

## CHAPTER V

### AN EXAMPLE OF PROVIDING PEDOTHERAPEUTIC HELP TO A CHILD IN EDUCATIVE DISTRESS

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the work, *Changing frontiers in the science of psychotherapy*, (Bergin and Strupp, 1972, p. 438), it is concluded, “From everything that has been said it follows that significant increments in knowledge, at least within the therapeutic framework, are likely to come from the intensive study of individual cases in which disciplined observation is complemented by, and takes account of, the complex interaction of variables, a task which cannot be accomplished by statistical manipulations, although certain statistical techniques may be helpful in other respects”.

Since the meaning of the previous theorizing is in ordering, describing, and explicating a phenomenon of relevance, in the following, there is a description of an actual case of providing pedotherapeutic help, as an illustration of the value of the presented schema for designing a pedotherapeutic practice.

#### 2. THE ANNOUNCED PROBLEM

Jenny, a 5-year and 4-month-old little girl, was brought by the woman who cares for her to the Child Guidance Institute [at the University of Pretoria] because of:

- a) outbursts of rage (she hits her nursery teacher and becomes very angry if there is food on her plate which she does not like, such that she becomes nasty),
- b) enuresis (at night her bed was never dry, and during the day she was wet so often that she had a rash on her legs),
- c) attention-seeking (she takes things which don't belong to her, cries over trivial matters, and bullies the other children),

- d) weak relationships with the male gender (she defies her father through disobedience, and annoys the boys at the nursery school),
- e) inadequate self-confidence (she continually turns to the adults who care for her, distances with difficulty and doesn't venture to carry out an assignment without help),
- f) clumsiness (she easily stumbles and falls and can hardly handle a crayon).

### 3. HISTORICITY

Jenny, the youngest of five daughters, was born when there were serious marital problems between her parents. Shortly before her conception, her mother had an abortion. During her pregnancy, which was unwelcomed, her mother had used tranquilizers excessively.

From 6-months of age, Jenny was continually cared for by the maid. When she was two, her parents separated, and she and her three older sisters lived with her mother and a male friend. At three, she was placed in a nursery school. Shortly after that, one of her sisters died and her mother and another sister were seriously injured in an automobile accident while driving under the influence of drugs. This was a very serious shock to Jenny. A year after this incident, her mother was once again in an automobile accident, and she died.

Her father who, in the meantime had seldom seen them, fetched the children and took them to a lady friend who had a daughter the same age as Jenny, and with whom he has lived outside of marriage. Jenny was placed in a private nursery school where she must attend church daily and is particularly influenced by the Old Testament Biblical stories she has listened to. The impression took hold that her deceased mother has changed into an angel. After approximately one year, Jenny had created so many problems at home and at school that her father's lady friend (who she had addressed as "Mommy") had brought the child in to get help.

## 4. SUMMARIZED PERSON IMAGE\*

### 4.1 Psychic life actualization

On the individual scale of the National Bureau for Educational Research she obtained an I.Q. of 134. She fared best on verbal reasoning items, where there is an appeal to analyzing as well as on auditory and visual memory items. Her language shows plasticity and a readiness for verbal expression, but the crude grammatical errors committed when the content carries an emotional weight shows that her affective lability prevents her from an adequate cognitive ordering and structuring of language. The gnostic-cognitive structure of the child's psychic life is so unordered that she doesn't succeed in creating order and system out of her physical surroundings (See Illustration i, Appendix 4(a)). Any appeal to create and construct using unstructured material, overwhelms her.

Jenny fared poorly on all items requiring form perception and eye-hand-coordination. She obtained a developmental coefficient of only 109 on the Nel-Sonnekus Developmental Scale for Preschoolers.

However, when she experiences being accepted in a relationship, this stabilizes her pathic-affective personal potentialities, such that she can adequately attend, venture, and explore. She then distances herself to be able to verbalize her feelings.

She gives normative meaning to her world in a fluctuating way. She is aware of the generally prevailing rules of decency in her family and school situation but does not accept them as "a-task-for-me". For her, there is little sense in complying with norms and acts of civility. Crass, excessive emotional expressions demanding immediate attention from her educators, while she does without their attention when she conforms.

### 4.2 Problematic educative event

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\* For a comprehensive discussion of orthopedagogic diagnostics there is reference to the work of P. A. van Niekerk, *Orthopedagogiek Diagnostiek* (1978).

The father's lady friend (hereafter, referred to as the mother) shows a degree of insight into the child's problem situation, but finds it difficult to approach her emotionally. Jenny fills her with feelings of guilt because she can see that Jenny yearns for mothering, but since Jenny compares so poorly with her own child, she avoids her. But she is the only person who can discipline her in any way at all. From the demands she places on Jenny, she expresses her misconception of Jenny's potentialities. During the night, Jenny must get up alone in the dark house, get clean sheets, and remake her bed herself. She is punished if in the morning, her bed is found to be wet.

The only contact between father and child is when he reprimands, corrects, and makes demands of her. Jenny exploits the situation by rejecting the demands and defying her father. Indeed, the father rejects this child because she reminds him of her deceased mother. He expects little from her which is positive.

Jenny's relationship to the other girls in the family is characterized by aggression, jealousy, and rivalry. This makes her the family's hobgoblin, and ensures that everyone is always aware of her presence.

The father-mother relationship lacks genuine understanding and trust. Indeed, it is still only a romance and not a genuine marital relationship where the one can rely on the help, support, and acceptance of the other.

The fundamental pedagogical relationship essences of understanding and trust appear as attenuated regarding this child's educating and culminate in a defective relationship of pedagogical authority.

Naturally, the pedagogical sequence and aim structures are also defective. Jenny looks up to her parents for support and help to break out of her distress. However, they are so entwined in the problematic situation in which they have become involved with her that their educative contribution has become ineffective and without vision. Parents and child are caught firmly in a vicious cycle.

## 5. LONG-TERM PLANNING

### 5.1 Introduction

From the pedagogical exploration of the world of the child, the inadequate and incorrect meanings at the foundation of her unacceptable behavior are illuminated, and subsequently there can be a plan for providing pedotherapeutic help to the child.

### 5.2 Problematic meanings

The most prominent “skewed” meanings in Jenny’s life are the following:

child : self

- (i) She signifies herself as a helpless baby.
- (ii) She is clumsy, insensitive, and someone who the parents will gladly get rid of.
- (iii) She is “homeless” and does not feel at home anywhere.

child : other

- (i) She does not accept her lot of being bonded by blood relationships. She wants to choose for herself who she recognizes as parents.
- (ii) Her deceased mother is a “small fairy” who, by working magic, can again appear as what has disappeared.
- (iii) Her father is cold, aloof, and not accessible at times of need. He is dead against her and tries to continually thwart her.
- (iv) She is not justifiably beholden to her parents.
- (v) The goodwill of others can be constrained by aggression.
- (vi) The presence of other children deprives her of her share of mothering.

child : things

- (i) A farm is an idyllic place to live.

