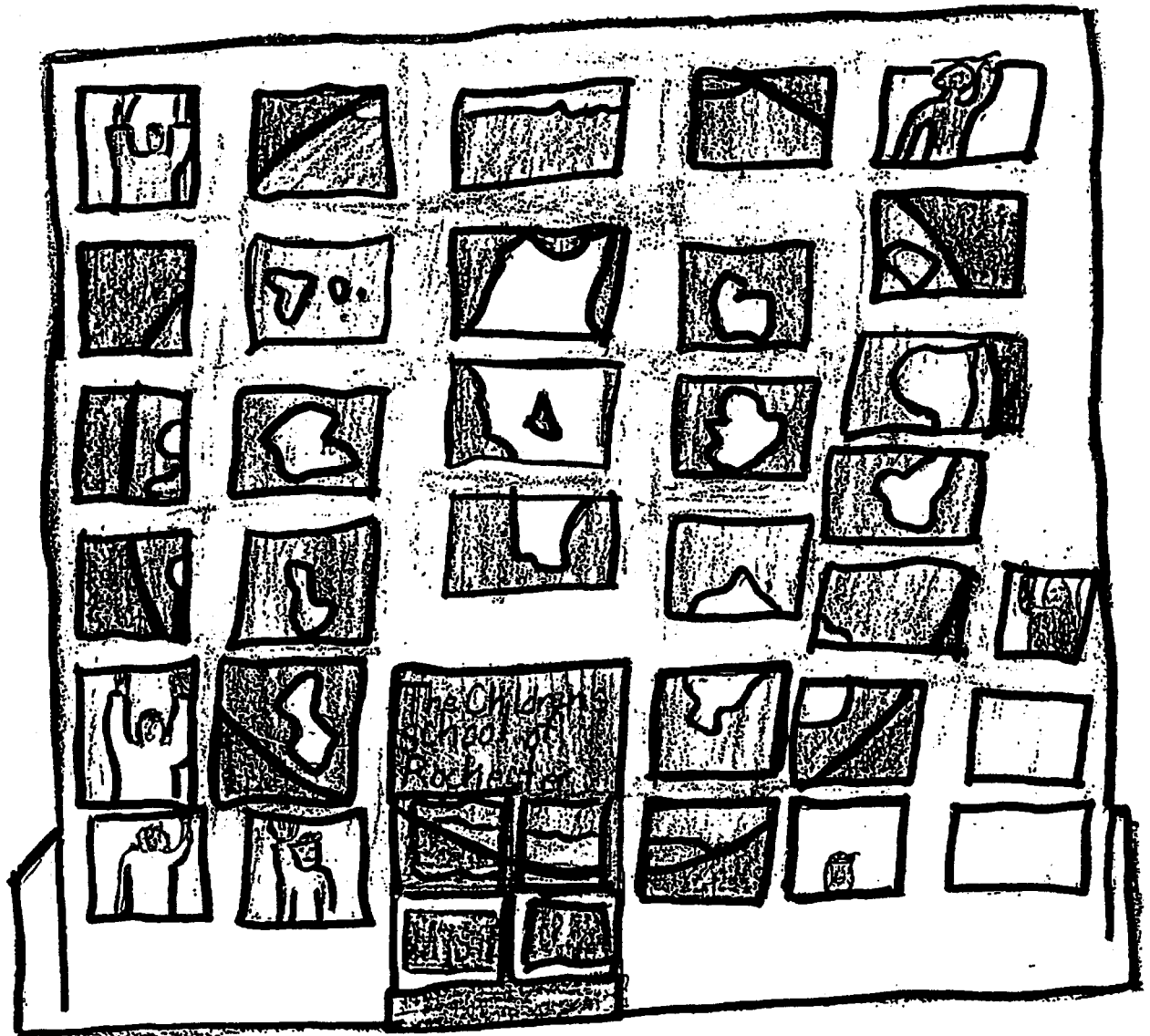


# A World in a school!



The Children's School of Rochester  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## **Introduction**

|                                  |   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| ➤ Overview .....                 | 1 |
| ➤ Mission Statement.....         | 2 |
| ➤ Vision Statement .....         | 3 |
| ➤ School Climate Statement ..... | 4 |
| ➤ Inclusion Policy .....         | 6 |

## **Teaming at CSR**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| ➤ Curricular Framework .....                                 | 7  |
| ➤ Family Framework.....                                      | 9  |
| ➤ Homebase.....  | 11 |
| ➤ English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) .....       | 11 |
| ➤ Briefing .....   | 12 |
| ➤ Creative Expression Workshop .....                         | 13 |
| ➤ Information Management and Technology Studies (IMTS) ..... | 13 |
| ➤ Role of Academic Intervention Specialist.....              | 14 |
| ➤ Role of Paraprofessionals.....                             | 14 |
| ➤ Role of Parent Liaison.....                                | 14 |
| ➤ Role of Parents and Guardians .....                        | 15 |

## **Decision Making at CSR**

|  |    |
|--|----|
| ➤ CSR's Design as a High Performance Organization..... | 16 |
| ➤ Definition of Work Groups.....                       | 17 |
| ➤ Recommendations for Work Group Membership .....      | 22 |
| ➤ School-Based Planning Team Responsibilities .....    | 22 |
| ➤ Guidelines - Teaching Family Assignments .....       | 23 |
| ➤ Operations Forum.....                                | 24 |
| ➤ Role of Principal .....                              | 24 |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b><u>Nibble Theory: Helping Others to Grow</u></b> ..... | 25 |
|---|----|

## INTRODUCTION

This booklet is an introduction and guide to the Children's School of Rochester (CSR). It furnishes information to interested stakeholders about the history and functioning of the school. As you read it, we hope you will develop an understanding of this special place.

We – students, staff, and parents at the Children's School of Rochester – take pride in our philosophy and belief system. We work together to provide an education sensitive to the individual needs of each student. This is a high performing organization, where the diversity of our children is celebrated and enhanced by a sense of family and community.

