

The Hendrick System

Generations Fete the 'Super Nanny'

By LYNN SMITH, *Times Staff Writer*

Order is heaven's first law

—Gladys Hendrick quoting Alexander Pope

They call her the general. The commander. The sergeant.

But the mothers who've hired veteran nanny Gladys Hendrick spoke with affection, admiration and gratitude last weekend in Newport Beach as they honored the 87-year-old great-grandmother who retired only this year after spending 34 years training 825 newborns and their parents to her way of thinking.

There were even tears as some of the 92 women—who had traveled from as far away as Idaho and Oregon to attend the luncheon—lined up to give testimonial after testimonial to Hendrick and the strict "Hendrick system."

Since starting her career in 1948, Hendrick, of Covina, has cared for babies in 65 cities nationwide. Among the so-called "Gladys babies" were those belonging to Mr. and Mrs. H.R. Haldeman, Mr. and Mrs. Pat Haden and Mr. and Mrs. Tad Devine.

In a time when new parents can find 10 conflicting philoso-

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phies in as many baby books, and when even Dr. Spock waffles Hendrick in her 34-year career hasn't changed one minute of her routine.

Based on order and discipline, she says, her system is a human version of the Woodhouse way of training dogs—which would make it controversial were it better known. The system is not for those who believe, for example, a crying baby should always be picked up.

"In 34 years, I've never tried to quiet a fussy baby," boasted the slender, auburn-haired Hendrick. "You must start with a well-fed baby, but after that if they're squalling that's their problem."

Overfeeding Crying Babies

Colic, she believes, results from anxious mothers overfeeding their crying babies and giving them stomach aches. Most authorities, she said, can't explain why a well-fed dry newborn continues to cry.

But crying can create an unnervingly tense atmosphere the first few weeks after coming home from the hospital, said some parents Saturday. They agreed that they would have reached the end of their rope without Hendrick and her schedule.

"She moves in and puts the parents on a schedule," said Dee Dee Colombatto, a Palos Verdes psychologist and mother of four, including two "Gladys babies." "Parenting them becomes a joy rather than a mish-mash."

"Without her, I never could have had five babies in five years," said Claudia Humphries. Some of her friends who watched others' marriages fall apart because a new baby "controlled the home" hesitated to have children until they witnessed the organization of her home, Humphries said.

"I wouldn't think of having a baby without Mrs. Hendrick," said Mary Margaret Curran, apparently summing up the feelings of all.

Hendrick's Schedule

The schedule, published in Hendrick's book, "My First 300 Babies," looks like this:

6-6:30 a.m.—Diaper change, bottle or nursing, back on tummy in bassinet. Sleep not later than 9 a.m.

9 a.m.—Waken, change. Turn on back, out of bassinet. Put any safe place for wake-time.

9:45 a.m.—Sing-time. Time to be rocked and sung to. Five-ten minutes.

10-10:30 a.m.—Bath and feeding.

11 a.m.—Down on tummy in bassinet for mid-morning nap.

2:30 p.m.—Waken baby if necessary. Change. Bottle or nursing. Out of bassinet, on back (after 20 minutes on side) on bed or in crib for wake-time. If he falls asleep, waken by 4:30 and keep him awake until bedtime. If he stays awake and starts fussing, at 4 p.m., turn him on tummy for a short nap to be awakened *not later than 4:30 p.m.*

4:45 p.m.—Sing-time. About 10 minutes.

5-5:30 p.m. Undress, lotion rub, dress for bed, bottle or nursing.

6 p.m. Down on tummy in bassinet.

9:30-10 p.m. (or sometime before the family...)

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call her as soon as my pregnancy is confirmed," she said. Otherwise, Hendrick, whose fame has spread through word of mouth, might already be booked.

Jo Haldeman of Los Angeles, wife of former White House aide H. R. Haldeman, said that after hiring Hendrick to help with her third child, she almost called her before telling her own family she was pregnant with the fourth.

Fathers, too, love the schedule because the mother isn't a slave to the baby, said Jan Steele of Palo Alto. "It puts children in perspective," echoed Bob Colombatto, a father who "crashed" the women-only event.