- (ii) Her family residence is inconsistent and unsafe.
- (iii) Objects in the physical environment are sometimes confusing and without order.

child : God She signifies God as an inaccessible, implacable figure.

### 5.3 Reduction of the problematic

#### *5.3.1 The relationship child : self*

The negative meanings of herself are mainly emotional and originated in the defective mothering this child, unwelcome at birth, received. This gives rise to the fact that, on a knowing level, she is ignorant of her positive potentialities. Because of her daily experience of being infantile, on a normative level she places low demands on herself.

#### *5.3.2 The relationship child : other*

As can be expected, as a young child, Jenny is primarily in the world emotionally. Her criterion for accepting her fellow persons is affective bonding. Since she rejects her father because of his emotional alienation, she lacks a male identification figure.

With a lack of a genuine relationship of knowing and understanding with the mother figure, she idealizes her deceased mother.

Because she does not accept her educators as identification figures, she rejects the norms they present to her.

#### *5.3.3 The relationship child : things*

Owing to her labile affect, she is not able to adequately apply her good cognitive potentialities. Her inability to order the surrounding reality, along with her poor muscle coordination, result in, Jenny signifies the objects in her world as confusing and of little value. On a normative level, she experiences no pride in her own private possessions, and she attributes little value to the possessions of others.

### *5.3.4 The relationship child : God*

Because of inadequate cognitive and affective accompaniment at the time of her mother's death, and a one-sided exposure to Biblical stories, she signifies God as threatening. Jenny does not know a loving, caring earthly father and consequently has no grasp of God as a Holy Father.

## **5.4 Aims**

### *5.4.1 Overarching aim*

Reaching the highest possible level of becoming by this child on her way to full-fledged adulthood. The aim is that, from the beginning of the pedotherapy, Jenny will give meaning to the meaningfulness of her own existence on a continually higher level of becoming, that she will arrive at greater self-understanding, highly regard her own human dignity and that of others, make decisions herself with increasing responsibility, identify with the norms her parents exemplify to her, and gradually arrive at a pedagogically acceptable philosophy of life.

### *5.4.2 Implicit aim*

It is aimed that, via pedotherapy, Jenny will arrive at a stable affective disposition of lived experiencing which can serve as a foundation for the optimal actualization of her cognitive potentialities. Regarding the normative way of lived experiencing, the aim is for her, via personal identification with her educators, to accompany her to norm identification and eventually to norm acceptance.

By a systematic, ordered unlocking of reality from a genuine pedagogical relationship with her, an attempt will be made to direct an appeal to her to unlock/open herself for reality. There will be an attempt to make the surrounding life reality so accessible and livable for her that she can arrive at a differentiated application of her psychic life potentialities, so that the pedotherapeutic event can be a fruitful learning event for her.

### *5.4.3 Explicit aim*

The aim is to substitute Jenny's inadequate and incorrect attribution of meaning to her world with the following adequate meanings:

child : self

- (i) She must experience herself as a pleasant, talented, and intelligent child who is able to maintain a stable relationship with a fellow person.
- (ii) She must understand that she is irreplaceable for her parents.
- (iii) Because of affective and cognitive lived experiencing of the fact that she no longer is a baby, and is no longer treated as such, she must show the self-control that is to be expected of a child who before long must enter school.
- (iv) She must explore, without seeking support via physical contact. Thus, she must emancipate from a mostly senso-pathic lived experiential disposition to a pathic-affective disposition.

child : other

- (i) She must see that the other children in the family can never replace her. There is no reason for competition or jealousy.
- (ii) In his unique way, her father has affection for her and will gladly help her develop her potentialities.
- (iii) Irrespective of other beloved adults who come and go in her life, she and her father will always be bonded through a blood relationship, and they are mutually accountable for their relationship.
- (iv) The mother accepts her because of her own unique positive potentialities and does not expect that she needs to be like someone else.
- (v) Her obedience to her parents is out of gratitude for their care and support of her.

child : things



- (i) She must see that death is something that lies on each person's path. Her mother has led the way for the family.
- (ii) She must experience that her security is not found in the permanent location of the house. She finds a dwelling with her parents, irrespective of where they stay.
- (iii) There are objects that personally belong to her and for which she alone is responsible. Others might not dispose of them. The same holds for the possessions of other people.
- (iv) There is order and regularity in the physical reality. Via actualizing her cognitive potentialities, she must disclose and realize an elementary system and order in associating with the things in her world.

child : God In light of her increasing knowledge and understanding of earthly fatherhood, she must come to the insight that the Heavenly Father never fails His children, especially when in temporary need.

### **5.5 Choice of principle of ordering**

Because of the child's affective distress and unordered cognitive lived experiencing, it seems to be appropriate to follow a punctual way of ordering. The attempt will be to start with a theme that is not threatening to her and from there to move to relevant themes for which she shows herself to be prepared and ready.

### **5.6 Choice of methodological principle**

Because of the child's affective restraint, she will have difficulty projecting and then there is little opportunity for symbol application. It should be advisable to work *directively* at first. In this way, the child's possibility of choice in the therapeutic event is limited, and she has a greater opportunity to become familiar with the therapist as an authority figure and to establish a relationship of trust in the experience of safety and security. To the extent that the therapeutic relationship thrives, the possibility of an *indirective* approach can be explored.

In connection with this long-term planning, now each individual session can be planned as the sequence of the pedotherapy. Because of the unpredictability of the pedotherapeutic sequence, it might be that an anticipation is incorrect and again, in the light of the long-term planning, there must be a reconsideration and adjustment according to circumstances.

## 6. THE PEDOTHERAPEUTIC SEQUENCE

### *Session 1*

#### *Planning*

**Aim:** There is an attempt to strengthen the pedagogical relationship in such a way that the child experiences that she is accepted, and that the therapist gets pleasure from being with her. She must be exposed to a limited number of therapeutic media to explore her likes and dislikes and to give her an opportunity to experience success and approval. At the end of the session, she must experience that there is something she can do well.

**Choice of content:** Elementary success-games are planned which give the therapist and child an opportunity to play together. They must be so simple that Jenny will likely succeed at mastering them with ease. The following are made available: "Lego" building blocks, paper, wax crayon, felt pens, a large yellow plastic ball, bean bags, colored cubes with prints on them, ninepins and a wooden ball, rings that fit in each other, geometric forms in a holder and a simple jigsaw puzzle cut out of wood.

**Strategies:** By way of example, this session is repeated in terms of the essences of the pedotherapeutic sequence. The same principles hold for the subsequent sessions.

- a) **Orienting:** The therapist welcomes the child by appropriately saying she is glad she has come, that the room has been especially prepared for her, and some time for conversing has been made exclusively for her. During her visit, she may play with any of the toys which have been put out. Also, she need

not stay for the entire time if she doesn't want to. The therapist evaluates her state of mind, her intentional directedness, readiness to explore and distance to orient herself in preparation for the following sequence phase.

