

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILDREN'S CENTERS DBCC NEWS

DOWNTOWN BALTIMORE CHILD CARE, Inc.
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August, 2007

END OF YEAR BLUES *by Susan Sandstrom*

It is almost the end of the school year and all of the children (and parents, too) will experience a major transition. Our oldest children will be leaving DBCC and going on to kindergarten. This is a big change—new building, new schedule, new curriculum. Everything is new! Those children staying on with us will be moving to a new classroom. Even those children who are remaining in their current classroom for another year will go through a transition. It is a scary time full of unknowns—especially for parents who have a clear understanding that things will be different—but what about the children?

Because young children don't fully grasp what this change is all about (despite a parent's attempt to provide information) there are usually behavioral changes. Most children will not say, *I'm afraid* – instead, the child will suddenly have separation issues. Because young children do not have the right words for *Do I have anything to say about what happens to me?* – some children become demanding. Because young children get angry when they don't understand – *I don't want to make another adjustment* – some children will become aggres-

sive. Because young children worry about the change, *I don't understand what's going to happen* – some children become whiny and have nightmares. And, some children will become whiny, clingy, sleepless, aggressive, grouchy *and* demanding.

It is important to remember that all this change and all this new behavior is normal. It doesn't mean that your child is being traumatized (although it may feel that way). Change is something we all have to get used to and having lots of support from parents and teachers makes the change so much easier.

What follows are some suggestions for helping your child adjust to the upcoming changes for the fall.

- Try not to psych your child up too much about school. A low-keyed attitude pays off! A child with very high expectations has a long way to fall. Expect the newness of the situation to dampen the child's enthusiasm for a while—this is okay.
- Remember, if your child complains about his/her new classroom or new school try not to feel as if you have to fix something. Instead, be an active listener. *It is hard going to a new school. I know you're going to be okay. Doing new*



Nikoli, Saleigha & Lucie

(Cont'd on page 2)



Please consider designating DBCC to receive your contribution to the United Way of Central Maryland, the Maryland Charity Campaign or the Combined Charity Campaign (#3537)!

END OF YEAR BLUES *(Cont'd from page 1)*

things is hard. Soon you'll feel like you belong. Etc. etc.

- Try to be mindful of your facial expressions and body language. Without saying a word people transmit a whole lot of information. This is especially tricky because, of course, parents are worried and anxious about their child.

- Spend a little bit of time *before* the transition in your child's new classroom the last few weeks of school. Go in and visit in the morning or evening (if you have time) *but only for a few minutes*. You don't want to spend too much time. Leave before the child is ready to leave. If your child refuses to go into the new classroom, don't make a big deal out of it. Simply say, "I guess you're not ready," and drop it. Make sure the teachers know about the child's reticence and let them deal with it. Teachers will be bringing children into their new classroom too—allowing the child time to get used to the new environment.

- Children who are new to the center are welcome to drop by and visit during August. Please call first (once your contract has started there is never a need to call first before stopping by the center). Simply letting your child play on the playground for several short, fun visits or exploring the classroom will make a difference.

- DBCC parents are welcome to hang around the classroom once your child has started in his/her new classroom. It is a good idea to stay very low keyed. Find a spot and if possible stay in that one place. It'll act as a home base so your child may explore the classroom and return to be near you if necessary. Be careful though—if you stay too long it can make the separation that much harder. When the time has come to leave let your child know you are going to work and will be back soon and *then leave*. It is a very common problem at *every* child care center for parents to delay their departure. It is hard to leave your child but delaying your departure makes it harder on the child.

It won't be long and your child will drop all of the grouchiness, sleeplessness, tantrums and whininess and be charming once again. No denying it—doing new stuff is hard for everyone but with enough support your child will learn that the scariness goes away and in its place will be growing confidence!



Everyone a Changemaker

“[Y]oung people are the last large group of people in the world we treat the way we used to treat women, older people, people with disabilities, African Americans, and colonized peoples. We say to them, ‘We are in charge of everything -- the classroom, the workplace, extracurricular activities where they still exist, and sports -- and we don’t think you young people are very competent or responsible.’ This is bizarre because what young people are trying to do when they leave the world of play is to learn how to be powerful contributors, and have an impact on human society. For the most part, adults discourage these efforts. So by the time young people turn twenty or twenty-one, they have come to see themselves as powerless and they haven’t had the opportunity to practice teamwork or leadership. Nor have they practiced putting themselves in other people’s shoes. It is too late when people reach the ages of twenty-five or forty to expect them to become confident or ethical leaders.