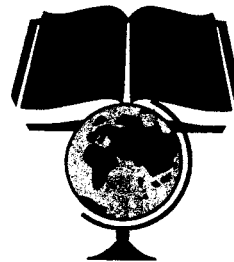
### Overview

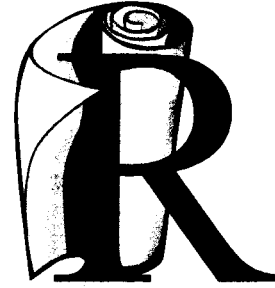
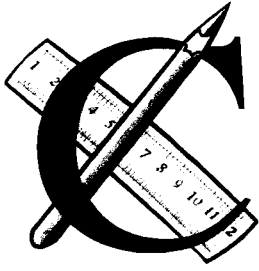
The Children's School of Rochester, a K-6 elementary school in the Rochester City School District, has been in operation since September 1991. The school was rooted in the far-reaching educational reform and restructuring movement in the Rochester City Schools. CSR is the first public school in the county, and perhaps New York State, initiated by a group of teachers at the site level rather than through a Central Office or administrative directive. Sonia Hernandez, formerly of the National Center on Education and the Economy, said, "The school is a perfect example of educational innovation and the 'ultimate statement' on behalf of school reform."

Originally, the school enrolled 200 students, grades K-3; grades 4 and 5 were added in 1995 and 1996, respectively. Sixth grade was added in September of 2003. Enrollment is open to any child in the City School District, and selection is done by lottery. Children who are English language learners, however, are enrolled by the District's Placement Center.

CSR is a community school in that it is open to children from all neighborhoods. Residence in the vicinity of the school does not secure a seat for a student. The school, since its opening, has the longest waiting list of any elementary school in the city. The original school was located in a leased site on East Henrietta Road. The school relocated to its current site on Averill Avenue in July 1995.

The student population, racially and ethnically, reflects the demography of the city; and approximately 50% of the students are English language learners and speak a language other than English at home. Approximately 20 language groups are represented. The school does not receive any additional funds from the School District to sustain it or to attract students.





### Mission Statement

We believe that in order for students to learn, to know how to learn, and to love to learn, a structure and curriculum which is child centered must be firmly articulated and operationalized. We also believe that learning must be bonded with the child's home culture and that the structure and curriculum in place must explicitly value and nurture this bond. *The mission of this school is to enable students to become critical, literate thinkers and doers.* The mission will be met through:

1. a child-centered structure and curriculum which focuses on the child's psychological, physical, academic, and socio-cultural development.
2. teaching which is self-conscious, reflective, and subordinated to learning.
3. a development of multicultural respect, understanding, and awareness.

The school is a celebration of childhood where a sense of community underpins learning and where curriculum and activities are structured so that they are hands-on, meaningful, and collaborative. The atmosphere of this school will be non-threatening, challenging, and authentic.

## Vision Statement

CSR aims to bring together different communities of our city in celebration of childhood. Here children not only learn, but also develop a love for learning and a strong sense of community and respect.

The school's "action curriculum" takes its cues from each child's developmental stage and interests. This is done through "kid watching," as teachers assess students' loves and needs throughout the working day through interaction and observation.

Children work and play together in carefully structured groupings. Teamwork emphasizes problem solving, risk taking and decision making. Small group sizes allow for active and meaningful student participation.

A child-centered, holistic approach is used, in which reading and writing are intertwined with speaking and listening. Science, mathematics, social studies, social development, health/wellness, and safety are all an integral part of the hands-on curriculum, which is geared to help curious students become reflective, critical thinkers. Art, music, and physical education are also integrated into the school's collaborative, action curriculum. Teachers serve as coaches rather than lecturers: where they talk with children and not at them.

Parents and school staff are expected to form an ongoing, supportive relationship.

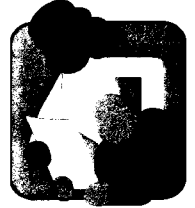


## School Climate Statement

We believe that in order to fulfill our school's mission, a safe school climate is essential. It is the base on which the psychological, physical, academic, and socio-cultural development of all our students rests. The safe school climate that we envision for our school encompasses the following shared values<sup>1</sup>:

### COOPERATION

- ❖ *We believe that by working together we will have better quality work and learning. Cooperation means listening to each other, sharing ideas, and each doing our part.*



### CONSIDERATION

- ❖ *We believe that when we treat each other kindly, we will have more friends, get along better, and be the kind of people we want to be. Consideration means ...helping other people when we can and treating people with respect.*

### CONSERVATION

- ❖ *We believe that our property and our environment are important and we will take care of them. Conservation means that we recycle and don't destroy things.*



### SAFETY

- ❖ *We believe that we learn and work best in a school where no one gets hurt. Safety means that we are careful not to hurt others and we solve our problems by talking them through.*

At the Children's School of Rochester, these values underpin the five I CARE RULES developed by the Peace Education Foundation. The I CARE RULES, which have been adopted school-wide, are:

1. *We listen to each other.*
2. *Hands are for helping not hurting.*
3. *We use I CARE language.*
4. *We care about each other's feelings.*
5. *We are responsible for what we say and do.*

