



The Australian Journal of **INDIGENOUS EDUCATION**

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There follows a brief comment from Mrs. Barrs at the Save the Children Fund Pre-School, Griffith, N.S.W., on the importance of parents.

There are very many ways of capturing the interest and involvement of Aboriginal parents in the education of their children. We can, I think, be very sure, that without such interest and involvement, the educational progress and personal development of the children will be hindered.

I should like, this year, to see contributions on parent involvement in each issue of the Journal. Would you like to contribute?

The children are given extra practice in the acquisition of language skills by a part-time teacher who visits twice a week. Most of these sessions are conducted on a one to one basis, or in small groups of three or four. Last term mothers were invited to join in these sessions, so that they could observe ways in which they might expand their child's vocabulary. In one particular session the teacher and the child were having a dialogue about various items of fruit, and were looking at a model and a picture of a pineapple. Fresh pineapples were not available at that time. The child could not tell the teacher what it was, and then the mother broke into the conversation with "But you should know what it is, we had some of that for tea last night.": The teacher asked "Did you give Billy the name of what he was eating, or show him the picture on the tin?" Mother thought for a while and said, "Well no, I didn't".

This was a good time to talk to Billy's mother about just how much she could teach her own child, by teaching him new words so that he can talk about what he sees. In Billy's case the word 'pineapple' would have been associated with an experience that was meaningful to him, and this is important. By giving him new words at the right moment and showing him how to use them, Billy's mother can also help him to understand what he sees.

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