

# CHILD REARING PATTERNS AMONG THE GREAT WHALE RIVER ESKIMO<sup>1</sup>

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The Great Whale River Eskimo who inhabit the southeast corner of Hudson Bay are the southernmost extension of Eskimo in North America (Honigmann, 1952). Subsisting partly through money earned by trapping, family allowances provided by the Canadian Government, and resources taken from the natural environment, (Honigmann, 1951) the population follows a pattern of seasonal mobility not unfamiliar in the sub-Arctic. The forty-two Inuit families spend summer in the trading post settlement which they share with Cree-speaking Indian families. In August the plain on which the settlement lies is cleared of tents as the Eskimo move to establish winter camps on the coast. From these camps seal and ptarmigan hunters operate in the succeeding months.

All the Eskimo are members of the Anglican Church. During the two summers when we were with them they rarely failed to attend services conducted in their own tongue by a white minister. All the men and some women are literate in Eskimo. They follow the church service from books printed in syllabic characters. In 1949 the Great Whale River Eskimo totaled about 190 persons, of whom 81 (41 boys and 40 girls) were below fifteen years old and constitute the principal sources of this paper.

## PREGNANCY AND PARTURITION

The Great Whale River Eskimo recognize two stages of pregnancy which they distinguish by separate terms. While attitudes change as a woman moves from the early to the later period, in general pregnancy is accompanied by little apparent concern over the coming child. We learned of no rigid dietary restrictions governing the pregnant woman, although she is advised to avoid flour and "too much" tea.<sup>2</sup> Meat, fish, and fowl are recommended. The woman's household routines alter little until about a month before she expects to deliver.<sup>3</sup> Then, fearing injury

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<sup>2</sup>Relatively little information came through interviewing. Much of the generalization is based on actual activity, observed and recorded as it occurred.

<sup>3</sup>Among the Nunivak Eskimo of Alaska there is also no elaboration of eating restrictions in pregnancy. The general pattern there of "easy practicality and lack of stringency and difficulty surrounding pregnancy" resembles what we found at Great Whale River (Lantis, 1946, p. 223).

to the child, she usually avoids very strenuous tasks like carrying heavy pails of water up the steep bank from the river. Yet in her eighth month one woman shoved off a large canoe loaded to the gunwales with people and belongings. The same woman in her ninth month, despite warnings, continued to carry heavy pails of water to her camp. In distinction to these departures from pattern, a newly married girl carrying her first child moved near the opposite extreme, limiting her activities to the simplest chores. Although people accept pregnancy casually, they do not readily speak about the condition. Even oldsters employ circumlocutions in discussing pregnancy and two young people, aged 17 and 23, showed the same intense embarrassment and reluctance regarding that subject as they did about sex.<sup>4</sup>

Word that labor has begun brings any number of married women to the parturient's dwelling. The husband also remains here, together with one or two elder men who are experienced assisting at difficult childbirths. The woman delivers while she kneels. Following is an account of a birth witnessed by one of the authors:

The parturient, Dinah, knelt on a dog skin facing the tent opening, which was kept open in the summer. In front of her stood a pile of pillows reaching to her chest. Between contractions Dinah rested her arms and head on this support. In front of the pillows a post stood firmly planted in the ground and with each birth pang she seized this stick and bore down. The parturient wore her usual dress with a blanket wrapped around her below the waist. This avoided any exposure of the naked body. Five or six women were seated on the bedding behind Dinah. Several others sat around the tent. The women kept leaving and returning in accordance with their families' demands. A number of their younger children were nearby in a neighbor's tent in charge of the older daughters while the men of the community were mostly all at work unloading a freighter which had arrived that morning.

When the groans came steadily and continuously the people closed the tent flap. A few minutes later the child and afterbirth were delivered onto the dog skin. One of the attending women behind Dinah immediately took the newborn girl and cut the cord about 4 inches from its body. After some discussion among the older women the cord was again tied with string and cut close to the abdomen with household shears. The infant was then wrapped and handed to its grandmother, near whom Dinah and her husband lived. The older woman rocked it gently. By this time visitors, including children and Indian women, crowded the tent. Nobody paid attention to the still kneeling woman but there was much interest in the baby. Finally some women prepared Dinah's bedding, setting down thick layers of quilting covered with a dog skin and topped with the blanket that had been wrapped around her during labor. The pillows were placed on the bed whose head was placed toward the entry, a position contrary from the usual makeup of beds.<sup>5</sup> Dinah moved onto the bedding where she remained kneeling until she received some clean cloths to set on her thighs. Then she lay down, her head raised high on many pillows. A shawl folded till it was about six inches wide was tightly bound around the mother's abdomen. Several sweaters were put on her while a thick blanket and feather quilt covered her from the waist down. Meanwhile the dog skin was wrapped up with

<sup>4</sup>Whenever ages are given they refer to the age of the individual at the time we observed the specific datum (that is, 1949 or 1950).

<sup>5</sup>The usual pattern in Eastern Greenland is sleeping with the head toward the entry (Thalbitzer, 1941, p. 620).

the afterbirth and set at the back of the tent. Later it was disposed of by being buried some distance from the dwelling.

Two children were brought forward to see the newborn infant—her only six year old brother and a three year old male paternal cross cousin. They looked at the baby and kissed her face. Some Indian women and children also kissed the infant's forehead, a rite several times repeated during the following days. Five days later the girl was taken to a nearby tent for a bedridden distant kinsman to see, being fetched by the latter's wife, Louise. He looked at the baby and softly kissed her cheek. His daughter, Sara, (two years: nine months) also kissed her after Louise had lifted the infant from the bed. Louise fixed a place for Sara to sit and let the child hold the baby.