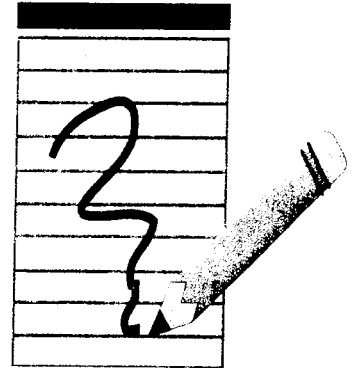


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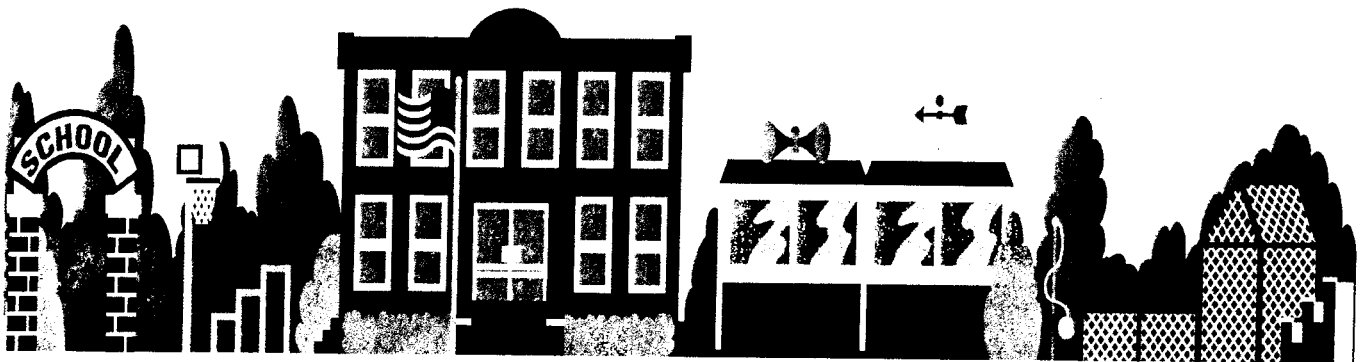
<sup>1</sup> From: Huntington Woods (Michigan) Elementary School in collaboration with William Glasser

In order to build upon these values and the related I CARE RULES along with the beliefs outlined in our Mission and Vision Statement, we believe that all stakeholders (students, staff, families, and the community at large) must be included in the discussion, interpretation, application, and ownership of them. Ways in which these happen include:

- ❖ homebase discussions and activities
- ❖ role plays, projects, and journals in classes
- ❖ interpretive posters and banners
- ❖ presentations at briefing
- ❖ our Fuss Buster program
- ❖ Rite of Passage Annual Retreat
- ❖ face-to-face report cards conferences
- ❖ presentations during Curriculum Night
- ❖ recycling club



Through activities such as these, we promote the growth of each child and bring to life the culture of respect, understanding, awareness, and reflection outlined in our mission statement. Our goal is to establish a safe school climate whose focus is proactive and preventive rather than reactive to troublesome situations.





## **Inclusion Policy**

**The Children's School believes in continuous progress for *all* children whether they have disabilities, are learning English, are gifted, or are at risk of school failure. In order to accomplish this, the staff and parents of our school strive for continuous improvement of the child-centered, instructional program.**

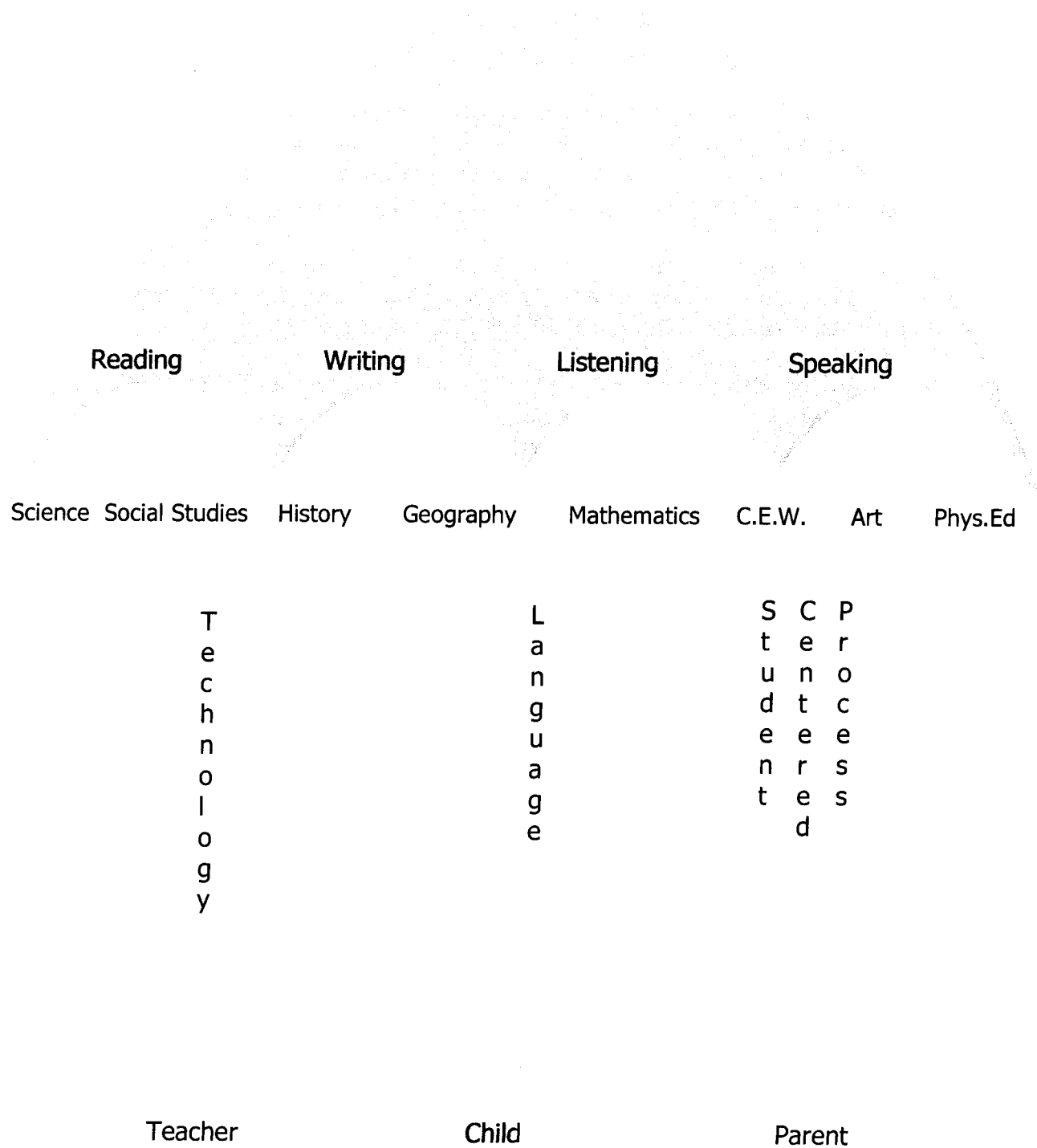
**The school embraces "differentiated instruction" as an approach to organizing how we work with students. We know that children learn at their own rates and in their own ways. Instruction is differentiated based on these rates and ways, and is tailored for the student. Our teaching is subordinated to learning.**

