

● Susan Smith ●

DAYCARE



Big or little?

You have probably gathered by now that children's politics are pretty important to me... and you, like I, may have wondered how one introduces children to political theories.

Well, the perfect book on dialectics for two- and three-year-olds has been published. And not just dialectics, but human dignity, humour, self-reliance, thoughtfulness and the

struggle of a young child to see where he fits into the world.

Big or Little is the story of a child of about four years old dealing with a typical day's challenges. We see him feeling good about tying his shoes - big, but unable to reach the elevator button - little, remembering to return library books - big, but getting yelled at for losing a sock - little. Getting up

before anyone else and making his own breakfast is a real victory for him. The array of milk, bread, cereal, peanut butter, mixing bowl, eggs makes you almost feel the stickiness of the counter-top. On the other hand he is quite chagrined to wake up and find out that he has wet his bed.

There are good and bad points about being big and little and that leaves plenty of room for discussion but, thankfully, the value judgments are missing. Bed wetting is something a *little* person does, not a bad person. Getting lost in the supermarket is a function of height and size, not disobedience. And remember the disappointment of opening a gift and finding something that you've already outgrown. But what very real proof that in fact you *have* grown. It's just too bad that your aunt is behind the times.

I have one criticism of the book. Although the child's mother does not appear in the illustrations, the only mention of her is made as she yells at him for losing a sock. All the other parenting is done by the father who

MUDPIE

Volume 5 Issue 8 October 1984

discusses space, watches a hockey game and carries him up to bed. To balance the negative mother image, we've edited our copy and now Mom discusses space.

You may now be wondering about my imagination - this much in a book with less than 250 words! Read it - it's 250 words well spent - congratulations Kathy Stinson, author, Robin Baird Lewis, illustrator, and Annick Press, publisher.
(*Big or Little*, Annick Press, Toronto, 1983)