The convalescent mother remains in bed for about five days or a week, always lying with her head to the tent door. For a second week she avoids heavy work, perhaps arranging for a young girl to live with her in order to assist in household chores. A woman with grown daughters is free to devote herself nearly exclusively to the care of younger children. Bilocal extended families insure that girls or women will always be available to relieve mothers of infants from household chores. During the first few days it is quite common for an older, usually related woman to care for the neonate.

#### EARLY CARE AND FEEDING

A tent housing an infant is kept warm and free from drafts. While being washed the baby remains wrapped in a blanket, only part of the body being exposed at a time. Clothing items are warmed before going on the infant. We observed one young baby being dressed first in two dresses and a sweater. Then its legs were held straight and bound with cloth to keep them extended, whereupon six or seven diaper cloths were wrapped around the infant's trunk. Finally the arms were partially straightened and the whole baby snugly swaddled in two blankets that pinned the arms in a still partially bent position. Three or four additional layers of blankets were then added. A cotton cap topped its head. The corner of one blanket covered the child's head and face. In summer the swaddled infant may be carried on the mother's back, supported by a shawl, and shrouded with a light flannel blanket. During travel in winter the baby rests in the capacious back of the woman's canvas parka facing the mother. Soft and finely shredded moss, which is burned after use, lines the innermost diaper cloth. Newborn babies spend most of the day in swaddling clothes but between four and six months the arms are usually released from the packing. Swaddling wholly ceases at about eight months.<sup>6</sup>

The baby always remains within reach of the mother or some responsible guardian. In the tent he spends much time in a hammock, his head on a pillow. The hammock, which people discontinue after about one year, is rocked to induce sleep, to lull the child back to sleep, or to distract it from fretting.

Outdoors a large shawl serves to carry the unswaddled child until he is about two and a half years old. The shawl, folded in a triangle,

<sup>6</sup>Swaddling apparently lasts only briefly among the Nunivak Eskimo (Lantis, 1946, p. 223) and is common among the northern forest Indians (Osgood, 1937, p. 161; Honigsmann, 1946, pp. 83, 136; 1949, p. 178).

is wrapped over the baby who faces the mother's back. It passes across the woman's shoulders, crosses in front, and the ends travel round to the back again under the arms. The ends are knotted under the child's bottom.<sup>7</sup> Sometimes girls twelve or thirteen years old pack youngsters to help a busy mother or one who is trying to wean her child. The guardian is not necessarily kin to her charge. A fretting child may also be shawl-packed inside the tent, being lulled to contentment by the mother pacing or rocking to and fro, perhaps singing as she moves. Resting on a moving person's back apparently becomes a source of comfort to a child.

Women sing variations of Scotch reels to children. Sometimes a mother will rhythmically repeat time after time a phrase containing the small one's name or its father's name.<sup>8</sup>

A baby who becomes irritable during a visit or in church is usually taken out of the shelter. We did not learn whether this gesture stems from consideration of the worshippers or of the child. At any rate, a crying child does disturb people.

Babies are kept quite clean. We found them fat, healthy looking, and free from diaper rash. One family transmitted scabies to other children but this was an atypically dirty unit. Eskimo individuals and households show a high degree of cleanliness by American middle class standards. The baby's clothes are completely changed in the morning. Frequently the first reaction to crying is to release the child from its swaddling and remove soiled diapers. At the same time he may also be sponged. If inside a tent he may be allowed to kick around uncovered for a longer or shorter period, sometimes covered loosely with a thin cloth. With increasing age the unswaddled periods become longer.

Parents select a Christian and Eskimo name soon after the baby's birth. These are usually names of a close maternal or paternal relative. Every person has both an Eskimo and a Christian name plus his patrilineally inherited family name. The first two are generally linked so that, for example, a boy will be called Willy Tukatuk after an older Willy Tukatuk. Either name may be used in address or reference but the family name is rarely so employed. The custom of naming after relatives, especially grandparents, is explained non-magically. People say it commemorates an oldster whose memory thus lives on.<sup>9</sup> Kinship terms are often extended to babies and children who are named after older relatives. Thus Winny's four year old daughter, Jean, is named after Winny's mother, Jean. Winny sometimes addresses little Jean with the term "mother". Both three year old Isaac and his mother's

<sup>7</sup>This pattern of baby carrying parallels one followed by the local Cree-speaking Indians and is common throughout the northern forest.

<sup>8</sup>Rocking and singing children to sleep with "petting songs" is reported from eastern Greenland. The concept, "petting song", well describes the chants we heard at Great Whale River (Thalbitzer, 1941, pp. 599-600).

<sup>9</sup>The Nunivak Eskimo of Alaska have the notion of honoring the person whose name is taken but accompanying this is an idea that a magical essence transfers from namesake to child. The same pattern probably existed aboriginally at Great Whale River (Lantis, 1946, p. 237).

brother, thirty year old Isaac, are similarly named. The maternal uncle's wife sometimes addressed little Isaac saying, "husband". An older person sometimes gives gifts to his young namesake. Baptism of an infant in church occurs two or three weeks after birth (longer if birth takes place on the coast) and is attended by a small group of relatives.

Until the mother begins to produce milk several women alternately wet nurse the infant. In addition the baby may receive powdered whole milk solution by bottle. Should no milk be available in camp, the neonate may receive only unboiled water and sugar or the stock remaining from boiled fish.

