

and skills to become independent. It is the parents who can provide this better than anyone else, the booklet stresses.

What the parents need are the qualities of a saint to cope with the constant teaching, the day-by-day dilemmas and the problems that might arise internally within the family.

Yet the booklet reassures the parents: If saintly qualities are required, then the parents shouldn't feel bad if they fall short in any of these categories.

#### SOME ANSWERS

The booklet was written by Dr. Manny Sternlicht and Ina Sullivan of Central Habilitation Services at Willowbrook in response to the many questions parents raised.

It suggests that a parent put aside some time each day that he can devote totally to the child, claiming "It is better to have a little time that is all his and yours together than a lot of time that is never really his alone."

Warning against comparing the child to the other children in the family, it takes a developmental approach, where the child is seen as unique, not to be compared to anyone but himself.

"He is unlike any other child, even another deaf-blind child, and his development is all his own. Compare him to himself, to his performance last year or the year before rather than to his siblings and you will see the increase he is making in his skills in living," it reads.

The booklet stresses that parents should not set their expectations too high, and that they should "try to find experiences for him that make use of and stimulate the senses he has."

For example, the world of smell is open: There are flowers, the beach, foods, freshly cut grass, gasoline in the filling station, soap.

And the tactile world, too: Let the child feel cold glass, grass and bushes; textures in the house, furniture, walls.

For beginnings of communication with the child, the parent can hold the child's head close to his chest when singing, humming and talking, so the child can feel the vibration. The booklet also claims the child will enjoy the vibration of musical instruments, such as the guitar.

#### TEACHING METHOD

It suggests a step-by-step method of teaching the child self-care steps: how to wash and bathe himself, to brush his teeth and hair, to feed and dress himself, to use the toilet.

"While this would take persistent and patient training, each step demands less and less of your attention and more independence from your child, and incidentally gives him a much greater sense of accomplishment," the booklet reads. "All learning is done by small steps, each building on the accomplishment of the one that has gone before."

Even as the child is seen as a special individual who can move only at his own pace, he should not be seen as so special that he need not follow any family rules or regulations.

"He needs to be accepted by all members of the family to be a real part of it," the booklet reads. "He won't get that acceptance if the family members resent the special privileges he gets in rule-breaking."

Four of the original six children in the program have returned to their own families for the summer. Foster homes are being considered for the other two youngsters.

The program was considered very successful by Willowbrook administrators and by HEW representatives who came from Washington for evaluation.

Funding has been renewed for another year, to extend the program until June, 1974.