**Acceptance of inclusion as a practice was affirmed through consensus by the instructional staff at the Children's School of Rochester during the 1995-1996 school year, and again reaffirmed during the 1999-2000 academic year.**

**Inclusion of all children, as a practice, is a philosophical belief of the CSR. The mission and vision statements reflect our commitment to each child's growth and progress. Through our values and practices, CSR seeks to provide educational support for students who are at a variety of developmental levels within the general education setting. We are committed to educating all children.**

**In our school, the general education setting is the teaching family, and it is within this structure that we are working to meet the needs of each student. The integrity of each student's instructional program is supported through the curricular and organizational frameworks at the school, as well as through professional development. The school seeks to develop and refine these efforts in the spirit of continuous progress.**

# CURRICULAR FRAMEWORK



## TEAMING AT CSR

Teams are groups of three or more people who work together to achieve common goals and who need each other to do so. Two elements are important distinctions between teams and all other forms of work:

1. common goals
2. mutual interdependencies

At CSR, we've designed the whole organization based on the foundation of teams.



The primary team is considered to be a "virtual" team of teacher, parent, and student – a three-person team that is at the heart of the school design itself.

### Curricular Framework

Within the team structure, a curricular framework as well as a "classroom" family framework, has been developed. (The school does not operate with traditional classrooms with a single teacher, but rather all of the students are organized in seven grade-level families – K through 6.)

The school's curricular framework is seen as a whole, without fragmentation, compartmentalization, or departmentalization. The curriculum framework can be envisioned as an umbrella where language, technology, and student-centered process activities are the medium through which cognition and knowledge (content areas) are actively developed. Language (reading, writing, listening, speaking) is the fabric which holds the frame of the umbrella (content areas) together. The umbrella is only meaningful when it is held together by children, teachers, and the children's families.

The school's curricular framework is based on the following assumptions:

1. Learning and teaching are holistic processes.
2. Children are born scientists and curious doers, who energetically test every facet of their environment. In the process of learning, their natural probing and questioning can be cultivated to their fullest limits. Their ideas come from a natural outgrowth of their daily experiences.

3. School should not difficult, yet it should be rigorous. Pedagogy and activities should be lively, hands-on and engaging.
4. Textbooks are resources and only a part of the curriculum. They are not a source of constant constraint on the imagination of children and school staff. The range of activities is dependent upon children, school staff, and parents.
5. The teachers are professional decision makers, the curriculum leaders in the classroom, who participate as learners and teachers.
6. Children's natural drive, enthusiasm, and curiosity is nurtured in an environment where their original thinking capabilities are developed.
7. Children's positive school experiences are achieved through respectful, considerate, and positive interest. Their interests, languages, cultures, and heritages are celebrated, accepted and incorporated into the curriculum.
8. Our love for children is channeled into a unified action-packed curriculum, where planning, encouraging, assessing and finding ways of improving what we do allows children to discover, value, and explore.
9. The curriculum is based on the abilities, interests, and developmental needs of its children.
10. The curriculum stresses student responsibility, activity, interaction and independence. Teachers are facilitators.

### **Family Framework**

Typically there are no "pull-out" teachers in the school, the exception being Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist, Instrumental Music Teacher, and Speech-Language Pathologist. However, children might be in a differentiated instructional group which meets outside of the designated classroom area. These groupings are carefully constructed and scheduled so that they are not "yank outs," but rather instructional groupings that meet in the most appropriate physical setting. The school strives not to permit "uncoordinated pull-outs."

Each teaching family is supported by specialists for individual students (speech/language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, special education resource, Academic Intervention Specialist, and instrumental music). In addition, each student in the family participates in Creative Expression Workshop, Information Management Workshop, Physical Education, and Art which are carefully scheduled to maximize in-class teacher/student engagement.

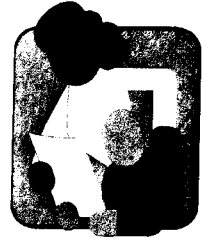
Special education services and ESOL support are designed to be integrated in each teaching family. Teachers work together in teams of three, where each teacher works with children in various capacities. Each family is housed in two classrooms, and the space is set up to bring the action curriculum to life. Both rooms are supported by technology. This family framework allows for:

1. Students to question, hypothesize, experiment, and actively engage in the learning process.
2. Varied interactions between teachers, students, and staff.
3. Flexibility in scheduling guest specialists within one of the many interest centers or exploratory times.
4. Individual learning experiences where children see they are capable of initiating and carrying out activities.
5. Independence and responsibility in students.
6. Small group experiences where there is a wide range of abilities and personalities that children are likely to encounter throughout life.
7. Large group experiences where children see themselves as members of a community.
8. Students to observe teachers collaborating, cooperating, and making decisions.
9. Integration of science and the humanities in a natural way.
10. Positive, productive assessments of students achieved through observing students during authentic problem solving on a daily basis.
11. Teaming introduces students to the way the work force might be organized in the future.
12. Students reflect on their learning and learning processes.

## **Homebase**

Homebase has always been a basic, integral structure in each family. The structure itself varies from family to family. The students in each family are divided into groups, each belonging to the homebase of one of the three teachers. In our child-centered school, homebase discussions are a special time for interaction among the teacher and the children. Each family decides how to schedule homebase time and what will take place during that time.

The time together is an opportunity for teacher and students to develop a closeness. This relationship is nurtured by the teacher's interest in each child's experiences, background, and home culture. Homebase becomes a "bridge" for communication to foster the bonding between the child's school environment and the home culture through close communication. The children are the active link between homebase and parents. The homebase teacher writes the report cards and has conferences with the homebase children and their parents. The homebase teacher is also responsible for recordkeeping, daily attendance, and for caring for children during dismissal, fire drills, field trips, evacuations, and other emergencies.



Homebase often includes reflecting about the school day, sharing important events that happen in the children's family life, introducing home cultures to homebase friends, discussing social/emotional topics that help children grow and mature as individuals, getting directions for homework or feedback from past assignments, as well as discussing any topic that the homebase teacher believes is critical. Such topics are often generated by students.