One informant claimed that only a woman with a male baby will nurse another's female infant. A girl, our informant said, does not suckle from a woman who has a daughter because to do so would cause the woman's breast flow to cease. Wet nursing is relied upon if a woman dies leaving a young baby.

Five out of ten mothers and one male informant declared themselves in favor of mother's milk for babies rather than commercial milk products. One woman admitted no opinion. Women who favor powdered milk are at the same time usually without the means to buy the product and thus can rarely indulge their preference. Mother's milk is fed almost exclusively during the first year of life. People perceive a relationship between milk flow and diet and believe that tea and meat promote abundant lactation. A starvation diet is known to inhibit the supply of milk.

The younger a child the more readily nursing follows on demand. Neonates receive the breast as soon as they cry but when the baby reaches five or six months attempts will be made to pacify him by means other than the breast. The diapers are changed or the child is patted, fondled, sung to, or has its head rubbed. Only when crying persists does nursing follow. With increasing age more diversified efforts are made to distract or soothe a fretful child. However, persistent evidence of discomfort always leads to a brief period of nursing.

Suckling sessions are always brief for an Eskimo nursling. Not even the neonate remains at the breast more than two or three minutes at a time. Fretting will lead quickly to another turn for young babies but if possible an older child is talked out of a second session. In other words, the Eskimo baby must nearly always put up a little struggle for the breast and eventually the mother always accedes. It is as though weaning for the Eskimo child started a few months after birth, when means other than suckling first come into use to soothe his crying. More elaborate efforts at distraction ensue if the child is really to be weaned—for example if the mother is pregnant. The youngster may then be taken for a walk, removed from the mother's presence by an older sibling, spoken to, offered a toy, or packed in a shawl and taken visiting. Sometimes an expectant mother tells the last born that her milk is all gone. If pregnancy does not interfere a woman may indecisively delay weaning over a long period. We saw Sara (one year: nine months) being elaborately distracted from the breast in 1949 and

her father said she was being weaned. When we returned the following year weaning had not yet been accomplished and she usually managed to get half a minute or so of the breast whenever she insisted.

Sara (two years; eight months) helped herself to her mother's breast. She tried to get more but her mother set her breast back into her dress. Sara reached for it again and continued to nurse. The mother got up as Sara clutched her skirt. Rhoda (seven years; eight months) tried to distract her with a ball but was unsuccessful. Sara tagged after her mother a while and then sat near her. The mother tried to protect Sara from mosquitoes with a kerchief, but Sara cried. Both mother and sister tried to distract her with a ball and then a match box but in the end the mother had to remove the kerchief and lie down to nurse her.

The age of weaning, therefore, varies considerably and depends primarily on the time of the mother's next pregnancy. Still, nursing very rarely lasts more than four years and is never discontinued prior to the age of one.

Breast feeding is relatively undemonstrative, being only lightly charged with emotion. In two cases that we observed, mothers scolded nursing children aged about two years who bit the nipple and shoved them from the breast.

Food to supplement milk begins to be taken at about nine months.<sup>10</sup> Fish, meat, and bannock (baking powder bread) are initially offered. By the time he is two, the child takes anything, including tea, although lifelong idiosyncrasies may already have made an appearance. Thus some children refuse tea and others milk just as there are women who can drink only cocoa or only coffee. Children usually eat readily, "even sealskin" as one woman puts it. In the same way that opportunities for nursing were earlier circumscribed so later possibilities to eat are limited. Prepared food left over from a meal remains under cover in the tent. A youngster may not freely help himself from these stores. Occasionally a mother seeks to appease a crying child with a piece of bannock. More likely all the prepared food will have been consumed at the last meal and nothing remains available for between-meals munching.<sup>11</sup>

A child to whom we dispensed food distributed it to friends if he pleased, but if his mother was present she regularly urged him to share the gift.<sup>12</sup> In nearly all cases boys removed their caps, and children sought to sit down, before they ate the tidbits we gave them.

<sup>10</sup>The Belcher Island Eskimo, who live sixty miles off the coast of Great Whale River, feed children from the age of 6 months with pre-chewed seal meat (Twomey and Herrick, 1942, p. 303).

<sup>11</sup>The Eskimo are also shy about eating in the presence of a non-eater and this reduced our opportunities to secure further data on eating. Young men in a hurry to visit fish nets crouched down and ate facing the tent wall, avoiding facing other people. Usually, however, meals are postponed until the visitor leaves.

<sup>12</sup>The value of food sharing is highly developed. The community recognizes that anybody without food has a claim on the resources of the others. Thus a group of young women on a berry picking expedition included the anthropologist who, in turn, forgot to bring her lunch. They evenly and carefully distributed the snacks which they had brought along in order to accommodate the latter.

### INDUCTION OF AFFECTIVITY

The household receives the new baby with fond adoration and pride. Mothers like to display young children and a cooing baby quickly becomes the focus of a group's delighted attention. We noticed no difference in behavior of this sort if the baby was male or female. Parents delight in playing with a youngster, nuzzling and cuddling him, grinning hugely all the time. Encouragement greets the child's originations. Alec (one year: six months) presented sticks to his mother and each time she received one she responded with a broad smile and a wholehearted, delighted "Thanks". When he gave her a messy object she again said "Thanks", following it with a less intense exclamation of disgust. We saw similar giving and receiving-with-pleasure sequences involving other children. Related to this is the profuse admiration extended to a toddler who displays some fresh item of clothing, like a dress. When white people who are visiting show attention to a child, a parent pushes the latter forward even though the youngster is reticent.<sup>13</sup>

Demonstrative affection and richly affect-laden interaction taper off as the youngster outgrows babyhood. At about the age of two its demands for parental attention wane, although even a three year old will receive abundant attention if he expresses the desire. However, by the latter age the child is generally learning more about his environment and gradually ceases to attract adult interest. His stimulus value in social relationships alters and he comes more and more to receive the routine responses reserved by adults for older children. The reader will note below that other aspects of the adult-child relationships also alter around the age of three, for example with respect to discipline.

