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ABSTRACT

Development of the following aspects in programing for the trainable is discussed: communication skills, motor coordination, emotional adjustment, self concept, self care and health, social adjustment, recreational activities, safety, moral and spiritual values, and aesthetic appreciation and economic usefulness. Curriculum activities presented consist of sensory and emotional development (using clay, painting, sand, drawing, cutting, and pasting), language development (conversation period, story telling, finger plays, and dramatization), social adjustment (rest, play, music, rhythms, instruments, and listening), physical development, and economic usefulness (lunch program, meal preparation, household activities, outdoor activities, and woodworking). Appendixes include lists of equipment and activities. (JM)

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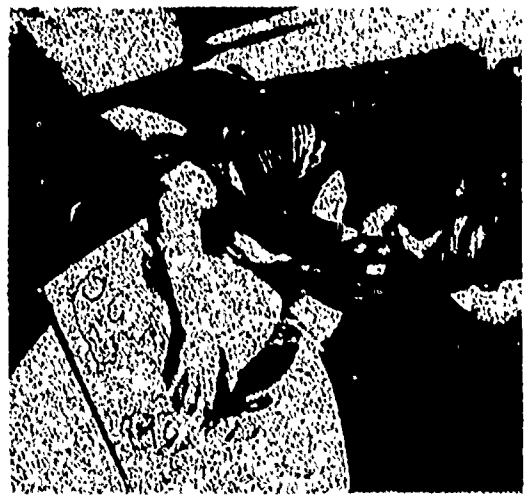
a guide to programming

TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED



TRAINABLE MENTALLY RETARDED

A GUIDE TO PROGRAMMING

Revised Spring 1969

Program for Exceptional Children
Division of Special Education and Pupil Personnel Services
Office of Instructional Services
Georgia Department of Education
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

DEFINITIONS

Trainable mentally retarded children live in an in-between world; they are not so defective as to require constant care, but neither are they capable enough to be able to live without semi-shelter or supervision. They have the ability to live in the community and are able to benefit from a specifically structured program within the public schools.

For school purposes, a trainable retarded child is one who:

a. Is of school age;

b. Is developing at a rate approximately one-third to one-half that of the normal child (IQ on an individual examination will be between 35 and 55);

c. Has the potential for self-care tasks such as dressing, eating, and attending to toilet needs, and who can learn to protect himself from common dangers in the home, school, or neighborhood;

d. Has potential for social adjustment in the home or neighborhood and can learn to share, respect property rights, and cooperate in a family unit and with neighbors;

e. Has potential for economic usefulness in the home and neighborhood — by assisting in chores around the house, or in doing routine tasks for remuneration in a sheltered environment.

Children who are eligible for placement in trainable classes in the public schools of Georgia are those between the ages of 6 and 18 years. Because of their moderate retarded intellectual development, they are incapable of being educated properly and efficiently through ordinary classroom instruction or special education facilities used for the educable mentally retarded child. They may be expected to benefit from a program within a group setting designed to further their social-economic usefulness in a home, sheltered environment, or residential setting.

The child who generally will profit from this program is one who:

a. Has a chronological age between 6-12 or 13-18 years:

b. Has a mental age of no less than two and one-half years;

c. Can communicate so as to make his needs known;

d. Is ambulatory to the extent that he does not create a hazard;

e. Has mental retardation as the prime disability (one of the signs of this disability can be found in an individual test of intelligence). This individual will usually have an IQ somewhere between 35-55;

f. Will not be a danger to himself or others;

g. Has acceptable toilet habits;

h. Has had a physical and hearing examination within two months prior to entering a class.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The trainable mentally retarded child must be considered first as an individual having the same basic needs and drives as any child. The primary responsibility of any educational program for this child should be assisting him to satisfactorily realize the fulfillment of these needs and drives. This fulfillment can best be achieved through an educational program based upon interdependence of school, family and community, and the recognition of the responsibility each has to the trainable mentally retarded child. The fact that he is mentally retarded should be of secondary consideration.

In organizing an educational program to fulfill the needs and drives of the trainable mentally retarded child, it is necessary to recognize the goals toward which one is working. Basic to this child, as to all children, is development of the individual to his maximum potential—personally, socially, physically, mentally and vocationally. The attainment of these goals can be realized by developing the program around the following framework:

a. Communication skills: The development of a satisfactory language pattern, both orally and silently, which includes the ability to understand and use the spoken language to advantage;
b. Motor coordination: The development of both the large and small muscles;
c. Emotional adjustment: The development of both socially and personally acceptable methods of expressing emotions;
d. Self-concept: The establishment of positive relationships between the child and his environment;
e. Self-care and health: The development of appropriate attitudes and habits of self-care and healthful living, such as body cleanliness, proper hair care, mouth care, table manners, dressing, undressing and understanding of simple diseases;
f. Social adjustment: The development of attitudes in relationships with others to enable the child to become a more acceptable member of his society now and in the future;
g. Recreational and diversional activities: The development and utilization of suitable recreational and diversional activities;
h. Safety: The development of ability to recognize potentially dangerous situations and ways to avoid or cope with these situations;
i. Moral and spiritual: The development of acceptance and understanding of moral and spiritual values;
j. Aesthetic appreciation: The development of an appreciation for and enjoyment of music and simple literature;
k. Economic usefulness: The development of attitudes and habits which will help the child to be a contributing and working member of his environment, whether at home, a residential facility, a workshop, or a sheltered environment.

The basic philosophy of the educational program for the child who is trainable mentally retarded is to help him develop to his fullest potential in all of these areas. The extent to which these

goals will be met in any educational program will vary, depending upon the child and his various environments.