“Thus, we perpetuate a world in which only 2 or 3 percent of the population are so-called ‘natural leaders’. What a difference it would make for this society if we went from 2 or 3 percent to 50 percent in the next generation. Educators can play a big role in building our leadership base by promoting in students the development of the whole person. Everyone should see him or herself as a changemaker. Once so empowered, a person can do anything -- and will be richly satisfied in life.

“...[I]t is incredibly difficult to redefine oneself as a confident, powerful person and leader without having previously experienced being powerful or having practiced the necessary underlying skills”.

Brayton. B. (2005, Spring). Everyone a Changemaker. Peer Review, 7, 3, Pp. 8-11.

5-YEAR CLUB

It is that time of year again . . . time to say goodbye to families who have been with DBCC for five or more years. We acknowledge these families because they have made a special long-term commitment to DBCC. We call it the 5-Year Club!

☆ **Cecilia and Aaron Meisner** enrolled their first son, **Gus**, when he was 4-months old. That was in 1996. He's now almost 11 years old! **Charlie** started in the infant room in the fall of 2003 and this fall he will be moving on to a new school. Both of the Meisner boys have been a delight! We will miss Charlie so much, as well as our visits from Gus. Charlie has been a regular Childspeak contributor and has made many a charming remark during center tours for perspective parents!

Cecilia has been a tireless member of the DBCC Board of Directors and a regular Class Parent. Her ideas and perspective are a tremendous asset to DBCC. Aaron has also been a wonderful resource for the center. Thank you both for your generous donations and your contributions of time and talent!

☆ **Diane Shaw and Andy Kane** started their son **Collin** in September 2000 at University Center. Brother **Ryland** started his DBCC career as an infant in 2003. Collin moved to Park Avenue for kindergarten, Ryland joined his brother as soon as he was old enough. Diane and Andy have been wonderful supporters of DBCC. Diane has taught dance to the children, Andy has called preschool square dances, dissected and cooked fish with the children and kept DBCC full of well-stocked aquariums. Diane and Andy have been faithful volunteers for whatever was needed and your family will be missed!

☆ **Eric Schott and Maggie De Cuevas** started their daughter, **Alida**, as a toddler in September 2001 at University Center. **Helen** was born the following year and started in the infant room in January 2003. Once Alida was old enough to attend DBCC's kindergarten the girls moved over to Park Avenue. Eric and Maggie have been wonderfully supportive DBCC parents. For a while, Eric was almost single-handedly responsible for keeping up the maintenance at University Center. Maggie is currently a DBCC Board member and part of the Executive Committee. Both Eric and Maggie have been very generous donors as well as active volunteers. We will miss you very much!

☆ **Rebecca and Mike Bainum** started their daughter **Julia** in September 2001. **Cora** came to the center in 2004. It has been delightful watching both girls grow up! Rebecca and Mike have both been involved and supportive parents, offering ideas for dealing with situations that were difficult and helping make DBCC a more open place for parents. Rebecca is a wonderful knitter, and made the staff beautiful neck scarves for the holidays. The office will also miss that annual peppermint bark supplied by the Bainum family each year.

☆ **Cathy Brennan and Kim Samele** brought their baby, **Liam**, to University Center's infant room in the fall of 2002 when Liam was 5-months old. Through the years we've watched Liam grow into a competent young man who is now ready for kindergarten! Cathy was a DBCC Board member and often a class parent. Cathy's mother makes the best cheese cakes and she regularly baked cheese cakes for the very appreciative staff. Thank you Cathy and Kim for all your support through the years.

☆ **Wendy and Andy Lane** started their son, **Zachary**, when he was a toddler in the fall of 2001. His brother, Jacob, started a couple of years later in the infant room. Both brothers went all the way through the center and each was known for their wonderful block buildings and construction paper costumes! Wendy often brought in stuff for the classrooms or a plant for the hallway and was very helpful through the years. Wendy and Andy attended DBCC's Spring Events and we are thankful for all of your support through the years.