## **English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)**

Each eligible Limited English Proficient (LEP) student works in a mainstream grade level (K-6) classroom where a "push-in" ESOL teacher teams with the classroom teachers for the entire day to provide student-centered, small group instruction with an integrated curriculum. There are seven grade-level families in the school, i.e., K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. The team of three teachers at each grade level works with each of the students in a "grade-level family." In addition to the three teachers, each "grade-level family" is comprised of two conventional classroom groupings, i.e., approximately 50 students, half of whom are limited English proficient. The students learning English in the school come from approximately 20 different language groups.

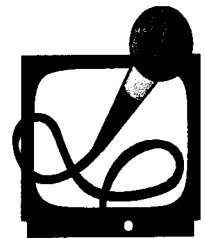
English is the medium of instruction in the school.

Students typically work in small instructional groupings. The composition of these groups varies throughout the day so that instruction is meaningful, engaging, and comprehensible at all times. At various times the groupings are based on oral English language proficiency, written language skills, subject area competency, or social groupings. Students also work in pairs, or in cooperative learning groupings. The groupings are based on students' needs and are highly individualized.

In addition to appropriate groupings, instructional strategies include: language experience approach to reading, total physical response, choral reading, echo-reading, shared reading, guided reading, reciprocal teaching, language games, direct modeling, computer instruction and journal writing.

Strategies for raising standards include adopting a new reading series Districtwide; disaggregating data for LEP students and setting goals for them in our school plan; use of narrative report card translated in the native language (when possible) and use of integrated curriculum adapted for students learning English.

### **Briefing**



All of the students and teachers of the Children's School gather together as a community every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morning from 9:10-9:30 a.m. in the gym. It is a time of celebration of our learning, our diversity, and our birthdays with one another. Children have opportunities to speak publicly on the microphone while making announcements and reading their own written compositions and poetry. Instructional presentations are given by students; they also perform songs, skits, dances, chants, and instrumentals they have learned. Students often present their own writings, art work, and interdisciplinary projects.

It is not unusual to see our teachers and principal participating by singing, dancing, performing in costume, consistently modeling cooperative, active learning for our children. We also use briefing time to officially welcome any visitors to our school by singing a song to them. Briefing provides a sense of family-like community that is so distinctive to the Children's School. Parents and visitors are encouraged to drop by and participate.

## **Creative Expression Workshop**



The Creative Expression Workshop is a music, dance, and performing arts experience provided for the children of CSR. It is a unique program where students become creative problem solvers, working cooperatively in small and large groups to create their own performances to share with the entire school community at briefings. Children become instrumentalists, composers, choreographers, costume designers and makers, actors, and public speakers. The subject of the performance is chosen to support and enhance the themes of study in the classrooms, or relate directly to children's personal experiences.

The children also study music history and appreciation through interactive listening experiences. The children are exposed to music from many cultures and countries, play instruments, and learn dances from all over the globe. An effort is made to make the music studied as diverse as our school population.

Each child has Creative Expressions Workshop once a week. There are also classes for fifth and sixth graders to study soprano recorder once a week. "The Shining Stars" choir is a volunteer ensemble involving all interested fourth, fifth and sixth graders. The choir sings at briefing, in concerts and at nursing homes in the community as a service to our city. In addition, an instrumental music program is offered to intermediate students.

The children may also take the initiative to create a solo, duet, or ensemble performance to be shared with the whole school at a briefing.

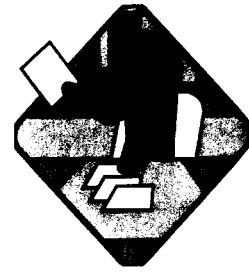
## **Information Management and Technology Studies -IMTS**

This program has been instituted this year with the addition of a full time librarian to the staff. The focus of the program is to turn the entire school into a library where text, electronic and other media support the work of the teaching families. In this initiative students develop their writing and research skills through the use of technology.



## **Role of the Academic Intervention Specialist**

The role of the Academic Intervention Teacher is to help the grade-level families. Half of the time is spent in the classroom with individual teaching families. The schedule varies based on priorities set by the Organizational Work Group, the principal, and the Academic Intervention Specialist, as well as requests for assistance in the classroom from teaching families. Because the core of teaching at CSR is in the families, the position of Academic Intervention Specialist will rotate among interested and qualified teachers every two years to allow an individual to return to a teaching family



## **Role of Paraprofessionals**

The paraprofessionals working at CSR have various responsibilities to the children, teachers, principal, and community. They play an integral role and are considered team players in the teaching families. While each family determines the role of the paraprofessional, responsibilities include assisting teachers, making copies, preparing classrooms for activities, and working one-on-one or in small groups with the children. Their responsibilities vary regularly and the ability to be flexible in these positions is key.

## **Role of Parent Liaison**

- The Parent Liaison works with parents and guardians to make them a vital part of the school community. S/he works aggressively to build stake with them and to maximize parental/guardian participation in all aspects of the school: academics, day-to-day classroom activities, attendance, school climate, PTO as well as school governance. The focus of the liaison's work is to help the parent/guardian actively support their child's schooling at home, and to help bond the home culture with the school. Specific goals are developed annually for the parent liaison by the principal and the Organizational Development Work Group. This work supports her responsibilities outlined by the District.
- The Parent Liaison serves on the Stakebuilding Work Group and provides leadership on that group for building stake with parents/guardians.

## **Role of Parents and Guardians**

Parents and guardians are an integral part of the educational community at the Children's School. Parents and guardians are encouraged to visit or volunteer in the classroom either routinely or occasionally and to participate in briefings any Monday, Wednesday, or Friday morning. They are strongly encouraged to work with children at home on homework and in reinforcing classroom lessons. CSR is governed by parents collaborating with teachers and administration on work groups.

PTO at CSR is another way for parents and guardians to be involved. All parents, guardians, and staff are automatically members of the PTO – there is no membership fee. The PTO plans, organizes, and staffs many special events throughout the year, raises funds to support special opportunities for students and teachers, and provides a forum for parents and teachers to discuss important issues and concerns.

## DECISION MAKING AT CSR

### CSR's Design as a High Performance Organization

In early 1991, a special design team of three teachers and one administrator, working with a consultant from Kodak's 21st Century Learning Challenge, designed CSR as a "high performance organization." They worked together to create a high performance organization that could outperform a traditionally designed organization in virtually every dimension of performance deemed important to elementary education.