In organizing an educational program for the trainable mentally retarded, one must look very carefully at the definition of that child. Through careful examination of this definition, one finds that program organization consists of five definite but interwoven basic areas. These areas are:

a. Sensory Development
b. Communications
c. Social Living and Responsibility
d. Physical Development
e. Vocational Experiences.

Sensory development is one of the most important areas of the curriculum for the trainable mentally retarded child. He may rely heavily on one sense area while neglecting other sense areas. These very often will be the areas of sight and hearing. The trainable child may have faulty visual perception or audio reception. There must be constant learning situations available for the trainable mentally retarded child which will allow for visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and other sensory perceptions.

The need for communications with others is obvious. As with the normal individual, the need for adequate communications permeates the daily life of the trainable mentally retarded child. The development of language for the trainable child comes about either as a direct or indirect result of every learning situation which he encounters. Every learning situation should stimulate the development of language and communication. As a result of the numerous frustrations and failures the child has met and will meet it is important that a usable and effective speech pattern be developed. He needs to develop a pattern which provides him with a means of expressing his hurt, disappointment, joy, pleasure and other emotions in an adequate and effective manner.

For the trainable mentally retarded child, the development of the ability to listen as well as to speak is as important as for any other child. The other areas of the communicative process, such as writing and reading, are limited to a protective vocabulary consisting of identification, directions, health and safety. For the development of an adequate language pattern, the emotional and social development of the child is as essential as the actual physical equipment for speech and language.

One of the basic areas in the curriculum for the trainable mentally retarded is development of socially adequacy. The curriculum should strive to develop within the child an ability to participate in social situations by accepting his responsibility in the school, the home and the community. Learning situations must be developed which allow the trainable mentally retarded child to experience sharing, cooperating, respecting of authority and caring for his needs, as well as the development of emotions and language.

The physical development of the child is an integral part of the curriculum for the trainable mentally retarded. Within a facility for these children one will find those who have extremely poor coordination and others who have relatively good coordination. Physical training activities not only help to improve the trainable child's coordination, but will also help the child to experience social interaction and develop more mature emotional attitudes.

Vocational training is usually equated with program development for the older trainable mentally retarded child; however, for successful vocational adjustment the younger trainable child must be taught the work habits essential to any employment. Appropriate attitude and a sense of responsibility must be developed as a part of all learning experiences to which the child is exposed. Vocational training must be considered not only as a prerequisite to placement in a sheltered employment situation, but as vital to the contribution of the trainable child in the home or a residential facility.

Vocational training for the older or more mature trainable mentally retarded child will be specific and selective. The child's previous learning experiences will be evaluated and put to practical use.

The program for trainable mentally retarded children is different from that for the educable mentally retarded. The development of this curriculum should evolve gradually and be commensurate with the performance level the child has attained with each skill.

In developing a program for the trainable mentally retarded, it is necessary to be aware that:

a. Mental age is more useful than IQ in planning teaching procedures;
b. Maladjustments exist to some degree in all children who come into the program;

c. Emphasis should be placed on social skill development and not on achievement in academic skills;
d. Improvement in general behavior and attitude, however slight, is desirable;
e. The child is the product of his environment as well as his inherited characteristics;
f. The curriculum should remain flexible to allow necessary adjustments to meet limitations of physical and emotional handicaps as well as the constant one of intellectual deficiency.

Consideration must be given to some of the major characteristics which may appear either singly or in combination in trainable mentally retarded children:

Physical Development:

a. Small muscles are not well enough developed for effective use;
b. Child may be hyperactive or hypoactive;
c. Eye-hand coordination is inferior and finger dexterity is poor;
d. Child is often handicapped in the use of extremities;
e. Child may become easily fatigued;
f. Posture is very often poor.

Emotional Development:

a. Child may be fearful, apathetic, disinterested, egocentric, or withdrawn;
b. Child may be overprotected or rejected by parents, siblings or other children;
c. A lack of self-esteem or self-confidence often exists;
d. Child may have feelings of frustration, failure and embarrassment;
e. Temper tantrums may often occur;
f. Feelings are close to the surface.

Social Development:

a. There may be a lack of:
   1. Communication through speech;
   2. Respect for the rights and properties of others;
   3. Willingness to share;
   4. Group experience;
   5. Contact with normal children;
   6. Knowledge of safety rules;
   7. Knowledge of the "outside world;"
b. Child may have poor health routines and poor eating habits;
c. There may be dependency on teacher or parent.

Mental Development:

a. Child will have:
   1. Attention spans commensurate with mental age;
   2. A lack of attention to sensory stimuli;
   3. The inability to conceptualize;
   4. Little or no ability to concentrate.
b. A tendency exists to cling to routine and "comfortable" situations;
c. Child will have little ability to think abstractly.

Facilities

The facility for the trainable mentally retarded should be outside of the regular school building when possible. However, the facility should be located in approximation to a regular elementary or junior high school so as to permit participation in assembly programs, playground activities, and utilization of the cafeteria.

For adequate program development it is advisable to have a home-type facility. This should include a large workroom which is similar to a family room, a fully equipped kitchen, a living room, one or more bedrooms, and a dining room. A fenced-in recreation area which contains gym and playground equipment should be adjacent. The facility should be as similar as is economically feasible to a real home. It should be airy, healthful and well furnished.

For equipment essential to the carrying out of the program of the trainable mentally retarded, a list of recommendations is included in Appendix A.

CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES

The program for the trainable mentally retarded child is based upon the realistic appraisal of the child's limitations and abilities. For a program to be adequate and appropriate, one must examine each child in light of the goals and objectives described in earlier pages. The teacher must ascertain the present level of development of each child in her class and ask herself, "What does he need to help him function in a sheltered environment, now and in the future?"

The following activities should be the basic core of the curriculum. The creative teacher will explore and go beyond these.