We will miss all of you! Thank you for sending us your very lovable children. What fun it has been watching them grow! Please stay in touch with us. It's families like yours that have helped DBCC become such a special place!

IT'S A BOY! IT'S A GIRL!

 Kylie Taylor is a big sister! **Chad Thomas Taylor** was born on May 27, 2007 and weighed 7 lbs. 4 oz. Congratulations to Karen, Jim and Kylie!

 DBCC friend, Vida Journeay is a great grandmother (again)! **Willa Carol Stansbury** was born on July 13, 2007 and weighed 8 lbs. 8 oz. Congratulations to Aunt Vida, Grandma Tootie and Grandpa Rob, David and Joanna!

 Janusz is a big brother! **Tadzio Kumpuni** was born on July 29, 2007 and weighed 6 lbs. 7 oz. Congratulations to Marya, Medzio and Janusz!

 Teb is a big brother! **Adella Mary Snyder Brownlee** was born on August 2, 2007 and weighed 9 pounds. Congratulations to Rebecca, Monte and Teb.

 Merriwether is a big sister! **Harper Amelie King** was born on August 3, 2007 and weighed 8 lbs. 2 oz. Congratulations to Hilary, Byron and Merriwether.

CHILDSPEAK

ALUMNI NEWS

- **Jordan Van Doren**, age 4, said, "Real people never give up!"
- **Charlie Meisner**, age 4, had to go to the doctor to get stitches. The doctor promised him he'd get a special prize at the end of his ordeal. Charlie, now leery of the presents from doctors said, "I don't want another toothbrush."
- "Why are you so silly, Antrell?" asked the teacher. "Because I have a silly mind and I can't stop it," explained **Antrell Freeman**, age 5.
- **Natalie Shin**, age 2, was trying to go to the bathroom but there were several children milling about the area. "STOP," she said, "I need privacy!"
- **Jordan Van Doren**, age 4, wanted to talk about her weekend but no one was listening. "Well," she said, "No one is listening, I will shut my mouth."
- **Will Meier**, age 1, was running and fell into a bench. **Maggie Menard**, age 1, went up to the bench, wagged her finger and said, "You may not!"
- **Celeste Veasey-Cullors**, age 4, said, "My sister was so mad at Mother Nature." "Why?" asked the teacher. "Because it rained on the 4th of July fireworks!"
- The children were discussing instruments around the lunch table. **Jacob Lane**, age 4, announced, "I can play *Twinkle, Twinkle* on my drum!"
- **Jordan Van Doren**, age 4, told her teacher, "Tebby is ruining my whole life!" "Why?" asked the teacher. "Because he won't play with me!"
- "Why didn't you come to school yesterday?" asked the teacher. **Antrell Freeman**, age 5, replied, "Because I was knocked out!"
- The teacher was walking out of the door and called to the children, "Hasta mañana!" **Brionna White**, age 4, said, "Banana? I don't have a banana!"
- **Ethan Korman**, age 3, carefully explained to the teacher, "The microphone makes me think of music and when you hear the music you have to dance. Do you hear me?"
- **Eli Cole**, age 2, was looking out the window with his teacher watching Susan "weed-whack" the grass. Eli watched Susan who stopped and looked around. Eli said, "What is she doing?" The teacher nearby said, "I don't know. She looks confused." The following day Eli was standing near the spot where the teacher was weed-whacking. "Remember, this is where Susan was confused," he told his teacher.
- Jordan was trying very hard to cross the monkey bars and **Rachel Kessler-Weinstein**, age 3, told her, "Jordan, take a break. Your hands are tired."

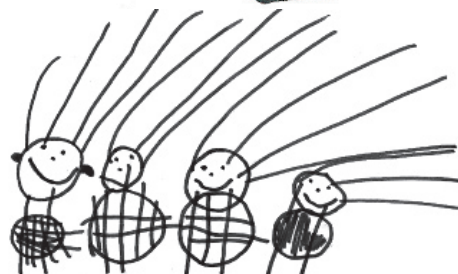


☆ **Courtney Peterson**, a favorite parent from years ago, called the center with encouraging words about the DBCC Newsletter. She also filled us in on her two lovely daughters. **Carrie** is now 26 years old (!) and **Lindsay** is 24 years old (!!). It seems impossible! Both women are legal assistants. **Lindsay** is a Peace Studies major and worked for *Save Darfur* for a year. Carrie and Lindsay, please stop by the center one day. We'd love to see you both—mom, too!