### ACTIVITIES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD

A baby may handle and play with almost any household object that attracts him, although he will be protected from dangerous utensils and deprived of objects belonging to other families. Should the parent not want the child to have a particular thing she may plan a ruse to retrieve it without producing tears.<sup>14</sup> Usually this involves offering a substitute object to the youngster. A child old enough to understand

<sup>13</sup>Compare the pattern with the following: "The Belcher mother kisses her babies very often and shows them to strangers with great pride, the first of all her possessions. Although apparently equally loving to the sons and daughters she will often display the sons first, and then cheerfully follow with the traditional female introductions so reminiscent of the Oriental attitude: 'Yes, she is my girl here. It is too bad that she is not a boy'" (Twomey and Herrick, 1942, p. 304). On the Labrador coast "The baby is the pet of the entire family and receives the attention of all visitors . . ." (Hawkes, 1916, p. 112).

<sup>14</sup>From Fort Chimo in northern Ungava we learn that "Among young children at play the greatest harmony prevails. An accident resulting in sufficient harm to cause tears obtains the sympathy of all, who strive to appease the injured child by offers of the greatest share of game, the little fellow often smiling with the prospective pleasure while the tears yet course down his begrimed cheeks." (Turner, 1894, p. 191).



is urged again and again to release an objectionable article and receives explanations for the parent's request until he accedes. Rather typical is the following:

Robert (one year: seven months) was playing with a part from the gun his father, Johnny, was cleaning. When Johnny finished the job, he held out his hand, asking Robert for the needed part. Robert held on to it. Johnny explained to Robert where it belonged on the gun asking again to have it. Robert held tight. Grandma Jane joined in urging the child to relinquish the piece, with equal lack of success. Johnny smiled, shrugged and went on wiping his gun. Johnny and Jane again spoke to Robert asking for the piece. Robert continued to hold it. Johnny set the gun away and went about his business. Jane spoke to Robert saying apparently that he and she would go outdoors as soon as he gave his father the gun part. Robert held out the piece to Johnny, who took it. Grandma Jane put on Robert's parka hood, Robert fetched his mitts from the bed and off they went, Jane carrying the boy.

As the youngster grows older he is allowed to handle objects previously considered dangerous.

Babies and children to about seven and eight indulge voluptuously in mouth play. The suck fingers; chew on strands of hair, ribbons of caps, table edges, benches, toys or any convenient object; they stuff things into their mouths, and finger their lips. People of all ages chew spruce gum or confectioners chewing gum with juicy, smacking noises and manifest obvious relish. Some parents claim to oppose mouthing tendencies but in practice often ignore the habit. After a brief scolding for mouthing behavior the child is very apt to enjoy his finger or table edge without further criticism.

Rarely does one see an Eskimo baby crawl. At 13 months one child under observation started to walk and at 19 months another walked well. Mothers said that their children started walking between one and two years. When the child attempts to walk parents are ready with assistance and encouragement. Smiles and exclamations reward successful standing alone and walking. For her own pleasure and the delight of visitors the mother may urge a youngster to exhibit these accomplishments. The first tooth wins as enthusiastic a welcome among the Great Whale River Eskimo as in our own society.

### TOILET TRAINING

Toilet training proceeds gradually. Occasionally we saw babies aged six months to a year held over a pot to urinate and being encouraged to do so by a patient mother.<sup>15</sup> She praises if he obeys. One child who became restless while being encouraged to urinate in this way was permitted to nurse the while.

Accidents bring no censure, even if the mother becomes wet. Rather they are often laughed about and a wet bed is stoically accepted. When the child can walk, or at most when he is two, he wears training

<sup>15</sup>Use of a chamber-pot in this fashion is something we never observed among the northern forest Indians.



pants most of the time. These have a wide slit under the genital area.<sup>16</sup> Girls sometimes simply omit underpants under dresses when undergoing training. By about one and a half years a child begins to ask to be toileted and the mother hastens to respond, taking the youngster outside, waiting, and helping as he attends to his needs. Or else, the woman seeing the child soiling or about to soil in the dwelling will seize him with a cry of alarm and carry him outdoors to finish. Mothers are apparently sensitive to cues that signify the child's toilet needs.<sup>17</sup> People expect night and day training to be completed at about three years. They then stitch together the slit in the training pants leaving an opening for the penis in a lad's trousers. Persistent bed wetters receive rather intense scolding.

Youngsters just learning to toilet themselves may seek relief close to camp. When the mother visits the women's toilet site, a hollowed out sand dune at the edge of the settlement at Great Whale River, she takes a child-in-training with her. Girls learn to use this hill while boys follow men out on the moss to a point where the land dips and where they become inconspicuous as they squat to defecate. Men and boys do not go far afield simply to urinate. The process may be performed within sight of the tents, the individual simply turning aside from people's vision.<sup>18</sup> Attitudes toward elimination are revealed in the case of a seventeen year old girl who on a canoe trip with the authors in early July asked for the boat to stop. A married Eskimo youth shut down the outboard. She disembarked on an ice floe, faced away from the canoe with a brief smile, and, as she squatted, deftly pulled down her pants under her skirt to relieve herself without revealing any part of her naked body. The only indication of some unease about eliminative activities stems from laughter that is provoked by questions about the subject.