Traditional Organization designs:

- machine-based model (all parts separate)
- command and control from administration
- narrowly defined work within rigid boundaries
- hierarchy of rules and accountabilities with limited thinking
- separation of management from "doing" the work
- low commitment and "not my job" attitudes

High Performance Organization designs:

- systems-based model (all parts interrelated)
- self-control of work processes
- fluid boundaries and boundaryless organization
- principles, values, and beliefs to guide behavior and expand thinking
- "doing" the work is managing the work as well
- result in high commitment and "we're each/all responsible"

The organization model is one of "Shared Leadership."

- not centralized
- not positional (not teacher-centered; not principal-centered)
- not hierarchical

School-Based Planning principles apply. . .but not in a typical way.

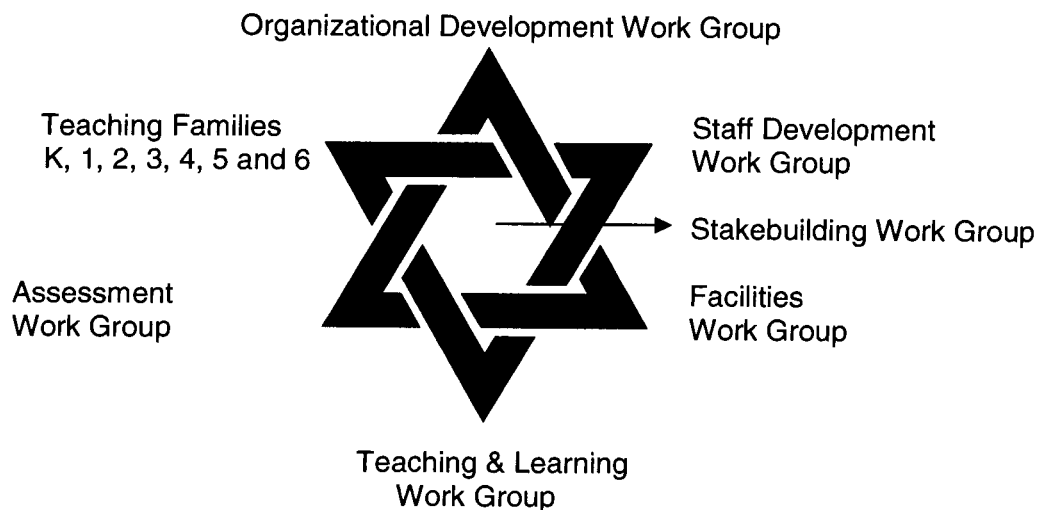
- Many School-Based Planning Teams
- Each team has its own unique purpose and role to perform
- Each team represents, for its purpose and role, the whole system

Consensus decision making is always the preferred process, not

- by one person
- by majority vote
- by vocal minority
- by authority rule
- by unanimous agreement

Decision making should occur as close to the teaching families as possible (point of production decision making), i.e., first grade makes decisions for first grade.

### Definition of Work Groups



The intent is to continually shape the present for the future through these work groups.

CSR has designed its school-based planning around a unique governance system of “work groups” made up of staff and parents. This governance system was designed with the help of an organizational specialist in a partnership with Eastman Kodak Company’s “21st Century Learning Challenge.” These work groups are the ultimate decision makers in the school. CSR has site-based budgeting – it receives an allocation per pupil that is standard for the District. The school has had discretion over how it uses funds to meet the school’s needs, although the amount of discretion has eroded significantly.

The Organizational Work Group is responsible for the CSR in a holistic context. It is accountable for how the school fulfills its mission, its vision, and its values. It also determines how the school is structured and what systems and processes are used to achieve its strategic direction and goals. The Organizational Work Group acts as an

interface between Rochester City School District offices and the CSR itself, ensuring “Central Office” demands and CSR responses to them are congruent with the school’s primary task. The formal CSR organization and informal “way it runs” are both agenda items for this work group.

The Facilities Work Group is responsible for the “infrastructure” at the CSR, which means it deals with physical site facilities, equipment, consumable materials, tools, and the “state” or condition of these. This work group ensures the physical facilities are there to enable the whole system (and each of its parts) to achieve its purpose.

The Staff Development Work Group focuses on the human resource capabilities required at CSR. Included in this work are training plans, specific training events for staff, managing monies for travel to seminars or special conferences, use of articles, books, videotapes, etc. that are available to the teaching staff. Teaming and organization development are also responsibilities of this work group. The SDWG sponsors several ongoing professional development initiatives for the teaching staff at CSR. Standards in Practice (SIP) teams are set up so that two teaching families meet together weekly to examine student work. Study groups meet once a month to research, try out and evaluate new strategies for meeting the needs of specific groups of students (those who are struggling academically, those who are high achievers and those who are learning English.) It is the expectation at CSR that every teacher become an active member of both a SIP team and a Study Group. At the same time, many CSR teachers choose to pursue additional areas of individual interest or requirements for certification – including graduate courses, conferences and workshops. After school courses, sponsored by the Rochester Teachers Center and taught by CSR instructors, provide additional opportunities for teachers in the areas of reading and math. Other small groups focus on Japanese Lesson Studies, professional readings and National Board for Professional Teaching Standards Certification. These individual and small group initiatives occur in addition to, not in lieu of, SIP Teams and Study Groups.

The Assessment Work Group concentrates on the measurement parts of the system at CSR. Typically this point covers all data and information acquisition, and assessment and planning activities (e.g., student report cards, teacher assessments, and school reports). It deals with both internal efficiency and external effectiveness. In addition, it includes the notion that none of these brings great value to us or the organization unless there is a built-in drive to upgrade our performance. The school views itself as a community of continuous learning.

The Stakebuilding Work Group works on continuously increasing the commitment of all significant parties (stakeholders) to CSR’s MISSION, VISION, and VALUES statements. Primary stakeholders are the children themselves, parents of these children, and teachers at CSR. Associated stakeholders are the Rochester City School District, Rochester Teachers Association (RTA), Board of Education Non-Teaching Employees (BENTE), Association of Supervisors and Administrators of Rochester (ASAR), and the Board of Education. Peripheral stakeholders are the

Rochester community at large, Rochester area businesses, and other educational institutions. Distant stakeholders are the New York State Education Department, the United States Department of Education, the National Center on Education and the Economy, etc. All stakeholders are important to the school as a "system" and therefore to this work group.

