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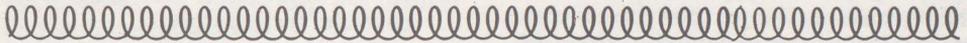
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(To Celebrate the Year of the Child) THE SUN CATCHERS

The sun catcher is pleasing to the eye as it swings in the sunlight and radiates myriad patterns in different shapes and sizes and in rainbow colors.

Children are like sun catchers. They make the world come alive. Where it is dull, they bring excitement; where it is dark, they bring light; where there is discouragement, they bring hope. Look for their many facets of light and feel joy in your heart.

Notice their rosy cheeks, smooth skins, freckles, upturned noses, big and tiny ears; blue, gray, brown or hazel eyes; blond, black, brown, red, or amber hair; and infectious grins and little pouts.

Watch them as they search for knowledge. They pick up a stone and examine it; they study birds as they pull worms from the ground or feed their young; they stare at the big crane as it lifts and moves a hunk of steel; and they observe and model mother and father at their daily tasks. Listen to their questions: Where did I come from? What makes the clouds stay up in the sky? If I dig this hole deep enough will I get to China? Can I go to Mars?

Notice their resilience to pain, sorrow, neglect, cross words, or punishment. They are able to turn their other sides, recover and go on; just as the sun catcher turns for another ray of light.

Look into their upturned faces and see their looks of love and trust. They are confident someone will catch them when they jump into outstretched arms. They feel safe and secure as they travel by car, plane, or train. They know someone will protect them from thunderstorms, snakes, and strangers.

Note what joy they have for simple pleasures: a stick of gum, a ball game with dad, a new pair of socks, a wave of the hand.

See them jump, hop, skip, and climb as they learn to use their bodies and express their joy at being alive.

Take the sun catcher away from the window, and the sparkle and colors are gone from the room. Take children out of the world and life would not seem worth living.

M. Edna Townsend, June 1979