#### TRAINING FOR SKILL

Education constitutes an informal, leisurely process in which the child adopts the example set by elders. Abundant opportunity allows observation of such examples. The acts the child sees are those which,

<sup>16</sup>This is a familiar northern forest Indian dress item associated with early toilet habits and one which we have observed as far west as British Columbia (Honigsmann, 1949, p. 180). Among the Great Whale River Indians a large oval may be cut out of these at the pants, a pattern Osgood reports for the aboriginal Ingalik (Osgood, 1940, p. 280). Obviously, a slit that can be sewed together later is more economical than cutting a part out of the garment.

<sup>17</sup>This is reminiscent of remarks frequently made about the speed with which a woman will whisk a baby out of her parka when it is about to soil. Twomey and Herrick say: "For a mother, this is one of the important Belcher Island competitions with Nature. If other women are near, they rejoice with her when she 'makes it' . . . When she gets the mess upon her own back, how the women hoot at her . . ." (Twomey and Herrick, 1942, p. 303).

<sup>18</sup>The local Cree Indian males fall on their knees, legs apart, to urinate as long as they are living on the open, treeless barrenland.

depending on sex, he will duplicate upon maturity.<sup>19</sup> All through childhood and adolescence learning gradually accrues through doing. Around camp small children from about the age of five are requested to perform light and simple tasks. A youngster usually obeys such assignments. Should he be disinclined to obey, parents do not press him and the task will be assumed by an adult. Accomplishment brings vivid intensification of the earlier pattern of parent-child relations—the child wins applause or admiration and in one way or another learns to feel that he is clever. Of course, such praise becomes less and less manifest as the economic obligations of the youngster become more and more routine.

Another way of acquiring skills is through experimenting with the camp tools that constantly lie at the child's disposal. An eight year old boy amuses himself splitting wood with a long handled axe. A girl of the same age uses her mother's semilunar knife and sewing equipment to repair some item of clothing. Adults rarely explicitly instruct the child in skills other than reading and writing the Eskimo syllabic script.<sup>20</sup> The pattern of causal learning carries over into sport. During the keep-away game (Honigmann, 1952) which involves a certain amount of skill, five year olds wander around on the ball field trying to participate by snatching the ball when it rolls. The older players give them little notice. The risks of getting hurt are the child's. If he gets the ball he handles it as best he can, tossing it to an age mate or a favorite adult.

When a girl reaches fourteen her mother depends on her for the regular performance of camp chores like hauling water, gathering wood, collecting berries, and caring for younger children of weaning age. A girl of twelve may be commanded to help in small tasks even by unrelated adults whose home she is visiting. Nevertheless, a woman without daughters is seriously handicapped in that these responsibilities fall on her own shoulders. Girls, shortly before marriage in the late teens, like to go in groups to get wood and berries; the journey becomes a pleasant interlude. At night when their tasks are finished girls visit around the settlement or play ball with the boys.

At about eleven years a boy begins to try his hand at hunting, sealing, or fishing. On water he accompanies an older brother or his father, at first, perhaps, only to visit a fish net. Later, in groups of two or three, boys roam overland for rabbits, birds, or other small game. Their responsibility for food provision increases sharply as their skill improves and when they reach the early twenties, when they are ready

<sup>19</sup>Sociocultural change has increased in the past few years as more and more unfamiliar problems have come to confront the Eskimo. Essentially, however, they still have a homogeneous community (See Mead, 1949, pp. 20-22).

<sup>20</sup>We are dealing here with the familiar pattern of American Indian education wherein the child works out correct sequences in whole patterns through casual practice plus imitation (Cf., Honigmann, 1949, p. 185; Pettit, 1946, pp. 43-47).

to marry, responsibility comes to include supporting a wife.<sup>21</sup> Bilocal residence and large, cooperative winter encampments somewhat cushion the boy's shift to heading a family.

### TRAINING FOR SOCIAL RELATIONS

In contrast to the casual learning of skills, certain values are more self-consciously inculcated. Two of the strongest thematic values are nonaggression and sharing.

People fear lest aggression in adult life get out of hand, the person perhaps running amok or committing murder. They recall cases of such behavior from the past. Parents are resigned to, but not tolerant of, children fighting. Any aggression is deeply deplored. Parents, older siblings, or unrelated adults reprimand fighting and order it to cease. Parents as well as youngsters agree that physical aggression is the worst thing that a child can do. Yet a very young child's aggression toward parent or older sibling is laughingly tolerated before the recipient attempts to assuage the youngster or distract him from his hostility. By the age of ten or twelve the previous years of scolding for overt aggression show their effect and aggression comes to be channelized into acceptable forms, like intensely rough ball games or wrestling. Between eight and twelve aggression frequently becomes directed toward Indian children, bickering between the two groups often leading to an exchange of sticks and stones. Such enmity, although recurrent, is only surface deep. Inside half an hour the antagonists may again be playing together.