- b) Questioning: To ensure that the child sees the possibilities of all the aids and is not overwhelmed by their multiplicity, her attention is directed to one at a time, and a brief explanation is given. The invitation to make a choice follows. Throughout, the therapist evaluates if the event stabilizes the child affectively, if she arrives at perspective, relationality, and security. The pedagogical criteria are brought into consideration in a converging way.
- c) Exposing: Irrespective of which toy a child selects, the therapist must be prepared to make use of each possible opportunity for pedagogical assent to give the child an opportunity to signify herself positively. Help with cognitive ordering is provided by means of analyzing and synthesizing, and making logical conclusions. By means of carrying on a conversation, questions and answers, and an empathic relationship, throughout the therapist controls/verifies whether the adoption of meaning has occurred.
- d) Controlling/verifying: To provide the child with an opportunity to master her newly found meanings, and support from the therapist to functionalize them, she is given an opportunity, through graphic expression, to project.
- e) Functionalizing: It is anticipated that this phase will progress simultaneously with the previous one and will extend further during the period of leaving at the end of the session. During parental accompaniment, the mother is made aware of new meanings which have figured during the session and is to try to offer the child further opportunities of functionalizing while at home.

A directive approach and play therapy are anticipated as appropriate techniques.

### *Sequence*

Jenny shyly enters the room and views the toys at a distance. She chooses the large yellow ball, catches it and throws it with relative

skill, and enjoys it when the therapist, by mistake, let the ball fall. However, she quickly becomes tired of the toy, runs to the shelf, and handles the other toys without making a choice. With encouragement, she chooses the “Lego” building blocks. Her inability to build a house leaves her anxious. The therapist offers to help and together they plan a simple little structure that Jenny builds. Next, she fetches the colored cubes from the shelf, but the “daring task” of beginning overwhelms her. The therapist takes a position next to her on the mat. Jenny moves ever closer until eventually she is sitting on the therapist’s lap (Illustration ii, Appendix 4(b)). Together, the blocks are sorted according to color and arranged in a pattern. Jenny enjoys the royal treatment and encouragement her success brings. She willingly sits next to the therapist at a little table and draws a small picture which she calls “me and my mom” (Illustration iii, Appendix 4(c)).

### *Evaluating*

Indeed, the child enters the relationship and in trust, and with the support of the therapist, she dares to explore. However, she is caught on a senso-pathic level of lived experiencing and can only use her intellectual potentialities if she is emotionally stabilized via physical contact. She cannot yet at all distance herself to an independent exploration. Her weak self-image and impotence regarding the mother-child relationship are expressed in her drawing. The confusing scribbles which replace the mother’s face testify to a weak actualization of cognitive potentialities. Jenny experiences security to such an extent that she can emancipate to projection but does not yet identify with the new meanings regarding herself. Orienting and relationality have taken a beginning but are not yet adequate in the light of the level of becoming possible for her.

### *Session 2*

#### *Planning*

**Aim:** In the light of the fact that the therapeutic relationship has had a favorable beginning but that there is still no *change* in meaning, the prospective aim of this second session is to improve

the self-image by self-knowledge. She must experience that her personal dignity is highly regarded because she is given the responsibility of possessing and taking care of private property. By the therapist exemplifying the norm of respect for another's property, she acquires an opportunity to give normative meaning to her relationship with things.

**Content:** Activities which lead to knowledge of the body schema, of bodily relationships, such as carrying out movements in front of a mirror, tracing her outline while she lies stretched out on a large piece of paper and cutting out a left and a right hand from wallpaper and constructing a doll with detached parts and learning an action-song which refers to body parts.

**Strategies:** Since the aims of session one were only partly reached, it is decided to once again work directive, but to make use of the concentric principle of ordering. She is not yet ready to take the initiative with toys. The ground forms of example and assignment are, thus, more appropriate. The technique will be changed, and more room is allowed for guidance via conversation. For orientation, the therapist refers to the picture she had drawn the previous week and which is so highly estimated that it is kept in a special folder with her name. As a problem, she then is asked to draw another picture of herself, but this time as large as she is. A conversation is now carried out over body parts, while she stands in front of the mirror. Her insight is verified with the help of a cardboard doll she must assemble. This also provides an opportunity for functionalizing.

### *Sequence*

Jenny is tense when she comes into the room, and immediately wants to tell about a visit which she concluded with a friend and the dog which had chased her. Her memory failed her, and she made many grammatical errors. The therapist lifted her onto her lap and began to ask if the dog had bitten her (with reference to the face, arms, legs, and other parts). She also inquired about how she felt, what she had done, what the other children and her parents had done. She climbed off her lap and answered, with a little smile, that it was not so bad. She can run very fast, and she quickly got away.

The activity aimed for was carried out and she is ready to sit alone at the little table, trace her hands on wallpaper and cut them out. With excitement, she discovers that the two hands are mirror images (Illustration iv, Appendix 4(d)). Therapist and child amuse themselves with her insight and success. The scissors work was placed in her folder, and she chooses her own storage space in the desk drawer. The therapist promises to see to it that no one tampers with it. Jenny and the therapist tidy up the playroom together. Jenny says goodbye and promises to come back.

### *Evaluating*

She shows that she is ready to explore in a more distanced way. Via applying her cognitive potentialities, she succeeds in discovering new relationships and in disclosing regularity and order. She accepts the imperative of the demands that speak to her, and she shows a readiness for pedagogical engagement. Her changed behavior is evidence that she has embedded the new meaning of herself in her possessed experience, and this will direct her to positive exploration. Indeed, she has constituted a piece of a new world.

### *Parental accompaniment*

After the second session, weekly sessions of parental accompaniment began. At first, only the mother visits because of the father's heavy work schedule, and because of the more favorable state of the mother-child relationship. It is recommended that, in the mornings, she stay at home with her mother, while the other children go to nursery school and that the mother try to get the father involved in building up the child's self-confidence.

The mother reports that the children have acquired climbing poles and that, initially, Jenny fell a lot, but with praise and encouragement, she improved markedly. From that time on, the parents paid more individual attention to her and now they are attentive in expressing their concurrence when deserved, and she no longer irritates her father so purposefully. The efforts of the mother to bring her for a visit for her own benefit led to a

deepening of their relationship, and they are now beginning to live as a family.

Jenny is no longer so clingy and dependent on physical contact, but often is despondent and sad. For the mother, it appears that she muses about her situation. Also, from this it appears that the child's new perspective and emancipation are coming to realization. On a cognitive level, she is trying to determine her place in life.

### *Session 3*

#### *Planning*

**Aim:** During the session there will be an attempt to accompany the child to explore the mother-child relationship on an affective, cognitive, and normative level. Via establishing relationships with the family members, she must acquire a home. She must become aware of her parents' care and experience that she is irreplaceable for them. She must experience that they are bound by fate.