The Teaching and Learning Work Group provides for **instructional excellence** within and across the teaching families at the CSR in a way that integrates the materials and resources used, the curriculum itself (at the grade level as well as across all grades K-6), strategies and methods for teaching and learning, and includes all children (those with special needs as well as those for whom English is a second language) so that the learning process meets the needs of children, parents, teachers, the RCSD, and the broader community.

## Performance

"Shaping the Present for the Future" has an x-dimension = *time*, and a y-dimension = *performance*.

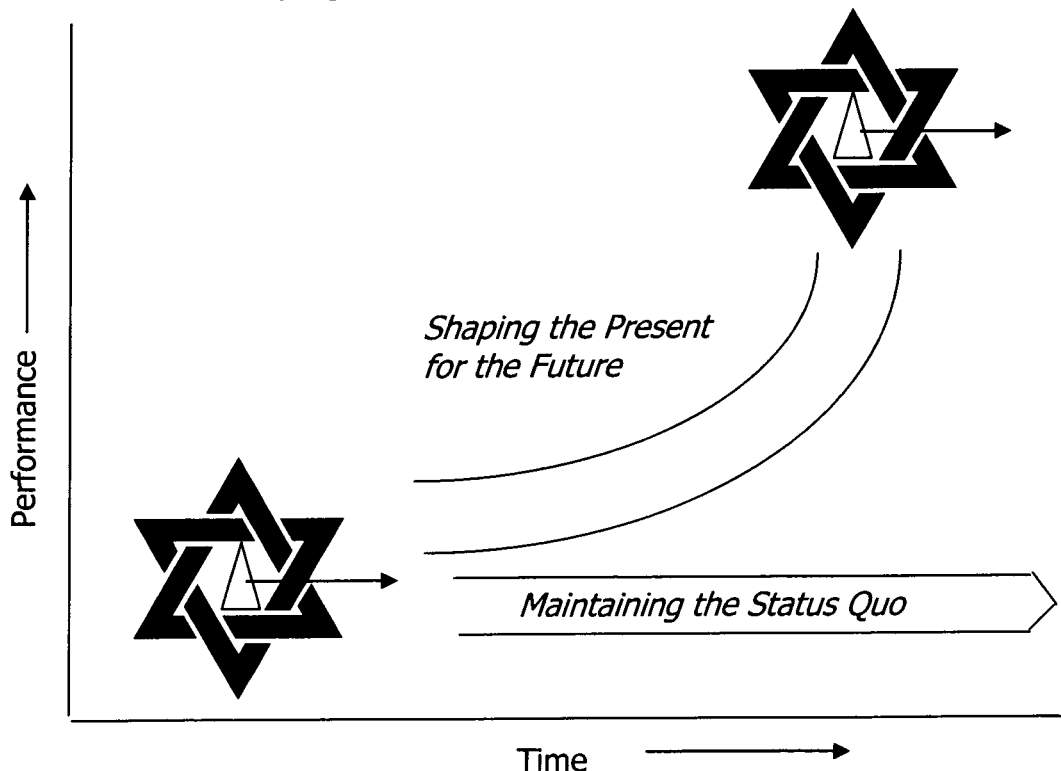
*Time* is simply the measure of time elapsed from "now" (the present) to "then" (the future).

*Performance* is multidimensional. It is basically any measure of effectiveness attributed to the Children's School as a system. Generic categories include:

- students' achievement
- staff's quality of work life
- parents' satisfaction
- RCSD's pride
- community impact

The notion implied by this diagram is that *performance* should be continuously improving over *time* as the CSR work groups do their school-based planning.

This is something that we strive for now, in the present moments of the school's existence... "*shaping the present for the future*" theme stated herein.



## Recommendations for Work Group Membership

Each staff member is expected to become an active, participating member of **one** work group.

After two years of membership on the same work group, individuals should consider leaving and joining another work group.

To promote consistency from year to year, at least one parent member and one staff member should remain on each work group.

Parents and staff rotating off should consider becoming a member of a work group of which they have not been a member.

## School-Based Planning Team Responsibilities



*At CSR the School Based Planning Team is comprised of the following six work groups: Organizational Development, Staff Development, Stakebuilding, Facilities, Teaching and Learning, and Assessment. These workgroups function in tandem in a dynamic interdependent, interactive process, with no hierarchy. These work groups function in a unique way that meets the requisites of governance established by the City School District.*

**Adopted by the Rochester City School District (RCSD):**

**The School-Based Planning Team is the unit of governance that has direct authority and responsibility for instruction, which may include but is not limited to, the following areas:**

- Developing and implementing a school improvement plan for a well-integrated, comprehensive program that incorporates the elements of the District's Five Design Tasks: Standards and Assessment; Learning Environment; Community Services and Support; High Performance Organization; Communication and Public Engagement.
- Establishing the school's focus on curriculum and instruction, including the selection of instructional materials; how to go about developing or revising instructional programs; and the kind and effectiveness of educational approaches/strategies to be implemented in the school.
- Reviewing the progress of all students including portfolio assessments, national, state, and local achievement tests, use of performance tasks, and stages of development as a basis for developing the school plan.
- Managing/implementing/monitoring the requirements of Performance Appraisal Review for Teachers (PART), summative appraisal, and the contractual requirement for teachers relative to the 30 hours for staff development.



- Determining how staff and space in the building will be organized to implement and support the School Improvement Plan.
- Engaging students, parents, and all school staff in the school improvement process and communicating the school plan.
- Planning effective professional development.
- Interviewing and filling vacancies in accordance with personnel policies and contractual requirements.

**To help make school policies, processes and/or procedures effective, the team will also decide:**

- If and how subcommittees will be organized and operated in order to fully develop and implement the School Improvement Plan.
- How school practices will be monitored and aligned with the school's vision, mission, and improvement strategies.
- How to best deploy the school's budget to support the school's improvement plan.

