

LOVE IS A CHILD

(FILM)

by

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A Documentary Film Submitted to the Faculty of the

DEPARTMENT OF DRAMA

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In the Graduate College

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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SIGNED: Frederick C. Guel

APPROVAL BY THESIS DIRECTOR

This documentary film has been approved on the date shown below:

Robert A. Keyworth      4/7/80  
ROBERT A. KEYWORTH      /Date  
Professor of Drama

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## ABSTRACT

The major components of the film listed below give a general overview of the scope of the film.

1. The film will show a special needs child being picked up at home and transported to Head Start. This segment portrays the apprehension on the part of the parent and helps establish audience empathy. Using Apache music, and a short Apache language voice over the mother's thoughts, the cultural element of the film is also introduced.
2. Playground Scene: Portrays the excitement of children playing together as the handicapped child at first stands alone watching the others play and then is invited to join with the other children.
3. Storytelling, narration begins: Portrayal of large group classroom activity is given. Emphasis is placed on the acceptance small children have for each other.
4. Play song scene: The children move to the song's music and words. Scene depicts the special attention teachers give to handicapped children.
5. Testing sequence: This segment explains the screening and testing procedures employed at Head Start to determine each child's abilities in relation to his age group.

6. Small group activity: This sequence shows an Apache teacher working on a one to one basis with two handicapped children.
7. Speech Therapy: Depicts the handicapped boy, Kenneth, involved in a Speech Therapy session.
8. Doctor Visit: A visit to the hospital is shown and the viewer is informed of this aspect of the program.
9. Eye Test/Ear Test: The importance of early discovery of hearing and seeing problems are illustrated.
10. Play song two: This provides a musical break for the viewer while showing the fun children can have together at Head Start.
11. Physical Therapy: A Physical Therapist is shown working with two of the handicapped children.
12. Home Visit: A teacher visits the home of the boy, Kenneth. This sequence shows the importance of parental involvement in the progress of their child. It also shows the cooperation that is possible between the parents and teachers.
13. Crown Dance/Finger Painting Superimposition: This sequence brings together the Apache crown dance, traditionally used as a healing ceremony, and the handicapped child. The shot has multiple cultural and psychological resonances.
14. Crown Dance Montage: A quick succession of shots to reaffirm the cultural identity of the film and the White Mountain Apache Head Start Program. Credits are superimposed over this section, ending in a freeze frame.

I.

## INTRODUCTION

Documentary

Time: 18:33

Produced by: Frederick A. Ench

Funding by: Department of Health, Education and Welfare

Grant Number: H-8021-N

Music by: Jay Cravath

Narrated by: Robert A. Keyworth

Narration written by: Frederick A. Ench

Love is a Child was written, directed, photographed and edited by Frederick A. Ench and submitted as a master's thesis project for a Master of Arts degree, College of Fine Arts, Motion Picture Division of the Department of Drama; The University of Arizona. The subject of the film is handicapped pre-school children and the White Mountain Apache Head Start Program. The objectives of the film are to increase community understanding of handicapped children and the services available at Head Start, and to encourage parents of handicapped preschoolers to enroll their children in the Head Start Program. The cultural stigma created by handicaps in the Apache Society has always caused major problems in providing the services that handicapped children need during these early years. Many of the parents of these children tend to hide them away, not wanting them to be ridiculed or to bring shame upon the family. This, in turn greatly increases the child's problems

with an isolation that can cause both environmental and social retardation.

Love is a Child hopes to help eliminate the problem by alleviating some of the fears and shame associated with having a handicapped child. The film attempts to blend elements of Apache culture with the Head Start Program to convey its message in a meaningful way for the Apache people and the public service personnel who work in the community and come into contact with parents of handicapped children.

II.

FILM NARRATION FOR LOVE IS A CHILD

Handicapped children are special children. Like all children they need love, but special children need special love and care.

(dissolve to the classroom)

This film is about very special children and the White Mountain Apache Head Start Program. While the majority of children enrolled at Head Start are not handicapped they all possess an acceptance and love for each other that is unaffected by the differences between them. It is indeed a beautiful age because these small children have not yet learned the meaning of shame or prejudice. It is a time of wonder.

This film is also about courage and dedication. The courage of handicapped children and their parents; and the dedication of the teachers, therapists and other professionals who work to help children with special needs for growing and learning

(dissolve to play song scene)

Children with handicaps will always have these handicaps, but with educational, medical and therapeutical services during the formative pre-school years, they will be able to deal better with their

disability later in life. The importance of early help cannot be over-emphasized.

