

Tip for Tots – “He bit me!”

A mother was chatting with her friend about putting her toddler into day care in the fall. Her son was playing with blocks calmly as the adults were discussing this plan. Suddenly, her son came up and bit her breast through her blouse.

The mother was shocked and angry. She hit her son, and sent him away “to learn to behave properly” to ensure that this would not happen again.

The mother had no idea why the child did this and did not think her conversation had had any effect on the boy, but in fact, children do listen to adult conversation and have “big ears”.

In this case, the parents had not discussed the day care plans with the child – the first he heard was his mother chatting with her friend. Although the toddler didn’t know exactly what “day care” meant, he understood it meant going away from his mommy.

Dr. Weininger suggested that the child was upset and angry that he was going to be “sent away” and his reaction was direct. He bit the very breast that had fed him and now appeared to be turning

away from him and hurting him. He simply hurt it back.

This was a curious, bright child who enjoyed his parents very much. To punish him was to aggravate the child’s sense of being rejected, hurt and bad.

Dr. Weininger further suggested that the mother talk with the child about her understanding that he must have been angry and upset to hear about the day care plans through her chatting with a friend. He encouraged the mother to talk directly to her son about day care – to show him where he would be going, for how long, where mommy and daddy would be etc. She could

help her son understand that the day care arrangements were another step in the growing up process and that her tone would be able to convey that this was not a rejection, and that he was still loved and wanted.

This is an example of “Time-In Parenting” ways that parents can help their children by helping them understand things better – for more information on this book, see www.barbaraburrows.com – Feb 2003 Magazine link.

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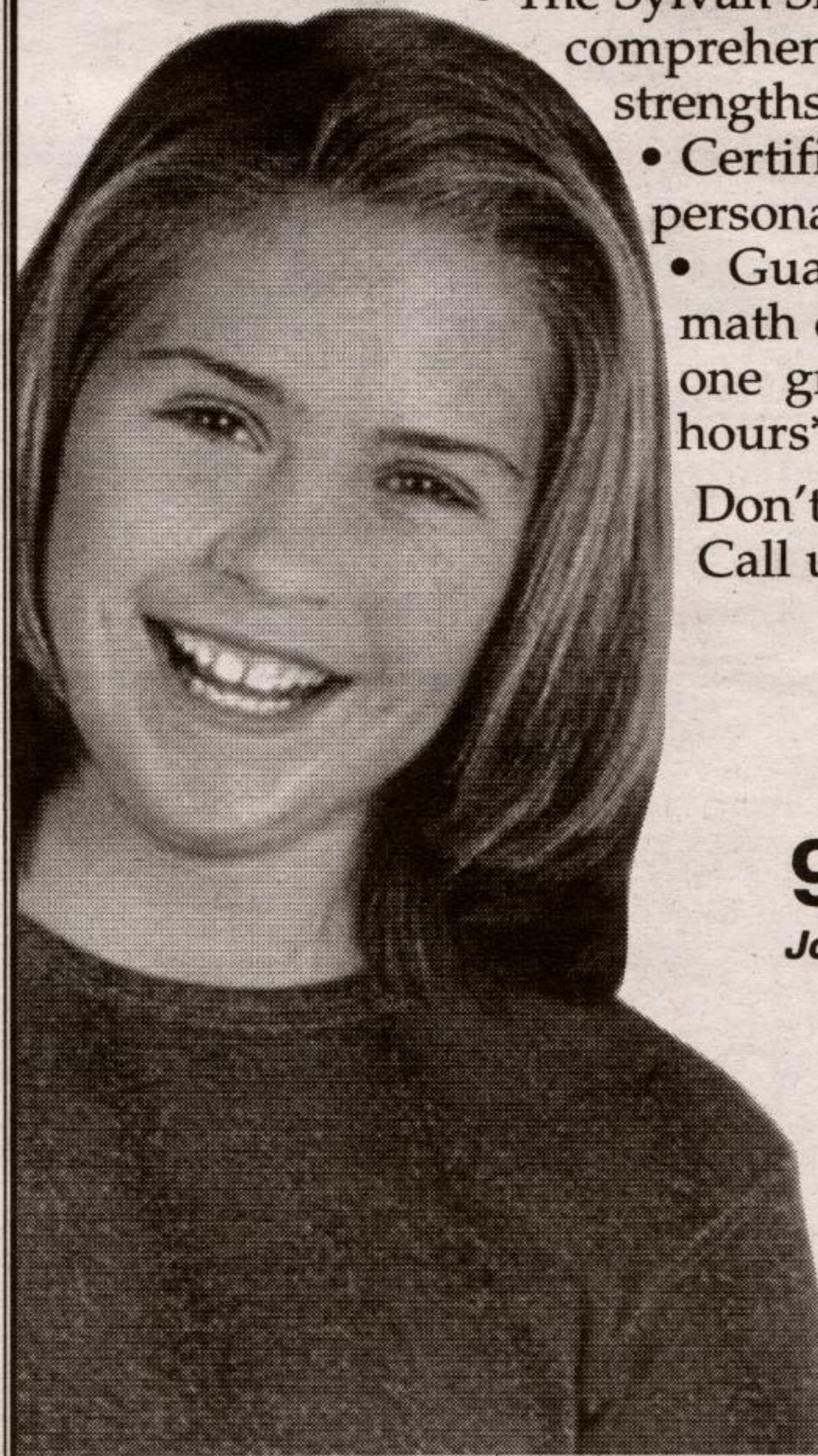