Sensory and Emotional Development

Creative expression, be it music, art or language, is a means for reducing tensions and expressing feelings and moods. It can serve as a safety valve—a sage, constructive way in which to handle hostilities, aggressions and tensions which otherwise could come out in a destructive form. It also serves as a method of developing communication and physical development. The trainable mentally retarded child has faced many situations which were beyond his ability to understand and manage, and they have left feelings of bewilderment, frustration, and helplessness. He often is unable to cope with the pressures put on him. Creative expression in itself may not change behavior or emotions, but it constitutes avenues by which some of the tensions and strains can be handled and alleviated.

Another value of creative expression is the feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment which arises as a result of a creative endeavor. This expression may be simple and crude, but to be able to creatively express one's own feelings, moods and ideas can be an enriching experience. For this child the need to feel successful, and to feel accomplishment, is paramount. Observations indicate that many trainable mentally retarded children lack self-confidence and have a very low estimation of their personal worth and abilities. Through creative expression, this child can feel successful and productive.

Graphic and plastic arts. Graphic and plastic arts offer many avenues of self-expression and creativity. The school should provide materials and offer opportunities for the trainable child, such as finger and brush painting, clay and sand modeling, crayon and chalk drawing, cutting and pasting.

The child at first may not be particularly interested in these activities. Several techniques can be employed to attract his attention to the use of these materials, such as hanging and mounting paintings, commenting on the art work of others, placing materials where they attract the child, or by the teacher sitting down and working with him on the materials.

After the child becomes aware of and starts using the materials, he will become more interested in mass production than in investigating the process. It seems to give him a great deal of satisfaction to have things that are his own. This probably stems from the fact that this child may have come from a large family or from a deprived home and had few things of his own. Often the trainable child will dab a few strokes of paint or paste two pieces of paper very rapidly, say he is through, and continue to make many more such items during a very short period. Having quantity seems to be an all-important factor.

In the art media, emphasis should be on the process and not on the product. It makes little difference if the product is not recognizable or is not representative. Much of the time should be spent

in manipulation. A child is generally five or six years old mentally before he attempts representation. Then he reaches the representative stage, but the product certainly is not realistic nor conceptualized along the lines of adult concepts. The important thing is to strive for the enjoyment and expression which can be achieved.

Investigation and expression through art should be encouraged and praised. Suggestions, demonstrations and questions to help the child figure out things for himself are often necessary. Giving help when he is having difficulty is important for maintaining interest and preventing an attitude of defeat.

The trainable child may find it as difficult to express his true feelings in art as in the other creative media. He needs to feel acceptance, understanding and interest before he can feel free to use art as an expressive medium.

Clay. Clay is a wonderful medium for developing sensory understanding. There are no tools to master, and the medium offers plasticity which makes it conducive to manipulation. The child can spend a good deal of time pounding, rolling, manipulating, kneading, and so on. A table covered with oilcloth or plastic material or individual clay boards are appropriate. An atmosphere conducive to freedom should prevail.

This is one area in which adults often have the feeling that a finished product is essential. The teacher must remember that it is the process, and not the product, that is important. The clay table can be utilized as a stage upon which hostile and aggressive feelings can be relieved. The child will often make something and destroy it or he will often pound the clay aggressively. These actions serve as releases for his emotions and feelings. The teacher should sit at the clay table and manipulate the clay. The child will often ask, "What are you making?" An answer of, "Oh, I'm just playing with it," seems to help the child understand that it is perfectly acceptable just to play with it without making something.

The older child may have an idea of something he wants to make, but he is at a loss how to do it. He will often ask the teacher to make one for him. Leading questions and discussion with the child on the various possibilities are helpful, but there are times when this is not enough. Sometimes the teacher can make a model so that the child can see the process, but she should then destroy it so that the child's product is not purely imitation. Sometimes she can help him along as he makes the object, to insure its successful completion. Teachers have observed that, when a child has an idea, it is better to help him complete it than to have him feel discouraged and dissatisfied. The trainable child is easily discouraged and, to keep the media open for future creativity, it is necessary to assist when the need is indicated. Care should be taken that assistance is withdrawn as soon as possible to prevent the child from becoming too dependent.

Finger Painting. Finger painting is very much like clay. No tools are necessary and the experience is also a direct sensory one. Finger painting is done in close proximity to a basin or a bucket of water, with plenty of paper towels to keep the messiness at a minimum.

The child may at first be afraid of getting his hands messy and of getting his clothes dirty. An apron, and the assurance that paint on the apron is perfectly all right, will usually ease this fear. Assistance in washing hands and an assurance that the paint comes off easily will help to alleviate some of these fears. The teacher may have to demonstrate this for the child by becoming messy herself.

First attempts at finger painting will usually be very cautious and timid, an attitude which corresponds to the child's fears. He will usually use small movements which cover only the middle of the paper. The teacher, by putting a large amount of water on the paper, can make the paint run. Then the child will develop larger and freer movements.

The same problem of mass production is evident with paint as in other media—a few globs quickly swished around and the child is through. To encourage more experimentation and manipulation, paints can be put directly on a table top covered with oilcloth. This will prove very useful and successful. The area is larger, and crumpling or tearing the paper is no longer a problem. This way the child is free to work and rework the paints. This can provide an opportunity for the child to discover and attempt various techniques of painting. A suggestion or demonstration often helps the child become aware of the possible techniques. The trainable mentally retarded child may show little interest in new or accidental discoveries. An enthusiastic comment from the teacher as new color appears focuses his attention and can lead to experimentation, manipulating and mixing of colors.