☆ **Shanika Williams** has graduated from City College High School! It is hard to believe because it seems like yesterday she was born. Yes, Park Avenue Director, Evelyn Owens is Shanika's mother and we've all watched Shanika grow up into a beautiful young woman! Shanika will attend Coppin State College in the fall and she plans to major in nursing. She will also be running women's cross country and possibly track. Shanika is an aspiring model and has been modeling since she was 15 at various fashion shows around Baltimore. Recently Shanika has become a trainer of models. She will be coordinating her first fashion show to be held in the Convention Center in December and she was recently accepted to be the face of a new clothing line coming out in the spring. Shanika is applying to be on *America's Next Top Model*!



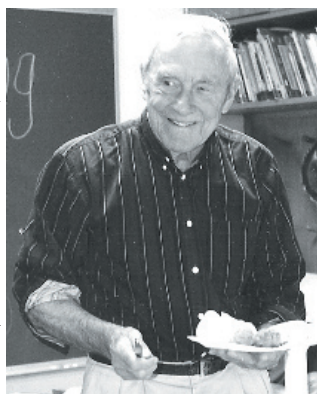
Ghosts and scared person
by Zola Littredy,
age 4



People with
long hair
by Elegia Lameson,
age 4

•••••M•I•L•E•S•T•O•N•E•S•••••

* DBCC sadly learned of the passing of our good friend, **Tom Johnson**. Tom was an important part of DBCC for many years. Tom lived next door to former Park Avenue teacher, Phyllis Cohen and she arranged for Tom to start volunteering in Room 2 at Park Avenue-Thank you, thank you, Phyllis! What a volunteer!



Tom came to volunteer in Room 2 every Tuesday for over a decade. Pouring rain, snow, hail-he showed up! One snowy day over half of the staff couldn't get in to work but Tom walked in the door, stamping the snow off his feet with a huge grin on his face. He wouldn't think of missing a Tuesday! He loved the children in Room 2 and every one of them knew that Tuesday was Tom's day! Tom was different from other volunteers. He would sit right on the floor with the children despite being quite elderly. He was actively involved in the classroom and he loved being surrounded by young children. He tied shoes, pulled up pants, wiped noses but he also listened to children and talked to children. He was always trying to engage them in conversations. He laughed off the curious comments from children, "You're old," or "Why is your face all wrinkled?" and delighted in their honesty. Children greeted him enthusiastically. When the children saw him they would run up at full speed and throw themselves into his arms. Sometimes I worried that he'd be knocked over by their exuberance! He loved it! Parents would ask, "Who is Tom? My child talks about him all the time!" Parents quickly fell in love with him, too.

Tom keyed into the special needs of some of the children. There was one child with whom he worked extra hard. This child was three-years-old and used curse words liberally. Tom worked diligently to get him to say, "suffering cats!" instead of his four letter invectives. He stayed by his side to model appropriate language and also gave the child lots of positive feedback. I never heard the child say, "suffering cats!" but the child's language did improve - thanks to Tom!

DBCC was very fortunate to have Tom with us every Tuesday. He was a great conversationalist and a wonderful resource for advice on center repairs, too. Those children who got to know Tom received a very special gift. He gave them his undivided attention, his kindness, his sense of humor, his gentleness and his love. Tom's presence enhanced DBCC and made a real difference in the lives of many, many children. He was an extraordinary man and we shall all miss him.

We are so pleased that Tom's daughter, Donna, was recently hired as a teacher at Park Avenue!

* Pioneering infant specialist and educator, **Magda Gerber**, died at home surrounded by her family on Friday, April 27, 2007. She retired in 1998 after a long career teaching her respectful approach to infant care and development to generations of parents and professionals in the infant/ family field. As a popular and charismatic speaker at early childhood education conferences, she was one of the first in the United States to focus attention on infants as competent self-initiators of their own development within the context of at least one secure and authentic relationship as a base. In addition to her direct teaching of parents of infants, her work had a profound influence on the growing infant development field in the United States, which became especially important as more and more mothers placed their infants in childcare as they entered or re-entered the work force.