Strong emphasis supports the value of sharing unequally distributed resources. If a child brings home a bag of candy the mother sees to it that each other child present receives one. Other lessons in sharing are given when the child is sent to beg a neighbor for tea, when gifts of meat or fish are sent out of the family, or when resentment is expressed against a neighbor who is niggardly. Children do not readily assimilate the lesson of sharing. Up to seven years some youngsters reveal a marked inclination to hold on to possessions. Play frequently illustrates the tendency, as when a child dashed to be first to use our swing and then refused to surrender it to another, even though he had tired of the activity. Frequently controversy over the swing was resolved by two youngsters simultaneously sharing it. Equally often they fought for possession. Despite the great emphasis put on sharing a child learns that his personal possessions should be respected. A toy may not be appropriated by another child or adult, although we once saw a twenty year old youth remove our playing cards from some youngsters. Little girls emulate adolescent sisters in keeping a treasure box, a carton for storing small trinkets, Christmas cards, photographs, bits of wool or

<sup>21</sup>Our data suggests that at Great Whale River the disparity of ages between married partners has been somewhat reduced from aboriginal figures. On Nunivak Island and in Alaska many girls marry when they are 13, which is also the case on the Labrador coast (Marshall, 1933, pp. 258-259; Lantis, 1946, p. 233; Hawkes, 1916, p. 114; Turner, 1894, p. 188).

cloth, thread, and ribbons. Much pleasure comes from examining, arranging, and exhibiting these items in which the girl seems to invest a considerable part of her ego.

Money earned by a youngster is his to do with as he pleases, regardless of family needs. On one occasion a mother urged her seven year old daughter to negotiate independently the sale of a cupful of berries that the child had picked. Our houseworker, a seventeen year old girl, spent her wages on relatively luxurious items although her father repeatedly complained that the family needed food.

Other deliberate instruction involves the handshake and smile. Training in these gestures begins in babyhood and relies on example, exercise, and encouragement. A person arriving in the community after an absence greater than two or three days shakes the hand of everybody he encounters, even the baby in a mother's shawl. When a departing family comes to call parents push children forward to make a similar gesture of friendship. "Friend" is the appropriate word to utter when right hands are clasped. People say, "Let us (make) friend(ship)." The smile stands for an appropriate response to any show of interest or friendship. Usually it is broad, genial, and toothy. The Eskimo mother may order her baby to smile while she faces him delightedly. We even saw a woman force up the corners of her one and a half year old son's mouth into a near smile when we picked up and returned a toy he had dropped. At two and a half the lesson of smiling remains still unlearned. The youngster's face tends to reveal whatever emotion he feels. A three year old manages a weak half-smile but indicates distinctly that he would rather scowl or hide his face from the stranger. At five, an easy, warm smile comes as a ready response in social situations. The charming, full-blown Eskimo smile struck us as indicative of a warm, approachable, and spontaneous personality.

Laughter is not explicitly taught but everybody acquires the pattern. Laughter serves to release any strong emotion—embarrassment, frustration, anger, distress, amusement, or pleasure.

#### DEPENDENCE-INDEPENDENCE TRAINING

The preceding patterns of early socialization assume that the child will soon develop the capacity for youthful independence. Emotional independence from parents generally proceeds at the child's own pace. Weaning gives an initial push to this development, as when the child is occasionally sent outside the tent with a father, aunt, or sibling to distract it from clamoring for the breast. Between one and a half and two and a half years the child may also wander around outside the tent, always under the mother's watchful eye. Roaming too far afield is checked by the concerned parent. Toddlers of three, however, roam freely in the Eskimo community, visiting other tents or trailing a group of older children whose activities they attempt to emulate. The mother still knows the approximate whereabouts of the youngster and may send cap or overalls for it if the wind shifts to the north. Should the toddler be accompanied by an older guardian, the latter will stand

patiently by, permitting the youngster much free rein. By five the mother no longer concerns herself with the whereabouts of the child during the day. Boys and girls wander around alone or in a gang, returning for food, and being rounded up at bedtime. At night they frequently have to be hauled home from the adult ball game. Bedtime varies according to the time of sunset; it comes very late in June and July. Pre-adolescents by themselves wander little in the Indian community, which is located only a few hundred yards from the Eskimo tents. Occasionally they visit there with parents or older siblings. Around the age of ten in summer a child may be gone most of the day, to the coast or up in the hills, without having advised parents of his whereabouts. But children must still be home before the family retires. From the age of fifteen, girls remain closer to camp during the day, their economic responsibilities are increasing. At night they go for strolls in groups but parents are mindful of even a seventeen or eighteen year old girl's whereabouts when it is dark and so opportunities for sexual relations are rare.<sup>22</sup>

#### DISCIPLINE

Early childhood reveals a pattern of discipline that is closer to permissive than restrictive (Du Bois, 1949, p. 196). Certainly it is far less restrictive than child rearing procedures among middle class Americans.

Babies and children below three are generously accommodated, perhaps with the aid of a little fretting or in response to a cry of demand. What restrictions are used at this early age readily yield to the child's counter pressures. Discipline now, as already indicated, consists often of appeasing, distracting the child, and suggesting alternative activities. The mother patiently reiterates her request, say for the youngster to stop playing with the swing and to follow her. She waits tirelessly while the child finishes his play or else she goes off alone. A tentative tug to follow may meet with so much outraged, childish protest that she drops compulsion, allowing the youngster to play until surfeited. Time after time Louisa called and led Sara (one year: eight months) into the tent. Sara's older sister, Mary (16 years), helped. Repeatedly Sara wandered outside again. By calling her back Louisa succeeded in keeping the little girl around the tent but not inside it.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>Illegitimacy in the Eskimo community appears to be higher than among the neighboring Indians. Three Eskimo are **known** to be illegitimate, two adolescents and a three year old girl. One of these had a white and another an Indian genitor. Only one known case of illegitimacy could be discovered for the Cree and that was not a case of miscegenation. Very little was learned regarding premarital sexual behavior except that intimacy prior to marriage is probably not an Eskimo pattern.