**Content:** Jenny's tonsillectomy, her experience in the hospital, and the subsequent care by her mother are chosen as therapeutic content.

**Strategies:** The child has shown her readiness to explore out of the therapeutic relationship, to be a conversational partner, and accept participation in the event. Her newly found self-confidence offers a basis for more exploration of and confrontation with the threatening content. The chosen therapeutic content lends itself to applying indirective play therapy and a linear way of ordering. The "Scenotest" of Gerdhild von Staabs is chosen as a therapeutic medium because of the collection of miniature dolls, including a doctor and nurse figure, as well as miniature furniture, animals, fantasy figures, household articles and means of transportation. For orienting, the therapist aims to understand how things are going with the child, to report that the mother said she behaved like a big girl at the hospital, and then to propose that they play hospital. The child is then confronted with the problem of what further must happen with the little patient now that she has left the hospital.

## *Sequence*

The child enters the room, and to the therapist's question of how things are going with her, she answers that they clearly are not good. She has had such a bad dream. She again sought physical contact, and while the therapist holds her little hand, she relates that she had dreamt of a beautiful little girl, Marie, who was killed by a car. A gnome policeman sprinkled her with magic water, and she was alive again.\* She also dreamt of a little hare which was bitten to death by dogs. The therapist reassured her by explaining that everyone sometimes dreams unpleasant dreams, but fortunately they always pass as soon as she wakes, and to the extent that she is a big and happy child, she will have few nightmares. She progresses quite well. Her mother made a special phone call to say how proud they are of her behavior in the hospital, and that they are glad she is their child. Subsequently, the therapist proposed to Jenny that they play hospital and to fetch the play materials.

Jenny is immediately enthusiastic and builds a hospital with three beds in which three girls lie. A doctor is taking care of them. There is a toilet in the corner of the room and the mother sits on one side of the waiting room. To the question: "What happens now?" she builds a farm with animals and trees. The ballerina doll goes with her father to stay at his farm. In the bushes there is a crocodile hiding who wants to bite someone. Jenny takes the toy telephone and calls the therapist to come and help. To the question from the therapist about what there is to do in the situation, she answers that the foreman of the farm must restrain the crocodile in a sturdy enclosure. The therapist had scarcely entered her room when Jenny called again to ask if she might be able to visit in the playroom. The ballerina doll shows up in the back of the wooden cage (Illustration v, Appendix 4 (e)).

In the playroom the therapist asks Jenny if she takes ballet lessons. She answers that she gladly would, but her mom is so mean that it wouldn't help to ask her. The therapist offered to chat with her mother on Jenny's behalf, but since it is her father who must pay for the lessons, he also ought to be approached. She proposes that

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\* Jenny's deceased mother's name is Marie. She had died in an automobile accident.



Jenny herself chat with her father. The child is immediately enthusiastic and willing.

At the conclusion, Jenny draws a picture of herself in a ballet skirt (Illustration vi, Appendix 4(f) and saves it in her own folder in the desk drawer.

### *Evaluating*

The child has emancipated to such an extent that she can explore her problematic situation. It seems that the mother-child relationship does not immediately create as many problems for her as the father-child relationship. She yearns for a father who will step up as a protector and source of safety and offers her a dwelling place under peaceful circumstances. However, she feels anxious about existing together with her father on the farm that cannot be permanent. There are continual threats (symbolized by the crocodile in the bushes). She sees the therapist as an advocate and looks to her for support. Jenny does not identify with a specific mother figure but recognizes her need for being mothered and for physical care. Hence, the anthropomorphic use of the cow. This conversation with symbols is evidence of the fact that her becoming has accelerated to such an extent that she now can, on a stable emotional level, distance herself to explore and apply cognitive insight as beacons of orientation in her search for identity.

The body schema she uses in her pictures is evidence of the elevation in becoming that has already occurred. In contrast to her previous drawings of a person where use was made of a stick figure and an infantile body schema (see **Illustration iii, Appendix 4(fg)**, this drawing of a person is on the level for a child of her age. The use of cheerful colors also attests to a more favorable emotional valence. However, the way the torso is colored in indicates that enuresis is still a problem for her. The row of stylized birds at the top of the picture manifests her weak form constancy. Her poor motor coordination leaves much to be desired.

By an analysis of her situation, indeed she has succeeded in identifying her problem in a symbolic way.

### *Parental accompaniment*

Her mother reports that there is a pronounced improvement in Jenny's behavior. She no longer continually bullies the other children, takes their possessions, has wild outbursts and even her bed was dry a few nights. During the day she is now continuously dry.

The therapist draws the mother's attention to Jenny wanting to approach her father and asks that she arrange for them to talk together alone. The matter of ballet lessons is suggested, and the mother says provided the other two little girls in the family also can take lessons. She and the father will talk about the matter.

Because the father is very tense and must be hospitalized for asthma, his lady friend does not want to tell him at this time that Jenny experiences their relationship as threatening. However, it is asked that the father participate in the parental accompaniment as soon as his health allows him to.

### *Session 4*

**Aim:** During this session there is an attempt to accompany the child to explore the father-child relationship to make bonding possible because of trust and understanding. The child must acquire insight into the fact that her father, despite his periodic leaving and less direct interference in her daily life, accepts responsibility for her and is fond of her. He will protect her. The therapist is only a temporary sympathetic fellow traveler. The child must distance from her. The specific mother figure is not necessarily a permanent educator. The father indeed is. He and his children are bonded by destiny. Father and child must establish a relationship such that adequate educating is possible. This aim now figures more explicitly. Her relationship to the objects in her world must be invested with more positive meaning on account of a more adequate possibility of manipulation.

**Content:** The farm theme with its rich symbolism appears to be highly appropriate for possibly attaining the anticipated aims. It also offers the possibility of following the linear principle of

ordering in analyzing, arranging, and synthesizing one theme after another. In linking up with the farm theme, writing patterns are carried out and simple forms are found such as arcs (hares jumping), curves (snake trails), etc.

Strategies: The Von Staabs medium speaks to her, she has succeeded in using the possibilities of the medium and even supplementing them with improvisations (see the use of the toy telephone not included in the set). The medium will again be presented to the child with the question: What is happening on the farm today? Setting up the farm scene offers the therapist the opportunity to orient the child. The results of the previous session, i.e., that the father caged in the crocodile, that she will gladly take ballet lessons and the therapist as a visitor to the farm is ready to give advice, are again made available as foreknowledge.

The child's readiness to bond with her father will be verified by giving her the opportunity to make him a surprise donation to buy a house. This also creates an opportunity to functionalize the newly acquired meanings.