Sand. Dry and wet sand also fall into this direct sensory experience type media. A child is intrigued with the feeling of both wet and dry sand. Experiences with these can be some of the most popular activities, ones in which the child seems more quickly to

discover the possibilities of expression for himself than in any of the other media.

Brush Painting. Brush painting may be done in one of two ways—at the easel or by laying paper on a table. Both have advantages as well as disadvantages, but a variety of ways will give the child an opportunity to paint with different perspective.

Brush painting teaches the necessity for proper manipulation of the brush and will aid in the development of coordination. Some children will experience difficulty with this. It may be necessary to demonstrate many times how to hold the brush. The child who has difficulty with dripping brushes may be disturbed and should be encouraged; therefore, he should paint at a table instead of an easel. However, another child may like the effect of drippings and should be permitted to allow the paint to drip on the paper as much as he pleases. The trainable child may paint in a scribbling fashion at first, but will start coloring in sections which will develop into representative painting. He should be praised and encouraged over his painting, but should not be forced to attach a name to it. In praising, care should be taken to praise an obvious aspect such as color or a particular stroke or combination of both.

Chalk. Chalk is much more easily manipulated than crayons, and the trainable child will generally prefer it. Opportunities for using chalk on dry paper as well as wet paper should be provided.

Dry chalk can be used in a similar manner to crayons, either on colored or manila paper. While the child will tend to use crayons for line drawings, he can use chalk for coloring. It is a much easier medium with which to color a large area.

Wet chalk drawing is done by wetting manila or oatmeal paper. The advantage of wet chalk is that the chalk dust does not intermix. It is also more fluid while being used for drawing. The finished product made with wet chalk is smoother than that made with dry chalk.

Crayons. Crayons should be available to the child. The older child uses them more when he is in the representative stage of drawing. Crayons are a more rigid medium than some others, and the child very often does not care for them.

Cutting and Pasting. The proper use of scissors is a rather difficult skill to acquire. A box with various colored paper in many shapes, to be used for pasting, should be available for younger children. After they have mastered the use of scissors, a variety of materials should be available for creating various designs and expressions of feelings.

Communication Skills

Language Development. In a class for the trainable mentally retarded child, oral expression, or speaking, is the medium of communication in nearly everything that is done throughout the day. Hence, spoken language becomes the key whereby the child is able to attain the three major objectives of school training: self-help, social adjustment, and economic usefulness. Since language development is so vital to the child's growth, it cannot be designated to a special period or time of day, but must be introduced in practically all activities of the classroom. At all times the teacher must be alert to and utilize every opportunity that encourages growth in vocabulary, meaning concepts, sentence usage and intelligible speech. The long developmental program should be in a permissive atmosphere with the following goals in mind:

a. To create a feeling of complete acceptance and security;
b. To create a desire for communication; and
c. To develop independent growth, through the choice of self-expression.

In order to stimulate maximum verbal output and to aid the child in developing a desire for speech, the program should be centered around an interest situation. Since the attention span of these children is somewhat shorter than in the normal child, physical participation should be encouraged.

1. *Conversation Period*. A period in which experiences about home and its happenings or about an object helpful in stimulating language development are shared with the group. The child should be encouraged to bring special toys to school to show and to talk about.

2. *Story-telling*. Factual stories have been found more helpful than imaginative stories, but the teacher must know her group and then base the types of stories she chooses upon the backgrounds with which she has to work. She should then develop stories along lines which will be both interesting and useful to her group. When the children have become familiar with the story, an individual child should be asked to relate what comes next.

3. *Finger Plays*. In teaching a jingle, finger game, or unison speaking, it has been found most helpful if the teacher speaks slowly, clearly and pleasantly. She should train the child to watch her face and to go along with her while she makes definite, but

not exaggerated, movements. At first the child may only mumble with her, but even if he is only making some sounds, it is a start. Word skills are slow to emerge, from mumbling to speaking in unison. If the child progresses to words and learns sequences, the teacher can gradually reduce the voice to a whisper. Then, only the lips are moved, and later a word or two is added when the child hesitates.

4. *Dramatization*. Dramatization of stories has proven helpful. Puppets, especially, can reveal to the child an awareness of language and speech. Toy telephones vitalize dramatic play situations. Model telephones for classroom use are usually available through the district office of the local Bell Telephone Company. Installation of these telephones provides opportunities for children to carry on conversations with friends in the classroom.

Social Living and Responsibility

Social Adjustment. The area of social adjustment is not something set apart from the other objectives and goals, but becomes a part of everything a child does. The child is encouraged to assume responsibility for caring for himself in accordance with his capabilities. Independence is one indication of maturation. Ability to do things for himself builds up self-confidence in the child and opens up other avenues of learning which are not likely to occur in the dependent.

There are numerous opportunities throughout the day for developing the skills of self-help; however, the majority of such opportunities center around the "routines." By "routines," reference is made to dressing, undressing, eating, toilet training and resting.

Through the school program the trainable child is taught to live in a cooperative environment. Work in the area of social adjustment begins when the child enters the classroom. He must have definite training to develop success patterns, to overcome fears and anxieties, and to gain a feeling of security, thus helping him to become more socially acceptable in the home and community.

The trainable child's basis for security is in knowing what is expected from him. With security, he gets satisfaction out of what he is doing. He is willing to attempt new activities if they are in keeping with his abilities. He will seldom be self-directing but will almost always need supervision. Therefore, it is necessary for the teacher to set limits.