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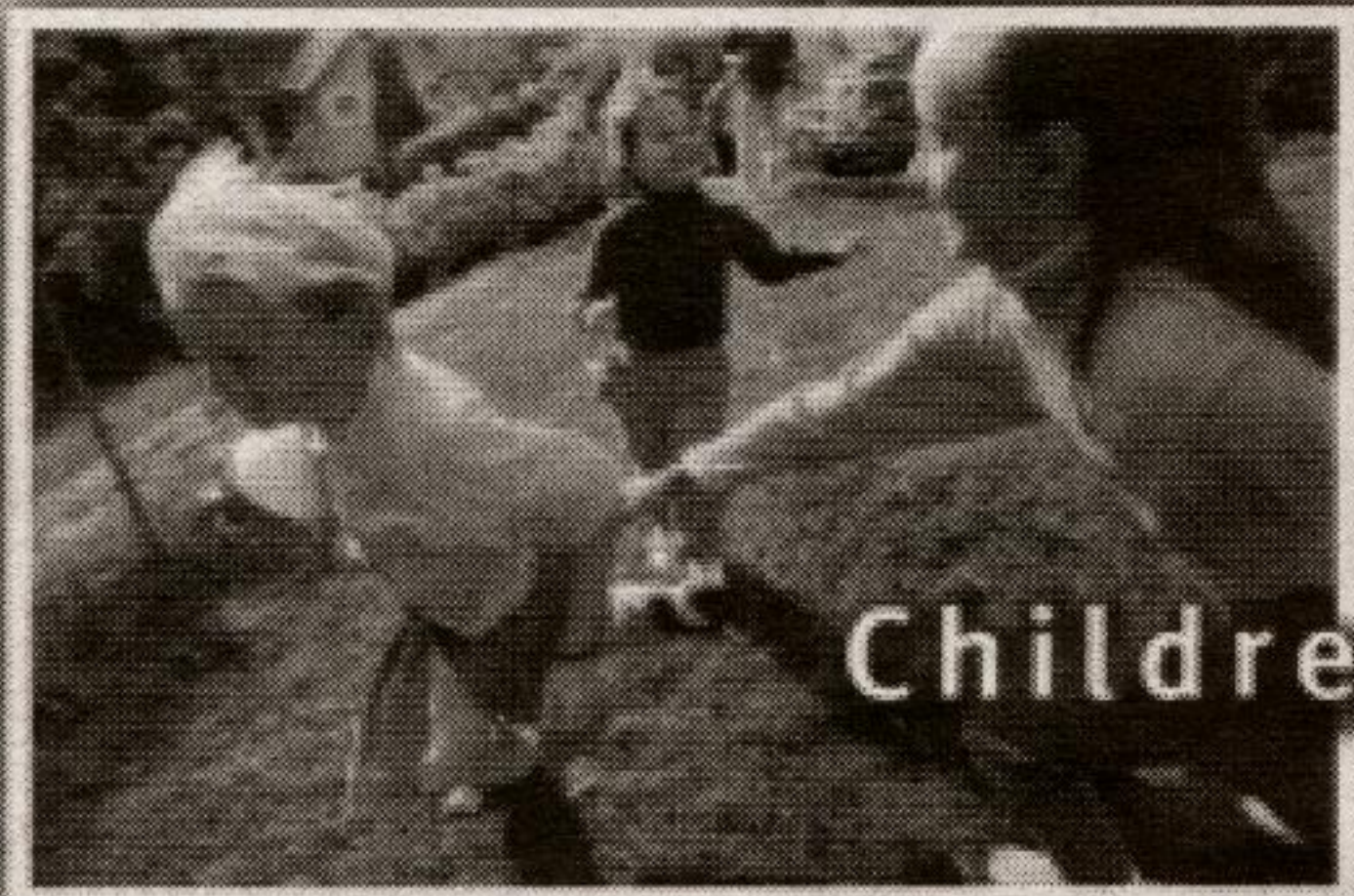
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