### *Sequence*

Jenny cheerfully enters the room and asks if she might play again with the little dolls. The therapist looked for an opportunity to actualize the relevant foreknowledge, but the child took the initiative and provided a running commentary while unpacking the little scene: a farm where she can stay with the therapist and Amanda's father.\* The cow will cook for them and do their laundry.

The therapist explains that she is fond of Jenny and would gladly stay with her on the farm but there are other children that she also is fond of who will come to visit her in the playroom. Jenny is welcome to also come and visit when she has a need for help. In addition, the cow and the farmer are there to care for her. Possibly the farmer would be disappointed if an unfamiliar person merely

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\* Amanda is the mother's own daughter from a previous marriage. Amanda's father visits his child on weekends, maintains a good relationship with Jenny and often invites her to go on excursions to his little plot.

came to stay at his farm. The little girl is the farmer's daughter, and he will protect her.

The crocodile bites a piece of the cage and stalks the ballerina doll. The therapist proposes that the monster must be done away with. Jenny insists that the farmer must be there. The ballerina doll accompanies him but takes the gun herself and shoots the crocodile. Jenny buries it in the corner of the playroom under a pile of blocks.

Jenny sets a little table and asks the therapist to come and visit. The therapist asks if she has talked with her father yet about dance lessons. She answers that the only time her father speaks with her is when he says she must brush her hair or else he will cut it off and who has ever seen a ballerina with short hair! The therapist explains that her father gladly will have her be a ballet dancer with well-groomed hair. If she copes with caring for her long, curly hair, she must ask her mother, older sister and even the maid to help her. Her father will be elated when he sees how neat her hair is. Then he will know his child is growing up.

To the proposal that she make a pretty picture of herself to bring home to him, she answers positively. Jenny becomes calm and reserved while she is involved with the little picture. She completes the task purposefully and without chatting. The therapist rolls the picture in a piece of gift-wrapping paper. She says goodbye and sticks her arms out to be lifted up. After a moment of physical cuddling, she leaves with the gift.

### *Evaluating*

Jenny still yearns for a father figure who understands her situation and shows expectations for her future. She appears to be ready to distance herself from the therapist and shows that she is ready to master her circumstances with a greater degree of independence and personal input. She accepts that she must get the better of the threat by herself but with the help of her father. She takes an independent stand against the unknown and refuses the therapist's help but spontaneously turns back to the situation of association. In this way she shows herself to be ready to explore alternatives with the therapist but does not blindly accept what she says. The child

has genuinely emancipated to acquiring her own standpoint in life and accepts her accountability with respect to her problem situation.

The session did not progress as the therapist had anticipated in her preparation. Too much content was envisaged. The child herself had delimited the conversational theme based on her need of the moment. In the light of her previous long-term planning, the therapist could change the support she provided and improvise in order to exploit the fruitful learning moments. It seems that where a linear ordering of the material was aimed for, she had not moved from one theme to a subsequent one. New problem areas are not explored. Jenny had once again chosen to concentrate on exploring the father-child relationship. Although she displays remarkable persistence, and daring her emotional state and momentary falling back on a senso-pathic level of lived experiencing show that the relationship with her father is still problematic for her.

### *Parental accompaniment*

The father shows up for the parental guidance and expresses his appreciation for the present that Jenny has made for him. He has put the picture on the wall of his office and recognizes that he has expected all too little from her.

The therapist indicates that the child in her current situatedness needs to get the necessary individual attention, care, discipline, and skills. The essences of the fundamental pedagogical relationship appear to be attenuated, but thanks to the positive intentional directedness of both, there is a full-fledged elevation in level observable. Despite these improvements in her circumstances, the child still experiences that she is only cared for on the spot. She doesn't really dwell there and has not yet found an abode. By her there is a lack of commitment, a bond of fate and an advocate. She feels insecure.

The father expresses his astonishment that his lifestyle can affect his child at all. He and his lady friend feel that each family member (also the children) are free from obligations regarding the relationship and consequently also are free of responsibility and

accountability. They do not want to feel that they need to stay with each other.

At the end of a few parental accompaniment sessions in which there are conversations about the child's need for education, and its essential nature, the father accepts the task, irrespective of the outcome, of this on his relationship with his lady friend, to involve his child in an intimate relationship and bring home to her that he accepts responsibility for her.

### *Session 5*

#### *Preparation*

**Aim:** The aim is to offer the child an opportunity to consolidate her possessed experience of her positive potentialities. In the light of her newly found self-confidence, she has directed an appeal to her father. Initially he is unable to recognize the friendly advance, and respond positively, which gave rise to doubts about her acceptability. During this session, there is an attempt to allow her to experience that she, despite relapses, is progressing on her path of becoming [adult]. The fact that the therapist treats her as a future schoolgirl provides her with an opportunity to purposefully assimilate her potentialities. After the session, she must feel that she no longer is a baby but one of these days is going to be a schoolgirl.

**Content:** Activities to promote reading and writing readiness of a simple nature, and that make possible a high degree of success, are so functional in nature that the child can experience them as meaningful. Since her fine motor coordination is not yet up to level, she will benefit from carrying out scribble patterns. These patterns have an inherent order and regularity that provide an opportunity for systematizing on a cognitive level.

**Strategies:** During the orientation phase, the therapist refers to the child's age and carries the conversation in the direction of attending school after her next birthday. There is mention that not all children can easily learn to read and write. There are certain things they must be able to do beforehand. One of these things is to be

able to draw uniform patterns. Jenny's previous little drawings (see Illustrations i and vi) again are shown to her and it is indicated that she just loves to draw patterns.

A large cardboard wheel with a star on its outermost border is rolled on the mat. There is attention to its movement. Then the therapist and the child carry out [the star's] movements in the air with their hands. Then with a thick piece of chalk the child must draw wheel movements on a large piece of white paper mounted on the wall. Thus, she carries out the movements vertically. Finally, the same pattern is drawn on a small piece of paper that lies flat, i.e., horizontally, on the little table. Now she is provided with a colored pencil. The same procedure is followed with other patterns such as waves and arcs. For verification, mosaic blocks are presented to her to evaluate the extent of her mastery of understanding regularity.

The [didactic] ground forms of example and assignment, as well as the directive approach, are appropriate. Play therapeutic techniques are used during the exposition and control phases, while conversation figures more prominently during the orientation phase.

### *Sequence*

Jenny enters the room with a sulk and a dissatisfied expression on her little face. She immediately relates that she is very disgusted with her father. He put her on his lap and said he is her real dad, and she would rather have Andries' father be her dad.\* Also he was hurt because she and Amanda had gone through the gate without permission and stepped into a café for coffee.

The therapist asks Jenny if she thinks it is right to leave the house without permission. She thinks about it and answers: "no". She asks the therapist if she had asked her parents for permission and seems surprised and says that her parents don't expect or require

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\* Andries was a friend who temporarily lived with her deceased mother after her divorce from Jenny's father.

her to do so. (Compare the father's view that no one in the family owes any responsibility to the others).