Rest Program. Regularly scheduled rest periods offer many opportunities for developing the skills of self-help. The younger trainable mentally retarded will need frequent rest periods. The older trainable child is able to prepare himself for the rest period, to remove his shoes and any heavy or tight outside garments that may not be conducive to rest. Some types of clothing are more difficult to remove or put on than others. Boot-type shoes are harder for the child to put on by himself than the loafer-type shoes. Manipulating zippers, fastening buttons, tying laces and fastening safety pins are all difficult for most of the children. In the beginning, if the teacher starts the zipper, the child may be able to finish the job. He may not be able to button five buttons, but the teacher may demonstrate how to button four of the buttons and then encourage him to attempt the fifth one. When he succeeds in buttoning one, he is usually eager to try more, whereas the big job of attempting to button *all* of the buttons may be too overwhelming for him. At the first sign of difficulty the teacher should demonstrate how things are done. Prolonged trials with repeated errors and defeats are discouraging and upsetting to the trainable child and deprive him of time that could be spent to better advantage. Since he seems to have a tendency to repeat errors over and over again, it is extremely important that correct procedures be established so a minimum of correcting errors is necessary. He should not be required merely to practice putting on and removing clothing, but short periods of instruction, limited to those occasions when the child really has a need for putting on and removing clothing, should be spaced over several weeks or even months, depending on the situation for each individual child.

The trainable child tends to be somewhat more easily distracted than the normal. The entrance of a child, a comment of another child, or a noise in the building may sidetrack him. At such times the teacher, in a friendly manner, should remind the child, "Take your boots off next," using some such positive rather than negative reminder. A comment such as, "You are doing a good job of taking off your rubbers," or, "You are a good worker," evokes interest and enthusiasm for learning.

To encourage each child to do as much as possible for himself is most important. When a situation is too difficult, the teacher should be on the alert to come to the aid of the child.

Play. Play is important and serious for the young child. The

foundations for some of the basic attitudes and interests are learned and developed through play. The ability to adjust to others, the acquisition of motor skills, the stimulation of dramatic, creative, constructive and imaginative expressions and acquisition of knowledge are all an integral part of the play activities of a young child. Equipment is a vital part of these activities, for it serves as the raw material on which play is based.

Dramatic and Imitative Play. As the child becomes more aware of his environment, he will become interested in imitative and dramatic play. He has seen adults engaged in various day-to-day activities, which he will at first imitate and then develop into dramatic play. This area of play is very important for social and emotional development in life. Many basic social skills are learned in dramatic play which calls for interaction with other children. Dramatic play is very good to aid a child in working through his emotional problems.

Sharing ideas, taking turns, respecting the feelings and properties of others are some of the learning experiences in cooperative play which serve as a basis for later social adjustment. Some types of equipment lead to more social interaction than others. Play with some toys is more interesting and fun to a child if someone else plays with him.

Constructive Play. After the trainable child has acquired some manipulative skills and as his attention spans increase, he will become interested in construction. Some of the toys which at an earlier stage of development were used in a manipulative manner now can be used in construction.

Music. Music in the form of an emotional experience should be a part of the lives of all children. Listening to music, reproducing and creating it affords satisfying and enriching experiences for the trainable child. These are areas which should be part of every child's life from infancy through adulthood, but so often this is not true of the trainable mentally retarded child. A mother seldom will have sung to this child, and he often will not have heard music. The responsibility rests with the school to provide opportunities to help him develop and enjoy musical expressions.

A teacher who enjoys music will be spontaneous and resourceful and sensitive to the feelings of the child. She can do much to foster creativity and enjoyment of music. The emphasis should be on emotional satisfaction and enjoyment, not the acquisition of skills. Music is the creation or catching of a mood and enjoying it through empathy.

Singing. It has been found that five minutes is about as long as trainable youngsters can sustain interest in the initial stages of singing. The songs which are used should pertain to the child himself, his activities and his belongings. Songs accompanied by actions are popular. At first there may appear to be no response from the child, but after a period of time he will engage in the actions of the songs. It is frequently several months before he will attempt to sing with the teacher. The child should be invited to sing or participate, but no pressure should be put on him.

An effort should be made to try to ally the songs to the immediate interests of the child. The standards for choosing songs are (1) a tuneful melody, (2) the content, (3) the rhythmic flow, and (4) the melody pattern. The teacher should also choose songs which appeal to her as well as to the child. The trainable mentally retarded child senses very quickly the feeling of the teacher and will respond accordingly.

At first, short sentence songs are probably the easiest for the child to grasp. As musical interest grows, longer songs can be introduced. Folk songs have proven very popular with the trainable child, even the younger one.

When he first starts to sing, the tunes will often be so different that sometimes it is difficult to recognize the song. As he gains more experience and maturity, he will reproduce more correctly the original song. Singing, no matter how corrupt the tune, has greater value at this level than learning to sing the song perfectly. Spontaneity is primarily the goal, not perfection.

Singing games encourage singing. Often the child who will not sing under other circumstances will join in during singing games. Flexibility is important here. Singing games can be adapted to many things. For instance, "Here We Go Around the Mulberry Bush," can be used to enact various playground activities. When children have ideas of their own, these ideas should be picked up and encouraged.

Rhythms. In general the retarded child is rather tense and awkward in his movements and often lacks rhythm. As much as possible, awareness of rhythmic movement should be introduced into play activity. Singing in accompaniment to a child's activity, such as jumping, rocking, swinging and like activities which have definite rhythm, should be done whenever an appropriate occasion arises.

In the music period rhythmic activities should be introduced. At first, the activities are mostly limited to basic movement such

as jumping, running, rolling, galloping and crawling, which are accompanied by the teacher either singing or beating a drum. Imitating various animals, playing train and airplane and enacting outdoor activities such as riding bikes are popular. As the teacher sings rhythmic songs, she can clap, tap, sway or make other actions appropriate to the singing. At this point the child will show almost no creativity or spontaneity.

It has been observed that the trainable child is imitative and will stay at this level for a considerable length of time. Much of the rhythmic activity at this stage needs to be teacher initiated and conducted through participation. It is necessary for the child to go through a very imitative stage to build up confidence and give him ideas before he is able to do things spontaneously or creatively.

