

Yes, they had everything, he thought. They did have everything . . . everything that is necessary to rear a good litter of pigs for the market. As children growing up to take their place in the community, they had next to nothing. They had a father, a mother and a house, but they didn't have a home. They had a school to go to, but they were not being educated, because they had no home encouragement and they were staying away from school as much as they could.

So many people say to me : "Yes, I would like my boy to learn to be a doctor or an engineer," or "I would like my girl to learn to be a nurse or a teacher. If the school teachers can make anything decent out of my kids, I'll be happy."

Listen, parents. The school teacher can't even make a good garbage man or a good window-cleaner out of your child unless you do your part and do it extra well.

You can work a part of the reason out by simple arithmetic. The teacher has your child for less than 30 hours a week for 42 weeks of the year. You have him for 168 hours each week for 52 weeks of the year. You can't take too much off for sleeping time, because the very conditions under which the child sleeps can make a big difference to his learning. Furthermore, you have him all to yourself for the six most important years of his life.

If you really want your child to do well in life, you must provide a real home for him or her. A home in which love, peace and co-operation are not disrupted and marred by jealousy, vice or violence.

Father should work to provide a decently furnished home and mother should work to keep the home in such a manner that her children need never feel ashamed of it, whether it be large or small, new or old.

When children go to school they should be always clean and tidily dressed. If they go dirty, ragged and smelly, they suffer the scorn of other children and this does damage to their minds which you can never repair.



These two little country girls are Hilda and Doris Blair of Ashford.

It is not enough that you provide a decent home, decent clothing and decent home-care for your children, if you want them to do really well with their education. You must take a personal interest in their school work and show them that you are interested by going along to the school yourself sometimes to find out from the teacher just how they are doing and what you can do to help.

I visited a very large public school during Education Week and I was very pleased to see quite a number of aboriginal mothers there being proudly escorted by their sons and daughters who were proud to show what they were doing in their class-rooms. This is the sort of thing which gives both the child and the teacher encouragement to do better. I went along to show a few other children that someone was interested in their school work, even if their own parents couldn't be bothered. They seemed pleased to have me, but I am sure they would have been much more thrilled to have their own father or mother.

Now don't try to hand me the old tale that your kiddies can never be anything because they are dark-skinned and nobody wants to give them a fair go. It was a handy excuse years ago and some of you may be missing it to fall back upon. It isn't even a poor excuse to-day, and never was a good reason for failure.

We had a guest at our house over the week-end a little while ago. He is a doctor in one of Sydney's biggest hospitals. His skin is darker than that of most *Dawn* readers.

I can hear a lot of you saying: "Yes, but he . . ." Listen, there is only one "but he" in this case. It's just this: "But he" had a good home and a good father and mother who were so interested in the education of their son that they were prepared to sacrifice their own immediate pleasures to give him a fair go.

It is an actual and undeniable fact there are more "fair goes" being offered to your children to-day than you parents are prepared to reach up and bring within their grasp.

I appeal to every parent to take stock of your little family to-day. Find out from your child's school what is needed from you to give him or her the best opportunity to reach the highest possible goal within his or her capacity. Maybe he can never be a doctor, and maybe she can never be a teacher. Only a small portion of us—black or white—have what is necessary to succeed in these high professions; but we are all capable of being better equipped and more useful than we are now.

Let us all improve ourselves and our way of thinking and living that we may provide a smoother path for our children to follow to greater heights of achievement.