The therapist asks about the role of Andrie and Amanda's father in her life. Jenny concludes that they were temporarily and haphazardly there and offered no support in terms of food, clothing and housing. Through questions, she is guided to see that her father was the one who came to help her with the death of her mother. The therapist adds that as a sign of her gratitude, she owes obedience to her father.

In recalling her mother's death, Jenny mentions that sometimes she yearns very much for her but knows that she will see her again. The therapist mentions that everyone will die at some time. Her mother and sister were the first in the family [to die]. In the meantime, God sees to it that she is still cared for and that there is someone who has love for her to look after her. It will be her father who cares for her, who is pleased and elated if she asks forgiveness for her transgressions. She is hesitant to agree, but adds that she still thinks it would be nicer if she had had a different dad.

The therapist presents modeling clay, paint, crayons and paper, and invites Jenny to make a choice. She immediately chooses the clay and begins to make a little dog. She asks if she might bring it home to her father, whose birthday is the following day. The therapist suggests that at this same time she can ask for forgiveness if she sees the opportunity. She takes the little [clay] dog and leaves.

### *Evaluating*

The father-child relationship remains problematic. Thanks to the child's good intellectual potentiality, and her willingness to communicate verbally about what initially was painful and threatening, there is cognitive ordering, insight into relationships and cause and effect. However, the new cognitive meanings conflict with her emotional meanings that spring from her possessed experience. For many years she has signified her father as cold, aloof and not available in times of need. She cannot yet assimilate her newly acquired experiences of his changed role in her life into her possessed experience. Normatively, she signifies her father's changed role as objectionable. Thus, there is a clash with her sense



of propriety when he announces himself as her “real dad” and wants to place demands on her.

However, Jenny accepts that she has a role to play in the relationship, and her own input can give it a twist. (See her previous successful attempt to want to surprise him again with a little gift).

She does not have an opportunity for projection via the image-therapeutic media available, and shows that she no longer needs to deal with the previously averted content, but has distanced herself from it enough to be able to verbalize the problem. Despite the strong emotional load that the content carries, she can control her language usage, and there is now no trace of the infantile to be perceived in her verbal expressions. Also, in this respect, her handicapped becoming has been eliminated.

### *Parental accompaniment*

The father reports that with few exceptions the bed is dry almost every night. There was a falling back to he and the mother going away together for a long weekend, and the children had to stay with friends. Jenny had repeatedly asked if they were going to come back. Also, she wanted to know if she could go with them when they travel someday.

The father had used the opportunity to show that, despite periods of absence, he indeed always had come back, and there always will be a place for her with him.

The parental accompaniment conversation deals mainly with the fundamental pedagogical sequence structure, with emphasis on the place and aim of a merely relaxed, informal association between parent and child. It also is indicated that the child’s genuine knowledge and understanding of the parent are a cornerstone of trust. Jenny must get an opportunity to thoroughly learn to know and trust her father before she is able to accept his authority.

### *Session 6*

### *Planning*

The planning of the aim, content and strategies remains as proposed for session 5.

### *Sequence*

Jenny enters the room and bubbles over with the news that she and her father were in the city to buy shoes and an outfit for her dancing lessons. He had also selected books for the other two little girls to take home. They had eaten pancakes in a restaurant and in the evening the whole family went to a dive-in theater.

The therapist rejoices with Jenny and points out that babies and little preschoolers cannot take lessons. Only girls who are big enough to listen and be obedient can make progress.

The planned activities are carried out (Illustration vii, Appendix 4(h)). Jenny worked with an even tempo and attended to what she was doing. She created the impression of being a satisfied, involved child who confidently carries out the task at hand. To the therapist's casual question if she had found an opportunity to ask forgiveness, she laughs, answers "yes", and returns to her task.

With the presentation of the mosaic blocks, she lays them all out on the floor, chooses the only four yellow squares, places them at the corners and then constructs a symmetrical design (Illustration viii, Appendix 4(i)).

### *Evaluating*

Jenny shows herself to be ready to open herself to the learning material. She applies her motor skills purposefully. She is affectively stable enough so that, based on her cognitive attunement, she can recognize that sometimes her efforts fall short. On a normative level, she can evaluate her results and accept the imperative to improve that addresses her without experiencing being inferior.

Her association with unstructured material is in sharp contrast to the unordered actions of the beginning session. Indeed, it seems that she maintains a purposeful, precise relationship to the objects in her world, and that changes in meanings have progressed.

### *Session 7*

#### *Preparation*

**Aim:** Explore the state of the child's relationships to her father, to her mother, to the other children in the family, and to herself. She must begin to distance herself from the therapist and be made ready to end the pedotherapy.

**Content:** Since the aims of this session are all related to the home situation, the home is chosen as a theme.

**Strategies:** For orientation, the therapist asks Jenny about how she is progressing with her dance lessons, the progress of the other two children, her mother's share in transporting, in strictness, washing and caring for the furniture, and the fathers share about interest and adjustment.

With an invitation to play house-house, the therapist will direct the child's attention to the dollhouse, dolls, doll clothes, furniture, hand puppets, doll theater and the large blocks. She will be asked to make a choice.

The child will be given an opportunity to proceed to projection via play, language or graphic expression.

#### *Sequence*

To the therapist's entry question about how it goes with the dance lessons, Jenny answers that it is going very well. She and the other two girls go each week for a lesson, and she progresses the best. At home, she also helps Amanda, who finds it difficult to point her toes. Jenny demonstrates the small steps that she has learned, and shows those with which she still experiences a little difficulty.

She considers the alternative aids that the therapist presents for a house-house play but asks if she can again play with the Von Staabs set.

She builds a stage with building blocks on which she places three dolls. She is the ballet doll in the middle and the other two dolls are the other girls in the family. She has placed her school slate on the stage behind her. She asks the therapist to help put the round blocks in a row and places the audience on them. On one side, she places two toy chairs in a position of honor. The mom and dad of the children are placed in them (Illustration ix, Appendix 4(i)). Before the performance, the parents stand up, kiss their children and wish them luck with the performance.

Jenny asks the therapist, in the meantime, to build a little house because this is the end of the performance. The entire family rides to the house on the faithful cow. The dad sits in front by the horns to steer. The three girls sit in the middle and behind them sits the mom. Arriving home, the father unlocks the house and lets his family go in while he puts the cow in the barn. With the toy telephone, the therapist dials to hear how the performance had gone. Jenny answers, "good, thank you" and hangs up the telephone. Then she milks the cow and brings the milk into the house where she sets it down in front of the mother and doles it out to the family.

The child loses interest in the play, stands up and looks out the window. She refuses an invitation to play with other toys or to draw something. The therapist walks with her to the waiting room and mentions that she is now such an independent, happy child that she can end her visits to the playroom. Indeed, she is ready to go to school after the holidays. It is agreed that the next visit will be the last.