<sup>23</sup>This resembles the pattern among the Labrador Eskimo where the child "is treated with great respect by his parents, and his smallest wishes gratified." The Eskimo child "is never punished and never seen to disobey" (Hawkes, 1916, pp. 112, 114). Among the Fort Chimo Eskimo the same pattern of mild discipline exists, the reporter saying, "I have never seen a disrespectful Eskimo child" (Turner, 1894, p. 191).

A little later in the child's life scolding becomes more important as a technique of punishment and, although used generously, its discussion should not be understood as painting a picture of the predominant atmosphere of those years. The language contains many words like "stop it!", "it is extremely horrid", and "caution!" These are shouted and shrieked by women at errant children. Parents claimed that they spanked children and sometimes even hit them with sticks but only very rarely did we note a moderate slap on the buttocks or a more vigorous pull at a child's arm. Children, once they are about five years old, readily comply with demands. However, we have seen children of this age get away with disapproved behavior simply by waiting until the parent lost interest in their activity and then taking the behavior up again without molestation. Or else, a child may persist in his behavior till the mother is tired of scolding, and, perhaps with a laugh, turns her attention elsewhere.

In certain circumstances the mother or guardian does insist on obedience without delay. For example, to snatch another child's toy is not tolerated, the toy must be returned and efforts are made to appease the frustrated youngster. Parents do not want to miss church attendance in the evening. Hence, if a child is too young to leave unattended the mother will force him to interrupt his play when the church bell rings. Respect for household food, nonaggression, bedtime, and appointments with the white nurse or doctor are also frequently insisted upon. At no stage is discipline employed to maintain separation of boys and girls. Toward puberty, however, girls probably receive some warnings with respect to sexual relations.

Restrictive discipline is most frequently and effectively executed by the parent, older sibling, and aunts. The mother has more to do with the child in this respect than the father, a pattern confirmed both through observation and by an informant. People outside the nuclear family, including kin, reprimand misbehavior by scolding but are frequently unsuccessful.

#### RELATIONS OF THE CHILD WITH PARENTS AND SIBLINGS

A mother tries to synchronize her recreative interests, like ball playing, with her child's needs. She takes the youngster visiting, he accompanies her to church as well as to dances, and she makes attempts to catch the ball in the keep-away game with a baby on her back. Should a child strongly protest any of these activities she usually accedes to his demands.

A father has fewer contacts with children. Often a child walks with its father and the men, like the aunts or older sisters, serve to distract the youngsters during the long weaning process. The mother, however, continues to be a primary source of security throughout childhood.

Parent and child appear to close to one another that an offense committed against a youngster strikes the former as a personal affront. In a distribution of candy by the missionary a small boy was overlooked. The mother acted very annoyed until appeased by a gift of cookies to

the child. If one child is praised and another stands nearby, the mother of the second may call attention to her youngster.<sup>24</sup> Great pride accrues to a mother who hears her offspring flattered. We have a little evidence indicating that parental responsibility is equally keen for youthful misbehavior. One father showed distress when his twelve year old son committed a series of petty thefts. The father, with the advice of the Anglican-missionary, decided to send the youth to the mission boarding school. This was one of two cases of stealing discovered during our two summers' field work.

Where the lap baby's and knee baby's needs conflict the former, the infant wins out. Yet care is taken to appease the knee baby, in whom jealousy is feared, by catering to its demands. He is not totally shunted aside in the delight over the new arrival. Terminologically a distinction is sometimes recognized between the infant, the toddler-with-a-sibling, and the five or six year old sexually still undifferentiated. Sexual distinction becomes important only with or shortly after puberty.

Older children in the family usually defer to the demands of babies with apparent good nature. Children play with infant siblings but always under the watchful eye of the mother. Sometimes, directly or indirectly, hostility breaks out, particularly if the older child is below six or seven. As soon as play takes an aggressive turn the mother, crying out with reproof, moves to protect the baby. Often enough what starts off as petting ends up with the older child striking the younger. So, for example, George (five years) would start patting his brother, Joe (five months), on the hand. Then he would give the baby's hand a vigorous squeeze. Or Mina (three years), playing near Joe, managed to throw her head back so that she hit the baby's head with her own. Isaac (three years: six months) liked to swing his infant brother, Ernest (eight months), in the hammock. He would start off gently and then become more and more violent until the baby became terrified. Briefly but sharply Isaac's mother reprimanded him. Sometimes he persisted and then his mother removed either the infant or Isaac from the situation. On one occasion, when Isaac was bothering Ernest, the mother set the baby into Isaac's lap. This pacified the older child and ended the aggression. In the family a child five years old or more tends to treat the new family member with pride, affection, and protection. We observed rare instances, however, where boys eight and twelve years old teased unrelated youngsters of three to the point of tears. Older children receive physical aggression from babies without retaliating and often with a grin, much the way parents accept a child's violence. Deference and indulgence by the older siblings declines as youngsters mature and a more symmetrical note enters their relations to each other.

Siblings of both sexes often operate in the same play group, the

<sup>24</sup>Flaherty reports that on Baffin Island he aroused a mother's hostility by unwittingly showing preference for a "rival's" baby (Flaherty, 1924, p. 123).



age range of such groups being also quite wide. We observed children from three to ten years hanging around together. Activities in a rambling troop of children include ready squabbling and fighting (in which case an older member may remonstrate by shouting, "it is extremely horrid"), abundant cooperative activity, and the comforting of someone in distress.