**The School-Based Planning Team has further responsibilities as follows:**

- To establish annual targets for improvement.
- To monitor and assess the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
- To continually improve the quality and effectiveness of school planning and the School Improvement Plan.
- To ensure school-wide communication and support for the improvement of teaching and learning.
- To report school progress on an annual basis, including information on areas targeted for improvement in the School Improvement Plan.

### **Guidelines – Teaching Family Assignments**

The process for making teaching assignments comes out of the Organizational Work Group.

The main objective of the staff assignment process is to keep an effective “teaching team” in place for each family at CSR

It is our desire to maintain stability in teaching “families” in order to support effective teaching/learning at each grade level. It is not our intent to reassign teachers in order to accommodate individual preferences. At the same time, we understand that these preferences do have an impact on the teaching family's effectiveness, and we attempt to accommodate these preferences when possible. .

Three people from the Organizational Work Group are involved in making the entire staff reassignment decisions. They are a consultant, a parent, and a teacher. The principal is not on the decision making team in this process.

### Operations Forum

The Operations Meetings are a forum for faculty, paraprofessionals and the principal for sharing information, for soliciting input on any matter regarding the staff, and for general discussion of issues brought to them or brought up by the constituents. It is not a forum for decision making. When issues come up there and decisions have to be made, they should be delegated to the appropriate subgroup (work group, teaching family, etc.) or individual (teacher, principal, etc.). These decisions, once made by the subgroup or individual assigned, are binding on the operations group. It cannot overturn, overrule, or ignore decisions made by subgroups or individuals with that responsibility. Please refer to the document developed by the Organizational Work Group entitled "*How Decisions Are Made At CSR*" (summer 2003).

### Role of Principal

The principal's role at the CSR is more of a developer than a director. In this developer role, he or she will:

- Lead a process that results in an understanding of school progress measures and establishes specific performance targets.
- Model behaviors consistent with the District's Values Policy; particularly, developing appreciation and respect for cultural and ethnic differences.
- Emphasize and advance the involvement of students in all aspects of schooling so that all students feel listened to, valued, and respected.
- Work to make parents and the community service providers true partners in the education of our students.
- Foster and advocate an environment that is student-centered, not punitive; and builds upon the strengths of students.
- Be a risk taker and support creative approaches to improving teaching, learning, and school climate.
- Work to create an environment of individual and shared accountability.



## NIBBLE THEORY: HELPING OTHERS TO GROW

From Kaleel Jamison's book, The Nibble Theory and the Kernel of Power. San Diego: University Association, 1984:

*Power is neutral. You can handle it for good or for harm. And you can help others to acquire it properly and use it properly, by how you treat them. How you treat others who are trying to grow is very important.*

*You can help to set the environment – in any group that you're in – that will help everybody to grow.*

*What a good teacher does, and what you too can do, to help others grow is this: Look – look hard – for the small, perhaps awkward, groping, weak attempt to grow. It is often almost covered over with something else ridiculous, or embarrassing. But to learn, we all have to make a first movement – however wide of the mark. Only by doing, and correcting, and doing again do we zero in on the target. It is not your responsibility to do the practicing for the other person, but it is your – perhaps sacred, human – responsibility to respect that first, tentative movement, to find in it what is right – even if that is only the will to make the movement – and to nurture that so that the next attempt is better. You do that by making an honest, appreciative, human reaction.*

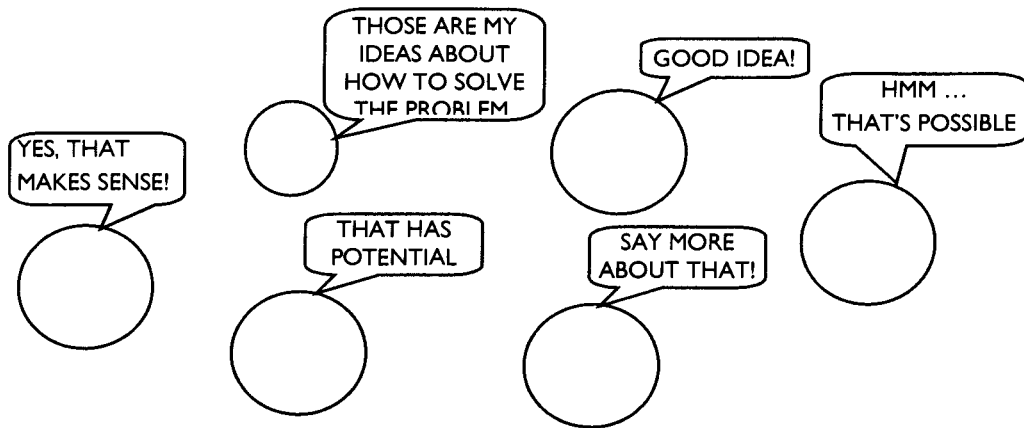
*Understand, too, that people grow in different ways – some openly, some noisily, some quietly. Be compassionate about the growth of others. But do not expect others to grow in your image.*

*Most people are usually doing the best they can. Everything people do is being done out of their own experience. That's useful for us to remember when we're encouraging somebody else to grow. If we advise somebody else, we have to remember that we are advising out of our own experience and telling a method that we have found useful. When we tell what we think is the very best way to handle something, however, we may miss what is happening to others. If we are too intent on telling our experience, or too intent on doing what we think best, we may miss what others are telling us about their experience and their best way.*

*So when a parent – or teacher – or manager is showing someone how to accomplish something, it is easy to be focused on "the right way." A "gift of knowledge and experience" is the intent. But the large circle must not forget that only as small circles incorporate the given knowledge with their own best way of doing things do they grow in wisdom and become larger circles.*

*The human potential for growth is not limited. Ours isn't. And yours isn't.*

*It is right and proper for you to grow, for you to continue to become the biggest circle you can be. That doesn't mean that you will have to nibble anybody else, to make somebody else smaller, so that you can be bigger. It doesn't mean that you have to submit to being nibbled. It does mean that when you are bigger you can help others to be bigger too.*



*The best way to experience growth is to be in a group where there is plenty of room for many big circles, and where your growth doesn't have to make others in the group smaller.*