### *Evaluating*

During this session Jenny shows that she is no longer jealous of her sisters. She is so sure of her dignity and place in the family which she is happy about her parent's role. She no longer feels neglected or threatened.

The mother is accepted as a person and is no longer merely one who physically takes care of her. There has been a differentiation in her role. The child recognizes the necessity for someone to provide her food and transportation but sees that this person does not necessarily need to be a member of the family circle.

She now signifies the father as head of the family, someone who looks after the families' welfare and can provide shelter for them. He is no longer a person who has a fun, pleasant and idealistic existence on the farm and who is indebted to her.

Regarding herself, she accepts that she also must show a contribution to the family life. She voluntarily milks the cow. She does not develop her potentialities only under current circumstances, but also anticipates the future and accepts the task of compulsory schooling.

Jenny has stabilized affectively to such an extent that she can apply her cognitive potentialities to order her world and to actualize her psychomotor potentialities. On a normative level, her lived experiencing fluctuates in connection with the changes that have appeared in her life circumstances. As soon as her home situation stabilizes, and fixed norms are accepted, it will be possible for her, on a normative level, to live up to the values that address her.

### *Parental accompaniment*

The mother reports that Jenny's announced symptoms have been eliminated and she is now a more relaxed child whose presence in the house is no longer disturbing. The father plans to get family lodging of a more permanent nature with the eye to a possible marriage. However, the mother's first marriage was so traumatic for her that she has serious reservations about such a step.

After conversing, it is agreed that the orthopedagogic help for the family be ended.

### *Session 8*

### *Preparation*

**Aim:** During this session the aim is for the child to finally distance (herself from the therapist) and to focus on entering school.

**Content:** Reading readiness exercises with emphasis on visual discrimination, e.g., recognition of smaller and larger differences and resemblances in pictures and letters as well as recognition of directional differences such as between f and t, b and d, p and q, n and u.

**Strategies:** During the orientation phase, the therapist indicates that this is the last session. Jenny's writing skills have quickly improved, thanks to her hard exercises. Reading skills require the same preparation. There are several reading games, all of which she can now master easily. The information conversation technique is combined with directive play therapy since the content points to the [didactic] ground forms of play and conversation. The tempo of the session must be such that it is a light-hearted, busy hour within which therapist and child associate with the content in a distanced, business-like way. During the conclusion, the child's attention is directed to the fact that ending the session does not need to mean the end of the friendship. The therapist expresses a continued interest in the child, and in the future, will gladly enquire how it is going with her.

### *Sequence*

The child enters the room with arms waiving and casually delivers the picture she has made for the therapist as a farewell gift.

The session proceeds as planned, but Jenny is somewhat disinterested. She completes the assignments, but not with her usual diligence. She will not draw or play with clay for the last time, and even rejects the favorite Von Staabs set.

To the therapist's parting, it is mentioned that she will always be welcome to come for a visit, and Jenny asks if she might come for a weekend. The therapist confirms that she will be welcome. Jenny

laughs and responds, “Then you must buy a plastic sheet because I sometimes wet my bed!”

*Evaluating*

Her apparent sluggishness and disinterest indicate that she no longer has a need for a conversation with the therapist. Her rejection of expressive and projective materials points to deprojection. There is no longer an anonymous danger that awakens anxiety. Her problem (enuresis) remains, but it no longer undermines her self-respect. She has distanced to such an extent that she can properly verbalize this without fear of rejection.

The handicapped becoming that the child had shown is eliminated and the natural course of educating is reestablished. Parents and child have recaptured a future perspective. The pedotherapeutic aim is realized.

**7. SYNTHESIS**

During the eight sessions of pedotherapy, which had spanned twelve weeks, succeeded in bring about adequate meaning of the following contents on a primarily affective, cognitive and normative way:

**7.1 The relationship child : self**

| Session number | and level of giving meaning                                | Methodological principle |
|----------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1              | affective (safety, security)                               | directive                |
| 2              | cognitive (bodily knowledge, laterality)                   | directive                |
| 2              | normative (regard for dignity)                             | directive                |
| 3              | affective (own talents)                                    | indirective              |
| 4              | cognitive (physical skills, independence)                  | indirective              |
| 4              | normative (personal cleanliness)                           | indirective              |
| 5              | normative (accountability for interpersonal relationships) | directive                |
| 6              | cognitive (dexterity)                                      | directive                |

|   |                                   |             |
|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| 7 | normative (value of independence) |             |
|   | indirective                       |             |
| 7 | affective (self-assurance)        | indirective |
| 8 | cognitive (future perspective)    |             |
|   | indirective                       |             |

### 7.2 The relationship child : other

Session number    Content and level of giving meaning  
Methodological

principle

|   |   |             |
|---|---|-------------|
| 1 | cognitive (relationship to therapist)   |             |
|   | directive   |             |
| 2 | affective (disposition of therapist)  | directive   |
| 2 | normative (authority of therapist and accountability for mutual relationship) | directive   |
| 3 | cognitive (mother as caregiver)   |             |
|   | indirective   |             |
| 3 | normative (father as protector)   | indirective |
| 3 | affective (therapist as advocate)   | indirective |
| 4 | cognitive (father as caregiver)   |             |
|   | indirective   |             |
| 4 | normative (therapist as temporarily involved)                                 | indirective |
| 5 | normative (father as caregiver)   |             |
|   | directive   |             |
| 7 | cognitive (sisters are not threatening)                                       |             |
|   | indirective   |             |
| 7 | affective (bondedness to parents)   | indirective |

### 7.3 The relationship child : things

Session number    Content and level of giving meaning  
Methodological

Principle

|   |                                    |           |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | cognitive (ordering play material) | directive |
| 2 | normative (private possessions)    |           |



|   |   |             |
|---|---|-------------|
|   | and neatness)                                     | directive   |
| 4 | affective (housing)                               | indirective |
| 5 | normative (value of obedience)                    | directive   |
| 5 | cognitive (the dead)                              | directive   |
| 6 | cognitive (regularity of patterns)                | directive   |
| 6 | normative (value of effort and full-heartedness)  | directive   |
| 7 | affective (unconditional acceptance by educators) | indirective |
| 8 | normative (value of criticism)                    |             |
|   | directive   |             |

#### 7.4 The relationship child : God

Session number    Content and level of giving meaning  
Methodological

Principle

|   |  |           |
|---|--|-----------|
| 6 | cognitive (God as caring and provider of life and death) | directive |
|---|--|-----------|

Of the eight lessons five proceeded primarily directly and the other three mostly indirectly. With the exception of the child-God relationship, giving adequate meaning in all three ways of lived experiencing were accomplished by directive as well as indirective approaches.