(dissolve to testing sequence)

Children in the Head Start Program undergo developmental screening to determine their mental and physical capabilities in relation to their age group. Testing covers three major areas:

The first is: Cognitive, the reasoning or mental ability a child should have at his age level. This includes the ability to understand and to follow directions.

The second is: Language, the child's ability to speak. It is important to note that all children are tested in whatever language they best understand when they enter Head Start.

The third is: Motor Development, the ability of a child to develop and use his muscles. This includes the large muscles of the legs and arms used for walking, running and climbing, and the small finger and wrist muscles used for picking up small objects, painting, coloring and cutting.

Another aspect of child evaluation is social emotional development. Children are observed for appropriate behavior development for their age level. Those thought to have problems in any of these areas are referred to professional help and an individualized program is designed for the specific problem.

(small group segment)

Special children not only participate in large group activities, learning to work and play together with the entire class, but also small group activities where one to one attention is given by teachers or aides. Learning and playing go hand-in-hand at Head Start. Playing is the business of childhood. It is the childrens way of learning about their own capabilities and the world around them. The fun of trying and then finally succeeding helps to improve the self concept of all children.

(speech therapy)

One of the therapeutical services provided is Speech Therapy. Children with speech problems are given individual attention designed to better develop their speaking skills and understanding.

(sync segment)

Speech Therapy is only one of the important services available to children that will help them in later years. It is not an exaggeration to say that they will have a head start over children whose speaking problems are left untreated until primary school age.

(dissolve to doctor visit)

Before any child enters Head Start, a thorough physical and dental examination is given. A doctor's visit may seem a little frightening to a small child, but, it is very important to make certain

that our children are healthy. Being healthy and feeling happy are inseparable. And, of course, if a medical or dental need is detected, referrals are made to the appropriate personnel and subsequently treated.

(dissolve to eye test)

Our eyes are the windows to our world. Much of what we learn about ourselves and our environment comes to us through our sense of vision. Good vision is one of the keys that unlocks a child's mind and lets in the world. Without this key a child is often left in darkness. Here we see a child who is not handicapped being tested for correct vision. The Head Start Health Coordinator is using a testing device that allows the child to move his hand in response to hand images projected on a small screen. It is vital to test the seeing ability of every child because if any child has a visual problem that goes undetected, this problem can seriously interfere with his learning abilities even if the child has normal or even exceptional mental qualities.

(ear test)

Music, laughter and storytelling could never be enjoyed without a child's ability to hear well. Hearing tests are another part of the screening process. As with vision, good hearing is a vital key to a child's learning potential. Many times a child thought to be a slow learner is only suffering from poor hearing. For Apache children,

hearing problems are a great concern due to the high number found to have middle ear infections or other hearing impairments. Because we learn to speak by imitating what we hear, both speaking and understanding the spoken word are extremely difficult for a child with an uncorrected hearing problem. Remember, a world without the sounds of laughter and music is a world with less fun and joy.

(dissolve to music and dance scene)

(next narration at very end of scene)

Headstart is learning together and playing together. It is a childrens' world. A world of sharing and good fun. Dancing and creative dramatic play are some of the physical activities engaged by Head Starters.

Of course what may be an easy physical activity for a normal child may be a difficult challenge for a child with a physical handicap. To help children with such handicaps, Physical Therapy sessions are provided.

(dissolve to physical therapy)

Physical Therapy is made available to any child, who after observation, screening and medical examination is found to have a weakness in muscle development or a permanent physical handicap. Through professional application of various kinds of therapeutic help, children can improve and sometimes overcome weaknesses and handicaps that left

untreated might seriously jeopardize the possibilities of later improvement.

(dissolve to home visit)

Although a child may spend several hours a day at Head Start, most of the child's learning and growing occurs at home. For pre-school children, parents are the most important teachers. The knowledge and insight parents have concerning their child can be a great help to the teacher in gaining an understanding of that child. Parental involvement is one of the essential aspects of the program. Teachers pay visits to the home of each child and provide parents with educational tools and games, to help the child learn at home. Discussions take place in which both parents and teachers make suggestions and offer ideas to help in the child's progress.

Another aspect of parental involvement is the developmental team meeting. Parents meet with the teachers, therapists and others directly involved with each child's progress. Teaching strategies are discussed and a fuller understanding of the needs and achievements of the child is gained by all involved.

(dissolve to painting scene)

Love is a child because love like a small child is not aware of what differences that separate one person from another. Love does not cause shame, instead it seeks to help those less fortunate yet equally important. The wonder and imagination in the eyes of all small

children are among the greatest gifts given to humanity and must be treasured in every child regardless of what some might see as imperfections.

The spirit of the Apache is a great spirit and the Apache have reason to be a proud people. It is important that this pride be extended to all sons and daughters of the Great Apache People.

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