Some out-of-state parents, such as Janet Foster of Portland, Ore., paid for Hendrick's air fare to their home because "there's no one like Gladys." Foster said her husband-gynecologist recommends Hendrick's book to expectant mothers. But most agreed that the book's words seem cold without Hendrick's warmth and personal philosophy.

The basic Hendrick tenet: "It's not what the baby does, but how you handle it."

New parents, says Hendrick, have two options. "The infant—who has been cradled in the mother for nine months with no anxieties—can tell you what to do. Or you tell the infant."

Not all babies adjust to her training immediately. "Some square pegs take a little longer, but I keep at it," she said.

Child's Needs

Dr. Victor Ince, a San Clemente pediatrician, said he agreed with part of the Hendrick philosophy. "Under no circumstances should a child control the home," he said. "But a child's needs should be taken into account."

A rigid schedule, he said, can tend to form a rigid personality. Moreover, there is strong evidence that depriving a child of touching and holding in the early weeks can be very harmful, he added.

(The Colombattos and Jo Haldeman, all of whom raised children now in their 20s and 30s both with and without the system, say they see no difference in personalities.)

Because societies, ethnic groups and subcultures differ so widely, there are no absolutes in child rearing, said Ince. "Anything is OK, as long as you do it with love." The Hendrick system, he said, really deals with therapy for the parents. "If the family is going to be comfortable with this way and no other, it's the only way to go."

Some parents were not really ready for the schedule, and because she "couldn't give in one inch," Hendrick said, she walked out in a handful of cases.

The mothers joked about Hendrick's stern mein. Pat McLaughlin remarked that when Hendrick came to stay, the family dog was no longer allowed in his two favorite rooms: the kitchen and the bedroom. When Hendrick paid a return visit, the dog upon hearing her voice, "put his tail between his legs, and we didn't see him for the rest of the day."

Privately, one mother said she found Hendrick much more flexible than her book. Most mothers, she said, modified the system to fit their personal life styles.

But publicly, they reminisced about the traits that have made her "an institution" and "one of a kind." The way she calls her employers only "Mother" and "Father." Her predilection for buttermilk, potato chip sandwiches and the soap opera "As the World Turns." The tattered black notebook with the name and identifying number of every one of her babies.

Some women became emotional as they described her devotion. Betty Raine, Jo Haldeman's sister-in-law, recalled a telephone call from Hendrick the day she was to arrive. "Don't worry," she told her. "I'm still coming. I just broke my arm yesterday, so we'll have to do things a little differently."

Some said having Hendrick was better than having their own mothers—either because their mother didn't want to or because they were afraid of conflicts.

Surprisingly, none of Hendrick's own children was raised by the Hendrick system. She decided to become a nanny in 1948, four years after her husband died, with her own three children already grown and away from home.

"This sense of order just came to me," she explained. "After five years, I realized I had something special. The babies were responding so beautifully, I knew (the system) was founded on principle," said Hendrick, a student of Christian Science.

In 1964, she published her own book—which includes recipes—and through several reprints, sold about 10,000 copies. Since a Santa Ana publisher, Vision House Publishers, acquired the copyright, a total 25,000 copies at \$4.95 have been sold worldwide, Hendrick estimated.

With a small income from a family ranch near Azusa, she said she never worked solely for money. When she retired this year, she was charging only \$30 a day, less than a third of the cost of a registered, private nurse.

With her retirement, the era of the "Gladys babies" comes to a close. There is a protege, a woman in her 60s. Hendrick describes as "a dear person who believes in

me." But, it's never the same. "You can't be strict about something you haven't proven yourself."

In order that the system will live on, Hendrick has recorded tapes of an edited version of her book and through an assistant, Janna Windsor, a mother of three "Gladys babies," is developing classes for new and expectant parents. The first class will be held Friday in San Gabriel. The cost is \$15 per couple. More information may be obtained by calling (213) 358-7557.

Some day, Windsor said, she hopes to expand the system to include classes for toddlers as well as infants. With the Hendrick system, she said, the "terrible twos" can definitely be avoided.

Two pregnant women at Saturday's luncheon were sorry Hendrick retired so soon. Linda Alshuler of Newport Beach and Jennie Todd of Irvine said they would make do, using the Hendrick system and schedule. But said Alshuler, "It'll be sad not having her there."