to par-
ents of other schools in Elizabethton.
A room mother for each classroom
assumed responsibility for delivering
a bulletin to the home of each of the
parents previously assigned to her. In
this bulletin parents could recognize
their own children in the charts or
in the lists of manifestations of growth
and development. The parents eagerly
studied the helpful suggestions given
in the material. Copies of the booklet
were delivered to libraries in local
schools and churches. Doctors, nurses,
dentists, baby sitters, policemen and
the juvenile judge have secured and
used the booklet in their efforts to
achieve a better understanding of chil-
dren. Developed by local people, this
booklet seemed to be of great interest
and help to many local groups and
individuals.

The publication has been used as a
basis for many study groups through-
out the city and area. Parents who
participated in the study conducted
parent education programs in other
city and county schools. In one school
for six afternoons, each teacher, using
the booklet as a guide, discussed with
school patrons the developmental tasks,
characteristic reactions and special
needs of a particular age group. In
34 states, individuals who are inter-
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Teachers who participated in this study believe that parents have a definite responsibility in planning and carrying out the school program. They encourage parent visitation in the classroom and seek parent aid in the development of learning activities. They secure the help of the parents in identifying the needs of each child and in helping solve his problems. We feel that the kind of participation by teachers, parents, and other citizens which characterized this research study, under the guidance of the consultant from the University of Tennessee, has resulted in a unique contribution to the better understanding of children’s growth. We believe it will be extremely helpful to all persons in child development and that it will serve to further work in this area by parents, teachers, and children.