A great deal of repetition is necessary. Repetition should be done in as many varied ways as possible, for if done in the same way it can stifle spontaneity and creativity. There are many songs, games and records which can be used for the same basic movement. Songs and games can be improvised or adapted to different movements. No attempt should be made to teach the child to keep time in the initial stages. Through relaxation and a variety of experiences along with maturation, the trainable child will develop a sense of rhythm.

As rhythm experience increases, records, simple singing games and circle games are introduced. As much as possible, ideas and suggestions should be solicited from individual children and cues picked up from them. This can be done by questions as well as by calling attention to random movements made by individual children and developing them into rhythmic activity. With development of confidence, relaxed feelings and a feeling of being accepted, the child will become more spontaneous.

Instruments. The trainable child loves to hear a variety of tones as well as to produce them. A variety of simple musical instruments should be available to the children—bells, triangles, sticks, rattles, drums, cymbals, maracas, xylophone, and so on. The child should be given opportunities to experiment with these.

Some children will need close supervision at first to prevent destruction of the instruments, and they will need help in learning to use the instruments. Introducing a few instruments gradually prevents destructive behavior which can develop if the activity is not properly directed.

Another common initial reaction to instruments is a wild, furious banging. Some of the children will later calm down, but others will continue to find it over-stimulating. Using various instruments with singing, rhythmic activities and records seems to help in their use and enjoyment. For instance, using bells while singing "Jingle Bells" or sticks with a record of a clock ticking seems to make children more aware of differences in quality. This also gives them the desire for further experimentation with the instruments.

Listening. For all children there can be a great deal of enjoyment in listening to music. Listening to recorded music should be the last musical experience to be introduced. Recording a familiar song which children have heard the teacher sing is one way to introduce listening to a record. Singing records hold children's interest at first. Records containing familiar sounds within a musical framework, such as the "Hunt in the Forest," are well liked. Short musical compositions within a story have proven useful.

Teachers have found that trainable children need a point of visual focus to be able to sustain interest in listening. As their attention span and interest develop, some of the children may choose to listen to records during free play. The picture on the cover of the record is often sufficient to arouse interest.

Music Period. The music period is gradually increased in length as the children's interest increases. There is no definite time allotted for this period, but it should be left to the discretion of the teacher. The time fluctuates from day to day depending upon the interest span of the children.

The general plan should be to start out the period by quiet activities such as singing and listening, leading into active rhythmic expression, returning to quieter activities and culminating in a rest period. The activities must vary from day to day with a great deal of flexibility. Though the teacher has a plan in mind, she must change it to suit the interests of her children as they arise. Also, she gets many cues from the children in songs, rhythmic activities, their choice of listening records, use of instruments and so on. The many songs with which she is familiar as well as her versatility help to keep this music period alive and spontaneous.

The children should be free to participate in the activities or just to watch. If they do not want to stay in the music group, they can play elsewhere at a quiet activity so as not to disturb the group. The teacher must work toward developing interest and participation by making the music period a relaxed, varied, enjoyable and spontaneous time. The teacher should also attempt to make

the children feel accepted and encouraged by praising and accepting any attempt as worthwhile.

Physical Development

Trainable mentally retarded children, regardless of their age, will need assistance in the development of muscle coordination and general physical development. Physical activity in a group aids these children to relieve their emotional tensions, as well as provides relaxation, muscular development and coordination.

The physical development program should be conducted on a daily basis, utilizing only a few minutes each time. The teacher should use such terms as left, right, backward, forward, sit, lean, bend, up and down. Many of the activities utilized in music are beneficial to the physical development of these children. (Appendix B is included for assistance in developing a program of physical education and development.)

Vocational Experiences

Economic Usefulness. In the light of present knowledge and operation, the chances seem remote that trainable mentally retarded children can hold jobs outside the home except in a sheltered environment. Some trainable mentally retarded adults may be able to work for remuneration in a very limited, well-supervised situation, but they are not capable of becoming totally independent of supervision. For that reason the training given in school situations emphasizes the attainment of simple skills in working about the home, the school, and/or other sheltered environments. Routine must be established by making the teaching constant and simple. But, within the framework or routine, the children are taught to adjust happily to varying situations. Developing confidence and stability in the individual, developing habits and attitudes that will lead to better workmanship, safety, use of leisure time, and physical well-being are essential.

Lunch Program. Eating provides an abundance of learning experiences: training in handling dishes, cutlery, glassware and napkins correctly; learning table manners, handling food properly and accepting and enjoying a variety of foods. During many of the learning experiences of eating, children become members of the group and learn to do their share of the work.

The children should sit at the same table with the same teacher throughout the year. While specific seats are not designated, the children will almost always choose the same location each day. They will feel more secure and comfortable if the eating situation is at the same place with the same teacher.

Few trainable mentally retarded children have had an opportunity to serve themselves. It is known that if children are given this opportunity, they tend to eat larger quantities of food. It will not be long before they learn proper procedures in eating and serving themselves. Minor accidents will almost invariably occur during every meal. When milk is spilled, for instance, the teacher and the individual child should clean it up. As soon as children learn the location of clean-up equipment, they will obtain that tool which is required and assist the teacher with this process. This entire activity is carried on in a friendly, calm manner so as not to upset the children or make them feel guilty for their mishaps.

Stability in the organization of the lunch program promotes a feeling of security. All procedures should be followed to the extent they contribute to the development of emotional stability and security as well as to the development of self-care and economic usefulness.