### THE ILLEGITIMATE AND ORPHAN CHILD

An illegitimate youngster suffers by comparison to his natural peers. Our records indicate that as the illegitimate baby grows up the family in which he is placed and other members of the community treat him with less than normal respect and love. Yet we observed an adolescent girl, conceived through a white man, who was particularly stable, cheerful and capable and respected by her peers. She evidenced qualities of poise and leadership. In another case a youth, nineteen, lived with his father and father's wife. He was morose, seemed ill adjusted, and made an ungainly appearance. Even before his father's illness he was kept busy doing many of the camp chores. Just before leaving the field one of us satisfactorily used him as a language informant, an experience that indicated a quality of alertness underlying his unengaging exterior.

A child without parents or whose widowed mother cannot support him may be adopted into another, usually related, family and addressed by son or daughter terms. The foster family receives an allowance from the government to help support the child. We heard of a father who remarried after his wife's death and wanted his daughter to be returned by the family that had adopted her. The girl's mother's sister and her husband, however, refused to release the girl so that the matter had to be referred to the district policeman. Our evidence suggests that although orphans and part-orphans are ideally regarded as children, they often become burdened with work sometimes so that an older daughter of the household is freed from chores.<sup>25</sup> A child with both parents living may also be "adopted" or reared by another family. For example, Nelly (14 years) lived in her father's sister's tent where her services were needed. The two families regularly wintered together. An "adopted" child of this sort joins another family primarily as a helper.

### ILLNESS

In the event of a child's acute illness the Eskimo family calls on the wife of the manager of the Hudson's Bay Company. She has medication furnished by the government as well as books of advice and can secure further instruction or a diagnosis from the government physician by wireless. The doctor holds a clinic when he visits Great Whale River two or three times a year. Then he also gives various inoculations.

Eskimo parents often tolerate chronic, mild illness. Should the

<sup>25</sup>Orphans act as servants in Eastern Greenland, are looked down upon, and often suffer hardship (Thalbitzer, 1941, p. 637).

manager's wife learn of such cases she will recommend treatment. Her medicines are always accepted by a parent but the will of the child may influence the mother's decision to seek aid or continue treatment. In general people accept and are resigned to illness. There are few theories, magical or empirical, to explain it. Much disease "just comes". People say—"It is that which springs from itself".

The sick child is put to bed and comforted or petted by adults in the camp. Such attention does not wane during chronic illness. We saw one utterly helpless, incurable three year old girl lovingly care for, carried about, and comforted by her mother. Isolation is not attempted even though urged by the manager's wife. A few home remedies are employed by the Eskimo. Seal oil is rubbed on painful parts or a lemming skin used to draw pus from an infection. Lancing with unsterilized razor blades commonly relieves boils, the same instrument also having been used in recent times to facilitate a difficult birth.

Resignation also appeared in response to one youngster's death. The child had been ailing. His death produced an initial burst of tears but the following day, at the funeral conducted by the missionary, the mother showed great composure. Four days later she went about her work smilingly.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>26</sup>At Fort Chimo "The dying person resigns himself to fate with great calmness. During illness, even though it be of most painful character, complaint is seldom heard . . . The friends often exhibit an excessive amount of grief, but only in exceptional instances is much weeping indulged in" (Turner, 1894, p. 192).

TABLE I  
SYNCHRONIZATION OF SOCIALIZATION PHENOMENA  
GREAT WHALE RIVER ESKIMO

Age	Nurturance Behavior	Exploratory Behavior	Discipline and Training
3 Mos.	This is a period when rich affection is lavished on the swaddled child.	Arms freed from swaddling. The period of complete bodily freedom gradually increases in length.	
5-6 Mos.	Attempts begin to pacify the infant by means other than nursing at the breast. The baby begins to be packed on the mother's back in a shawl.	Swaddling discontinued.	Child urged to urinate into pot but no real insistence on toilet training.
9 Mos.	Solids begin to supplement liquid diet. Great approval and admiration for accomplishments.	Mouth play is evident and continues richly. Standing alone.	Substitutory gratifications in lieu of forbidden and dangerous objects are much used. Toilet training in mother's company.
1:0 Yr.	Rocking in hammock discontinued.		Training in smiling commences.
1:6 Yrs.	More serious attempts at weaning begin. Distraction heavily used to dissuade child from the breast.	Wandering outside the tent allowed but under watchful eye of mother or guardian.	
2:0 Yrs.	Parental affection tapers off. Lap baby expected to defer to younger sibling but there is much concern for the feelings of the former.		
2:6 Yrs.	Shawl packing discontinued.		
3:0 Yrs.		Child wanders afield from camp but mother knows where he is.	Toilet training supposed to be completed. The ability to smile conventionally instituted. Scolding becomes more important as a technique of discipline.
4:0 Yrs.	Weaning completed.		
4:6 Yrs.			
5:0 Yrs.	Mother gives affection if sought.	Range of going afield increases and mother not concerned. Gang activity involving both sexes begins and lasts till about 10:0 years.	Ability to smile warmly takes hold. Light tasks requested of child with admiration for compliance and no punishment for disobedience. Child usually obedient and docile.

TABLE I (Continued)  
SYNCHONIZATION OF SOCIALIZATION PHENOMENA  
GREAT WHALE RIVER ESKIMO

Age	Nurturance Behavior	Exploratory Behavior	Discipline and Training
7:0 Yrs.			Lessons on sharing, begun early, start to take hold. Controls on aggression only starting to take hold.
7:6 Yrs.	Mouth.	Mouth play ceases.	
8:0 Yrs.		Considerable aggression released against Indian children.	
10:0 Yrs.		Boy goes far afield and may be gone most of the day. Boys begin to hunt in groups or with fathers and elder siblings.	Aggression comes to be successfully controlled. End of playing in gangs of mixed sex.
11:0 Yrs.			Economic duties of girl increase and in two years will take up most of her time.

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