

A Circle of Children

US : 1977 : dir. Don Taylor : 20th Century Fox : 100 min
 prod: Edgar J Scherick : scr: Steven Gethers : dir.ph.: Gayne Rescher
[Matthew Laborteaux](#); [Patrick Laborteaux](#)
 Jane Alexander; Rachel Roberts; David Ogden Stiers; Nan Martin

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
5607	1½	3	0	602	3 - - - -	No	unseen

Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide
 2001 review:

"Beautifully acted drama about affluent suburbanite whose volunteer work with emotionally disturbed children fills the void in her life. Mary MacCracken's autobiographical novel served as the basis for this sensitive, intelligent, surprisingly unsentimental film. Alexander's superb performance is matched by Roberts as a gifted, demanding teacher. Script by Steven Gethers. Sequel: "LOVEY: A CIRCLE OF CHILDREN, PART II". *Above Average*"

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review - identical to above

Halliwell's Television Companion review:

"Problems of a teacher of autistic children. An earnest and well-written piece, but the feature film "A CHILD IS WAITING" was better. "LOVEY: A CIRCLE OF CHILDREN, PART 2" was an unnecessary sequel. * "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89
 review:

"Luminous adaptation of Mary McCracken's novel about a financially poor, spiritually rich private school for emotionally disturbed children. The most talented of the understanding teachers is Helga, a woman with a marked German accent, unschooled, but a "therapeutic genius", who inspires an affluent suburban woman to volunteer at the school.
 ***½ "

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Films of 20th Century Fox", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

"This dark, handsome, intelligent boy played dark, handsome, intelligent boys: more remarkable than it might seem, since he had been adopted by the Laborteaux couple as a nine-month old baby with grave physical and mental handicaps which included autism and a hole in the heart. All these, through love and devotion, he triumphantly overcame. In the mid-1970s Matthew was for some time a regular in the popular TV series "The Little House on the Prairie", and had the first lead in the serial "The Red Hand Gang".

In his later teens, he was the whizdest of the "Whiz Kids" (TV series 83), and his technological genius led him into deep waters in "DEADLY FRIEND" (86) when he fitted an electronic brain into a brain-dead girl, who then turned nasty. Matthew's "elder brother", Patrick Laborteaux (also adopted at nine months, and also overcoming appalling handicaps) proved a busy and gifted actor too."

No further information currently available. The title of the sequel is truly awful, but hopefully no reflection on the emotional pitch of this story. Patrick Labordeaux was 12 and Matthew 10. The boys' private history can't have been lost on the film's makers, who must have counted themselves fortunate having two child actors available with first-hand knowledge of autism. Rachel Roberts made a strong impression two years previously as principal Mrs Appleyard of the girls' finishing school in "**PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK**", though her character there was an alcoholic termagant. Autism has moved up the agenda of topical "issues" latterly, as the condition has become better understood and publicised, and quite a few films have centred on autistic children, with greater and lesser degrees of subtlety. See for example "**THE WIZARD**" (89), "**SILENT FALL**" (94) and "**MERCURY RISING**" (98).

See subject index under **AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL TITLES, DISABLED / HANDICAPPED** and **SCHOOL**.