

Look at the little crippled kid... Who cares if she'd like to walk?

By ROBERT E. HUBER

Haja Lopez,
Of the Willowbrook State
School.

Six-years old. Big eyes and splendid eyelashes. At turns affectionate, inquisitive, audacious. Always bright. A little shy around men, but if you sit down and talk to her, eye-to-eye, you get on famously with her.

She doesn't know her name means jewel in Spanish. Observers know it by intuition in a minute.

They also know she is crippled. She was born with a disease called spina bifida.

Spina bifida is an affliction of the nervous system that has caused paralysis in Haja's legs. Her legs are useless. But her arms and chest and torso are strong. She conveys that

strength to her crutches which drag her legs along.

Her mind is unimpaired. She is a normal little girl. Not retarded, and what is more surprising she is not shy — a usual by-product of life in an institution.

She has lived at Willowbrook all her life.

Haja was placed in the Willowbrook State School

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Haja Lopez receives mathematics instruction from Mrs. Marilyn Sesky at Willowbrook State School.

S.I. Advance Photo by Robert Parsons