

Eye to Eye: Volume 2

Gloria J. Walther

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"Honor thy father and thy mother," instructs the Bible. Gloria Walther, author of *Eye to Eye: Volume 2*, a handbook on parenting preschoolers might include "Honor also thy children." This easy-to-read manual belongs on every parent's bookshelf.

Walther speaks with authority. She holds a doctorate in early childhood development and has more than forty years of experience as a preschool teacher. She is the founder of The Walther School, a preschool in West Hollywood, California, which implements her child-development philosophies. Equally important, Walther speaks with heart about her passion: positive child development.

Honor your child in all that you do. That is the central tenet of *Eye to Eye*. For example, demonstrate respect by respecting your child. Listen and speak to your child at eye level. Tell your child the truth. She writes directly to parents: "...let your humanity show. If you make a mistake just say, 'I messed up. I'll try harder the next time.'"

Throughout the second volume of *Eye to Eye*, Walther not only explains her gentle, child-centered parenting principles, but also offers concrete advice. She provides a useful topic index for "What if?" situations. What should a parent do when a child has a nightmare? When a child gets into a fight? When a child's friend has a terminal disease? When a family pet dies?

"Go home and dig up all of the [dead] koi," Walther tells one parent who buried the remains of the family fish to avoid upsetting his children. "Rinse them off, and throw them back in the pond. Then let the children discover them on their own." Such advice may seem startling to the reader, but, as Walther explains, "...if the fish can vanish, then parents can vanish—and they (the child) can vanish too. This [thought] can be quite frightening for [children]."

Walther's principles are based on sound research, although she spares readers from academic descriptions of methodology. Instead, she distills the essence of time-honored findings, explaining them in common parlance. Her approach emphasizes exploration of nature, family meetings to discuss each person's concerns, self-discovery as an effective learning tool, and honoring children by genuinely listening to them, offering them age-appropriate choices, and promoting their full participation in family and school life.

Decades of research have consistently revealed that the first five years of life are crucial to healthy development. "This is when children develop their tools for life, their confidence, their awareness, and their sense of who they are." Parents who read *Eye to Eye: Volume 2* will take a giant step toward positively guiding their children's development during those early years.

NANCY WALKER (April 27, 2011)

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