In 1957, Magda Gerber and her family immigrated to the United States from their native Budapest, Hungary, where she had been mentored by innovative pediatrician, Dr. Emmi Pikler. Along with the essence of what she had learned about infants in Hungary, Magda contributed her own valuable insights into parenting and how to impart this important knowledge to parents and professionals in her adopted country. She applied her skills to normal as well as high-risk infants in several California infant programs in the 1960's and 70's.

Based in Los Angeles, Gerber founded Resources for Infant Educators in 1978 with Tom Forrest, M.D., and became its first director. RIE is a non-profit world-wide membership organization, dedicated to improving the care and education of infants through teaching, supporting, and mentoring parents and caregivers. Students from around the world still come to her modest, homey center in Silverlake to see the approach in action and to learn the theory from the active demonstrations thereof.

Gerber was known as an intuitive genius in relating to people. As a thoughtful parent and therapist, she knew how to relate empathetically to a concerned parent. Modeling what she wanted to teach, she demonstrated how to respect infants and parents as she waited, watched and affirmed each parent who acted in a way that was in tune with his or her baby's need for free exploration on the one hand, and a safe haven for rest and comfort on the other. Parents were reminded to "Do less; observe more; enjoy most."

Gerber was on the faculty of Pacific Oaks College for twenty years, and was an original member of the WestEd the advisory panel and faculty. Still widely read, Gerber edited *The RIE Manual for Parents and Professionals* and co-authored *Your Self-Confident Baby* by Allison Johnson.

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DBCC AT THE WORLD FORUM

Susan and Margo attended the World Forum on Early Childhood Education which is held every other year. This year it was in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It was a fascinating experience (despite the 22 hr. plane ride via Stockholm, Sweden) and we were able to network with early childhood people from all over the world. We discovered many of the problems in early childhood education are the same everywhere, such as public schools offering pre-k classes and creating enrollment issues in child care centers. We were able to tour two centers and by comparison, see the bounty of supplies that the DBCC children enjoy. One doctor from Baghdad talked about the 5 *million* orphans in Iraq because of the war—such a horrific statistic. Margo and Susan brought DBCC Newsletters to the conference and talked about DBCC every chance they had.



The Pinkee Stories

have continued this year!

The children are now writing their own Pinkee stories.

A Pinkee Story

Pinkee was walking and jumped into a rice pile. Pinkee found a building. He went in and found a bunch of pizzas. He ate the pizzas and his tummy got big. Then he went to his hole and ate some more pizza. The end.

By Jacob Lane, age 5

A Pinkee Story

Pinkee went far away out of town. He don't know how to get back home.

By Vivian Mariita Watson, age 5



Ask Aliceanna...

Aliceanna often hears from parents who have concerns about feeding their child. The following article appeared in the eNewsletter *ExchangeEveryDay* and is worth reprinting an excerpt. The original article is from *Gourmet* magazine (March 2007)

Teach Your Children Well by Ruth Reichl

Reichl was describing a New York City restaurant dedicated to children's foods, and commented; "the very notion drives me so crazy that I simply can't keep quiet." She goes on to observe . . .

"For starters, the notion that children are a separate species who require a different diet from the rest of us, pretty much does away with the concept of the family meal. The point of eating together, it seems to me, is not just that we all sit down around the same table but also that we share the food. The same food."

"Children study their parents—that is their primary job in life—and one of the things they absorb is the way grown-ups eat. 'Oh look, Mommy loves salad and Daddy thinks spaghetti a la Bolognese is swell,' is one lesson learned at the family table. The message is that these are delicious and desirable foods, and the obvious conclusion is, 'I'll probably like them, too.' But if little Suzy and Sam get applesauce instead of salad and naked pasta in place of meat sauce, the lesson is quite different. What we are really telling our children is 'You won't like what we are eating.'"

"And yet we know that what children like is mostly learned. Japanese children are not born thinking rice, fish, and seaweed is breakfast any more than American children are born with an innate preference for cereal. We tell them what they like, even if we don't say it in words . . .