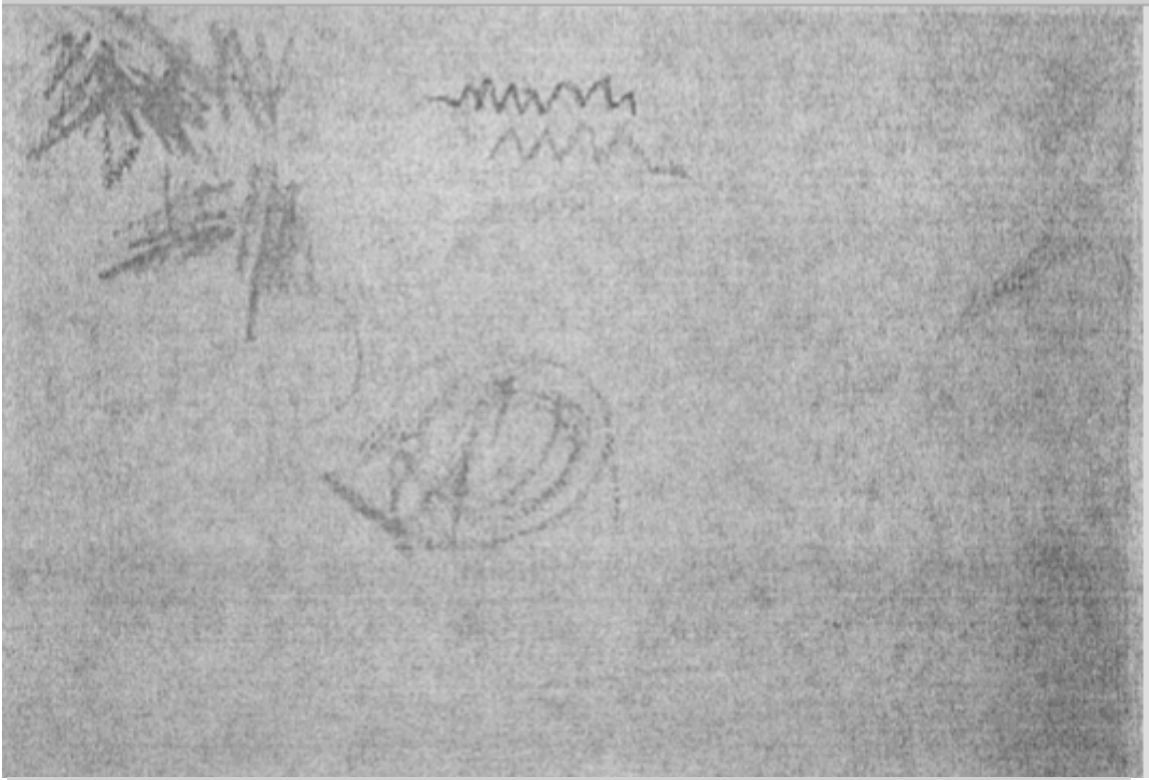
Because of the young child's defective possessed experience and linguistic deficiencies, the child-God relationship figured less prominently as pedotherapeutic content. The abstract nature of the content is such that it is doubtful if during the pedotherapy any change in meaning occurred that is worthy of mention. At best only a few new experiences can be acquired that during the course of full-fledged, favorable educating possibly can be consolidated into already possessed experiences. It can be concluded that change in the child-God relationship was an unrealistically optimistic explicit pedotherapeutic aim. However, to allow it to figure only as an implicit aim in the course of therapy, the possibility should be created for exploiting fruitful moments in this regard. The

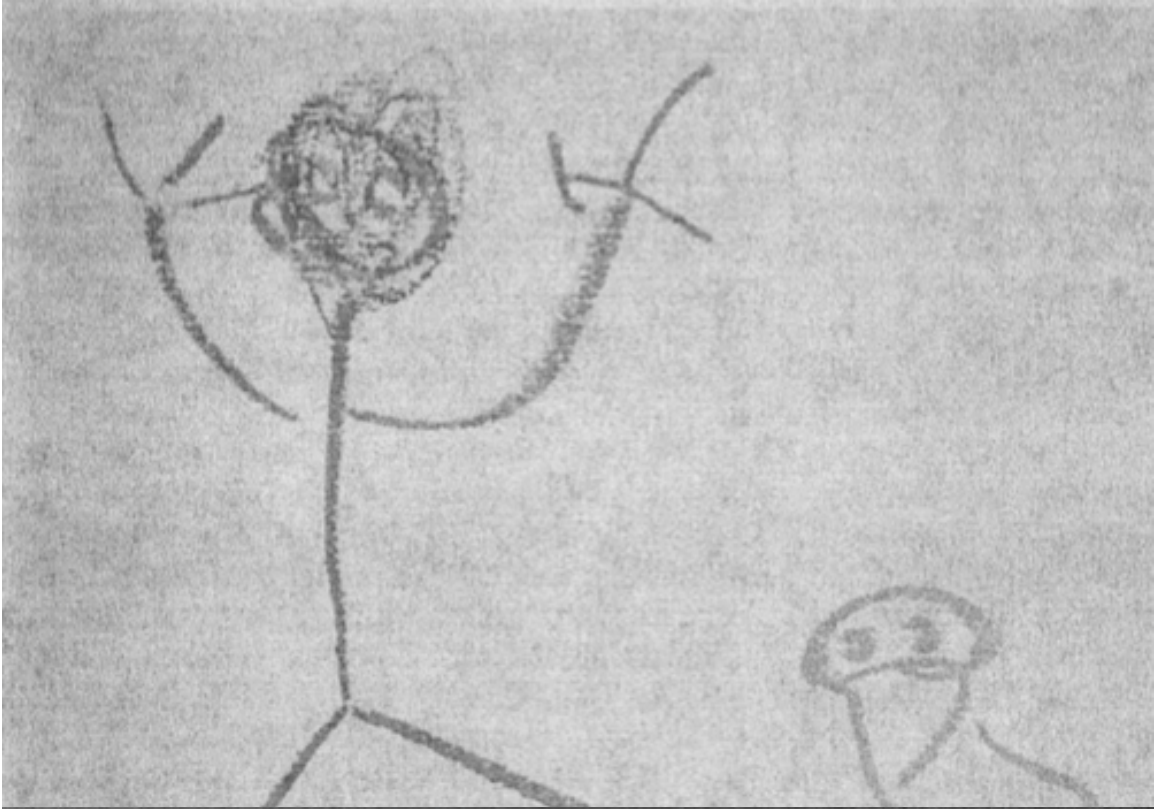
problematic nature of this specific therapeutic content entails that the therapist, parent and child should easily be able to avoid it. Thus, it seems meaningful to consider this as an explicit aim during planning.

## **7.5 Conclusion**

During subsequent contact with the family six months after the end of pedotherapy, the father reported that his lady friend decided against marriage and moved away. He had bought Jenny's school outfit and took her to school the first day. She quickly progresses in school and is happy and satisfied at home. With this, contact with the family is ended.

## **APPENDIXES**





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