Learning Experiences in Meal Preparation. Children should be permitted to assist with as many steps in the preparation of a meal as they are able. They may (1) wash and scrape vegetables, (2) use a can opener, (3) get out appropriate cooking utensils, (4) empty the contents of the can, and (5) measure out a can of water. They may (6) pour milk from a pitcher and (7) stir soups or Jello and (8) use an egg beater for mixing foods.

Household Activities. Household activities which will aid in teaching trainable children are readily at hand. The program is structured around the most common household chores and activities.

Manners can be taught when the group eats lunches and school-prepared meals together. Certain specific rules can be learned through such activities as eating with a fork and spoon. Such skills as drinking from a cup and proper eating may be mastered.

The cottage type facility provides an excellent opportunity for learning names as well as learning the parts of the body. Color concepts can be taught through colors of eyes, hair, food, clothing, and furniture. Number concepts can be fostered by counting chairs, tables, people, plates, forks, and quantities of food, as two apples.

Muscular coordination can be fostered through using egg beaters, sponges for squeezing, dusting with a large cloth, wiping silver and unbreakable dishes. Household objects such as pans and spoons make good drums. Paper bags are good for blowing up and popping, thus increasing lung power and improving muscular coordination. Old or toy home appliances offer specific kinds of activities.

Outdoor activities. Trainable mentally retarded children do not present an optimum picture of physical development. They may have poor small muscle development, are often handicapped in the use of extremities and may become easily fatigued.

A program of outdoor activity should not emphasize such activities as violent running, ball handling, or distance relay running. The intellectual and maturational development of these children precludes involved games as well.

The outdoor program will prosper with the use of such activities as jumping, walking, balancing, crawling, climbing, rolling, turning and such equipment as tunnels, balancing boards, big rubber or plastic balls, jungle gyms, swings and things to climb over and on.

Creative play will be limited; the children will need to be introduced to various activities and equipment—insecurity and fear may prevent the immediate use of equipment by the children. The teacher should make every effort to demonstrate the "how to" of all equipment, either by herself or by utilizing advanced children for demonstration purposes.

It is well to keep in mind that many trainable children will probably spend some period of their lives in an institutional setting; self-reliance and a good self-concept will contribute greatly to their welfare both in an institutional setting and in semi-dependent public life.

Some examples of outdoor activities which will aid in the development of awareness and competency are:

Gardening	Picking up papers
Car washing	Trimming shrubs
Lawn mowing	Picking fruit
Baking	Watering lawn
Trash removal	Picking up stones
Decorative work	

. . . any activities around the school or cottage grounds which may be found appropriate.

The horizons of this form of teaching can be broadened by developing interrelated activities in which one child or several children may be interdependent in terms of getting work done—thus, the need for trust in others and reliance upon self are fostered.

Woodworking. The comparative ease with which such soft woods as white pine, spruce and basswood may be worked makes woodworking a desirable activity for trainable children. It must always be borne in mind, however, that successful woodworking, in the case of these children, must always be well planned and thoroughly structured if attractive projects are to result. The trainable retarded will almost invariably "bang and hammer" with great delight, and in some instances this may be good. But if projects which will meet the needs of the children for satisfaction and feelings of worth are to be made, a carefully formulated plan of activity must be adhered to.

As a general approach to woodworking, the teacher may find that pre-cut projects which need only a minimum of sanding, assembly, and finishing will be the most efficient approach. Simple projects appropriate to the seasons or to present classroom activities are usually best. The children enjoy cutting their own material, but their skill with handsaws, coping saws, and the like is usually very limited. Trainable children will tend to attempt projects with little or no forethought and with no plan in mind. If the teacher does not carefully structure this experience, she will find herself in a melee of banging, sawing, pushing, and shouting; each step should be planned and nothing assumed.

Project ideas are readily available in shop publications and magazines. Perhaps the best source, though, is the teacher's own imagination, since she knows the exact immediate needs of her class in terms of children and activities.

As a practical guide, however, projects such as single-piece animals, stars, trees, cutting boards, etc., can be pre-cut. The children then sand the project, mount a screw-eye for hanging, and neatly "finish" the project with water paint.

Such finishes as enamel, varnish, and shellac are appropriate but should be used under close supervision. Hand tools such as knives and chisels are best used only by the teacher. They should be kept in a secure and locked cabinet.

THE TEACHER

The teacher of the trainable mentally retarded child should be patient, adaptable, and able to plan. She should be able to sing, teach rhythms, and stimulate interest through animated teaching.

Teachers of the trainable mentally retarded should be well prepared for their positions. The well-prepared teacher will have taken courses in and have a thorough understanding of the development of young children, language and speech development, exceptional children, the nature of mental retardation, educational evaluation and teaching the trainable mentally retarded. She will hold the key to the future adjustment and happiness of these children. Their economic usefulness and social and emotional adjustment will be dependent upon the wisdom and sincerity with which the teacher teaches.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, a few general suggestions may help to set the preceding material in order in the reader's mind.

Trainable mentally retarded children need routine in their school lives. They need periods of activity and rest, noise and quiet. They are at their best in the morning for work demanding concentration; the afternoon is best for physical activity and socialization. One should make definite plans, but allow for flexibility; plan more activities and materials than one would expect to use.

The program for the trainable mentally retarded is best described as one designed to stimulate growth and foster healthful attitudes toward living. It must always be remembered that these children have varied needs, and it is the responsibility of the school to provide this program. A well organized and developed program will provide for these needs.

Appendix A

The following is a list of suggested equipment and materials for utilization in programs for the trainable mentally retarded.