"Sitting down to dinner, at any age, should be an invitation to the fabulous banquet that is life. The most important lesson we learn at the table is that great rewards await those who take chances. Do we really want to be telling our children, 'Just eat your nice chicken nuggets'? It would make so much more sense to say, 'Pull up a chair. Take a taste. Come join us. Life is so endlessly delicious.'"

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[Aliceanna loves to hear from you. You can email her at uc@dbcckids.org and put Aliceanna in the subject line.]

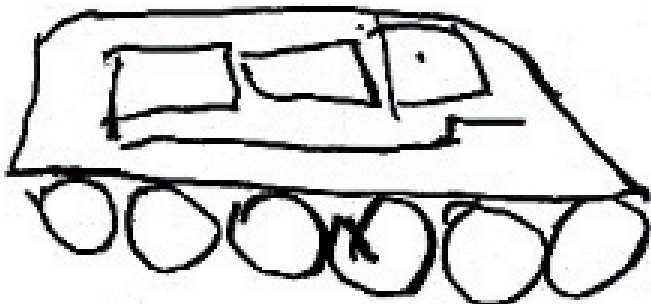


Where Are DBCC Children Going To Kindergarten?

Friends - 2
Bryn Mawr - 1
Patterson Park Charter School - 1
Baltimore County Public Schools - 2
Baltimore City Public Schools - 3
Roland Park Elementary School - 1
Cardinal Sheehan Elementary School - 1
The Green School - 1
New Song Christian School - 1
Fort Garrison Elementary School - 1
Riderwood Elementary School - 1
Midtown Academy - 1
Spanish Emersion School - 1
Hamden Hill Academy - 1
Kent Island Elementary School - 1
Howard County Public School - 1
Children moving out of state - 6



Jack Davis and Jacob Seese, both age 4



Train car by Harry Zimmer, age 4

DBCC'S FIRST PUBLISHED AUTHOR

Jane Kamau recently published a book on Kikuyu folk tales. Kikuyu is a language spoke by about 7 million people in Kenya. Jane is originally from Kenya and speaks Kikuyu. Each center has an autographed copy and Jane graciously included a translation in each. Congratulations Jane!



Dear Mommy

I miss you so much

And I want you to pick me up early

because I think I don't feel good

because my tummy is wiggling a lot.

And I think that you want to pick me up.

And I think you know that I love you, Mommy.

I had a rough day

Then I fixed the problem.

I noticed you're my best friend

And I love you so much.

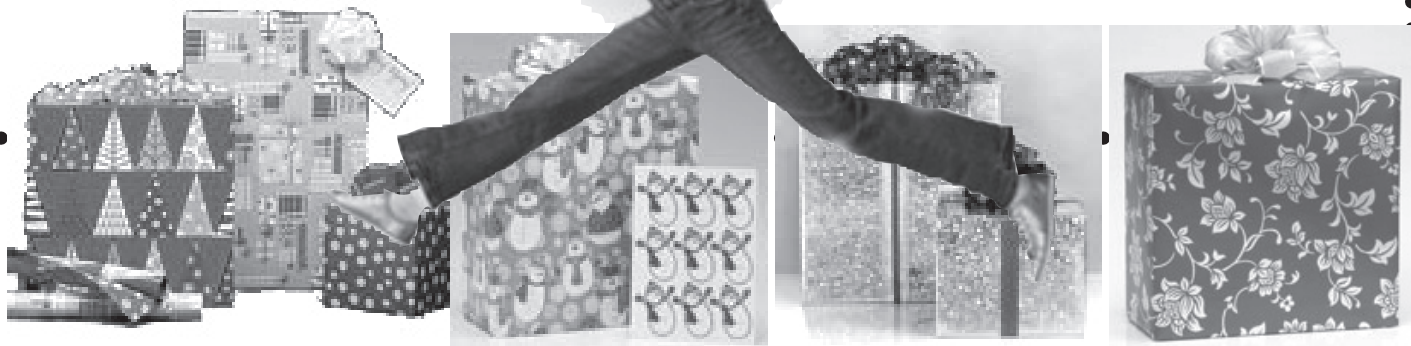
Love, Sydney

Sydney Paschall, age 5

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holidays, birthdays and
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DBCC's account number is 0451182.

Orders need to be placed no later
than Friday, October 5, 2007.
Delivery is expected on
October 25, 2007.



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*Childhood should be
a journey, not a race.*