

Back to school: More than new clothes

The author is the director of the Howard University Child Development Center.

GUEST COLUMN

By ROSELYN P. EPPS

Often, when parents think of getting their children ready for school, they think of things such as shoes, coats, boots and books. But what about your child's health status - the physical, mental and social development?

Although the health of American children is better than ever before, when children enter school, many new demands are made that can lead to long-term health problems.

Childhood contagious diseases largely can be prevented, and protection should have been started shortly after birth. If they were not received then, immunizations must be started as soon as possible, because many schools require parents to present the child's immunization record prior to school entry.

The basic immunization series (DTP, 3 doses) includes

diphtheria, tetanus and pertussis, or whooping cough, and, preferably along with the oral polio vaccine (OPV, 3 doses), should be given during the first year of a child's life.

The booster doses for all four are given one year after the third DTP and polio doses, with additional booster doses before school entry. Tetanus and diphtheria boosters should be repeated every 10 years throughout life.

Immunizations against measles, mumps and rubella, or German measles, can be given as a combined vaccine at any time after the child reaches the age of 15 months.

A recently licensed vaccine to protect children against hemophilus influenza bacterial infections, or HIB, is recommended for all children at 24

months. For those who did not receive the vaccine at this age, immunization against HIB is recommended through the fifth year, especially for children in day care.

In very young children, HIB can cause acute, often life-threatening infections such as meningitis, pneumonia, throat infections and blood infections.

In addition to immunizations, a complete physical examination should be obtained prior to entry or return to school. The physician should include evaluation of growth, nutritional status, hearing and vision, determination of the health status of various systems of the body, detection of infection or anemia and assessment of the child's developmental level and potential for school achievement.

Many factors affect a child's development - the quality of interaction with parents, teachers, health professionals, other adults, playmates, and compa-



nions. With the decline of infectious diseases and acute illnesses in school-age children, problems such as learning disabilities, behavior problems, emotional disturbances, school troubles, and problems of speech, vision and the teeth are more frequent and more visible.

To prevent school adjustment difficulties, care should be taken to prepare your child emotionally for school.

Before the first day, take your child for a visit to the school.

Pointing out the entrance, the classroom and the playground, allow the child an opportunity to become familiar with the new surroundings.

Describe the route to school and the method of transportation; if possible, make a rehearsal trip. Introduce the child to other students who have been or will be in the child's school or class. Introduce yourself and the child to the principal, teacher, nurse, counselor and other key school personnel.

If meals will be eaten at the school or away from home, discuss these arrangements with the child. Describe and discuss any plans for before-school and after-school child-care arrangements.

Plan to introduce the child to the new situation over a period of days before school starts. Notice any signs of anxiety and make efforts to dispel any fears.

School should be presented as Please see page A10

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Chronicle to acquire new syndicated columnist

A weekly column by Les Payne, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and one of America's most respected minority-issues commentators, will appear in the *Chronicle* starting Sept. 25.

In his column, distributed by the Los Angeles Times Syndicate, Payne focuses on a wide spectrum of national and international issues, targeting the realities, inequities and hypocrisies.

Assistant managing editor and staff columnist for *Newsday*, which he joined in 1969 as a beat reporter, Payne has covered sub-

jects ranging from migrant farm workers, drug trafficking, the Black Panther Party and illegal aliens to involuntary sterilization, the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and the kidnapping of newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst.

He is author of "The Life and Death of the SLA," an investigative account of the revolutionary Symbionese Liberation Army that terrorized the West Coast.

Payne also is a co-author of "The Heroin Trail," based on a 33-part series that earned him

and other *Newsday* reporters the 1974 Pulitzer Prize for public service reporting. For the series, Payne spent more than six months in Europe, tracing the international flow of heroin from the poppy fields of Turkey to the veins of drug addicts.

While national correspondent for *Newsday*, Payne reported extensively from Africa, the Caribbean and the United Nations, covering political, economic and military developments.

In the wake of the 1976 Soweto uprising, he traveled throughout South Africa, writing an 11-part

series that the Pulitzer Prize jury recommended for the 1978 foreign reporting award; the advisory board, however, overturned the jury's selection. In the late 1970s, he was the first American journalist to visit guerrilla-held areas in Rhodesia-Zimbabwe.

A frequent lecturer, Payne also has been on numerous radio and television programs, including "Meet the Press," "The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour," "Washington Week in Review," "CNN Year in Review," "Like It Is," "Black Horizons" and Please see page A10

Brown From Page A4

ty (like African-Americans) underachieve because they are not using their original African culture as a basis of achievement; rather, they are denying it and working for an assimilation that cannot take place.

The truth is that whites are not going to share white centers of power, and blacks are never going to be white.

The Jews understand the myth of the melting pot; Arabs understand it. The new wave of Asians, Koreans in particular, succeed in spite of white (and, increasingly, black) hostility. And I challenge anyone to prove, as J.L.C. alleges, that Koreans or West Indians are subsidized by corporations or governments.

What other non-white groups are demonstrating with their success is that racism can be beaten by group unity. Blacks who cling to the infallibility of white racism overrate its potential. The new economic leaders in America will not be white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, but Jews, Koreans, Italians, Vietnamese, Hispanics and blacks who are indigenous to a culture other than America's black slave colony.

The acceptance of the facts should not be a source of embarrassment or envy toward West Indians or hatred toward all whites. Rather, we must become inspired by our own potential and the examples set by these various ethnic groups (the black ones in particular).

African-Americans can either

choose the path of least resistance and blame everything and everybody for our problems and guarantee our continued destruction and misery, or we can face reality and free ourselves from the self-doubt that racism has built into our psyche.

Out of the depths of ourselves must come a love of what we are, not a desire for or hatred of what we are not. African-Americans, as we now know them, must die.

We must go into the darkness to find the light. When we understand that pride in ourselves is more powerful than racism can ever hope to be, we will develop insight, self-mastery and the subsequent ability to stand alone.

Therefore, the death I refer to is the great step forward when we shed the old self of the plantation slave mentality - the belief that whites can do anything to us they desire because they are powerful and that powerlessness characterizes our condition.

Like a seed that goes into the darkness of the earth, breaks its shell and creates new life, we must go into the darkness of ourselves in order to find the light.

Blacks need not fight the darkness; blacks need to turn on the light.

Tony Brown is a syndicated columnist and television host, whose series, "Tony Brown's Journal," can be seen Sundays at 1:30 locally on channels 4 and 28.

Edelman From Page A4

As a start, Congress should pass legislation, now pending, that would permit states to raise the Medicaid eligibility cutoff to the federal poverty level in the case of maternity and infant coverage. It is an important first step in a much more long-term and essential effort to make sure

all mothers have a way to pay for maternity care.

Marian Wright Edelman is a National Newspaper Publishers Association columnist who is president of the Children's Defense Fund, a national voice for youth.

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