1. Easels, brushes, jars, paints, newsprint
2. Cutting and construction paper—various colors and sizes
3. Writing paper—ruled
4. Clay
5. Paste
6. Scissors
7. Papercutter
8. Crayons
9. Finger paints
10. Pencils
11. Blocks, balls, puzzles
12. Weaving materials
13. Building toys
14. Bulletin and chalkboards—low enough for children to reach
15. Picture books
16. Workbench and vise
17. Carpenter's kit
18. Glue
19. Wood chisel
20. Wood clamps
21. Handsaws
22. Sandpaper
23. Varnish
24. Paint
25. Turpentine
26. Brace and assorted bits
27. Patterns
28. Planes
29. Rulers, trisquare, yardstick
30. Copper sheets
31. Mallets, punches, shears
32. Aluminum sheets
33. Leather
34. Tooling tools
35. Looms and yarn
36. Spray gun and ink
37. Screens
38. Fused linoleum blocks and cutting tools
39. Tiles
40. Floor looms
41. Felt
42. Cork
43. Plaster of Paris and molds
44. Beads
45. Pipe cleaners
46. Patterns
47. Weaving materials

Appendix B

The following list of activities is included as a suggestion for a program of physical development:

FOR RELAXATION:

1. Bend elbows—hands to front, relax wrists, shake hands until fingers tingle, drop hands to sides.

POSTURE TRAINING:

1. Arms outstretched—palms up (catch rain in hands), bend elbows and touch fingers on top of shoulders.
2. Bring elbows forward and touch together—raise up—move to sides and back—as far as possible.
3. Sit on floor—back straight—legs straight in front—feet together—hands on knees, lean forward—try to reach toes with hands—back straight and in position.
4. Same position as 3. Raise knees quickly, locking hands under knees. Then quickly straighten knees—throw hands at side on floor.

STRETCH:

1. Body roll—hands on hips—fingers to front. Bend forward—roll to right—back as far as possible. To left—forward. Repeat 2 or 3 times—relax—do again.
2. Touch toes without bending knees.
3. Touch right toe with left hand—then left toe with right hand.

BALANCE:

1. Stand, hands on hips—kick, lift right knee—at first balance one hand touching wall or table. Do same with left knee. After balance is learned this way, lift knee—then raise foot forward, leg straight—this is a jerk movement—hold—down straight—same with other foot.
2. Move 4 to 6 steps forward—then step backward in same line, same number of steps.

3. Do same with arms outstretched—raise up on tip toe—stand—down.
4. Walk along board on floor.

EXERCISE FOR MUSCLE CONTROL:

1. Learn to roll wrists.
2. Roll feet—sit on floor, back straight, feet in front—turn feet from ankles. Roll wrists.
3. Arms straight out—make circles with hands moving from shoulders.
4. Close fists—open one finger at time. Close same way.
5. Roll eyes.
6. Rise on tip toes.
7. Climb ladders, stairs, etc. Play on outdoor play equipment.

DEVELOPING GROSS MUSCLES AND COORDINATION:

Walking—singing games—climbing "In and Out the Window"
Climbing stairs
Marching—musical games
Running—tag games
Bending
Sliding—skating—dancing
Jumping—rope, over obstacle, "Jack Be Nimble"
Hopping
Kicking—games with ball
Galloping

GAMES (Suggested activities for various age levels):

Pre-primary:

Doggy and bone
A Tisket, A Tasket

Activities with oral directions:

Jump Jim Crow
Put Your Finger in the Air
Indian Dance with War Whoop

Chronological age 5-12

Follow the Leader
Jumping
Jump and Hop
Hopping
Duck Walk
Rabbit Hop
Crab Walk
Gallop
Forward Rolls
Side Rolls
Backward Rolls
London Bridge
Dodge Ball
Go In and Out the Windows
Railroad Train
Musical Chairs
Bean Bag Throw
Circle Singing—Ring Around the Rosie—Mulberry Bush
Bowling
Exercises—Body bends, side bends, running in place, hopping in place

Chronological age 10-15 boys

Follow the Leader
Ball-throwing, catching, kicking, bouncing
Bean Bag Games
Target toss, distance throwing, throwing in basket, passing bean bag.
Bull in Ring Circle—Boy in center tries to get out of circle
Object Hunt—hunting for object which has been hidden
Drop the Handkerchief
Guessing Games—hiding button in hand of one child for others to guess who has it
Parade of Vehicles—wagons, scooters, tricycles
Singing Games—One, Two, Three O'Leary
Looby Loo
Did You Ever See A Lassie?
Wrestling—with supervision
Tumbling
Dancing—square dancing—basic fundamentals, swing, do-si-do, promenade, square the set, grand right and left
Hikes
Swimming
Exercises—body bends, side bends, reaching exercises, rhythm exercises to music
Marching to music

Chronological age 14-21 boys

Soft Ball
Indian Ball
Basketball
Soccer (use soft volley ball)
Relays
Softball Hockey
Bowling
Tennis with ping-pong paddles and tennis ball
Kickball
Wrestling
Follow the Leader
Guessing Games—object hunt
Croquet
Horseshoes
Tumbling
Hikes
Exercises—Body bends, deep knee bends, side bends, running in place, hopping in place, sit-ups, push-ups
Swimming

Chronological age 12-21 girls

Bowling
Badminton
Softball
Basketball
Ballgames—dodge ball, soccer, kick ball
Quiet games:
Shuffleboard
Ring Toss
Horseshoes
Checkers
Dominoes
Bingo
Monopoly
Bean Bag Throw
Red Light
Stoop Tag
Puzzles
Group Singing

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(3) Alabama State Department of Education. *"Specific Guidelines for Teaching Exceptional Children."* 1966.

Acknowledgments

The purpose of this publication is to provide administrators and teachers who work with the trainable mentally retarded basic information about programming for these children in our public schools. While this is an official publication of the Georgia State Department of Education, I wish to recognize the cooperation, thoughtful effort, and enthusiastic actions of those people who assisted in the development of this guide.

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