DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 784   PS 014 052
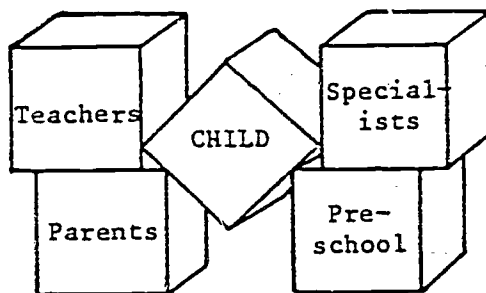
AUTHOR   Gauvin, Anne
TITLE   Gesell Screening Guide. The Best of BES--Basic
                Educational Skills Material.
INSTITUTION   Southwest Educational Development Lab., Austin, Tex.;
                Toppenish School District, WA.
SPONS AGENCY   Administration for Children, Youth, and Families
                (DHHS), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE   May 83
NOTE   84p.; For related documents, see PS 014 048-58. Some
                pages were removed because of copyright
                restrictions.
PUB TYPE   Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)

EDRS PRICE   MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS   Developmental Continuity; *Kindergarten Children;
                *Parent School Relationship; *Preschool Curriculum;
                Primary Education; *School Readiness Tests;
                *Transitional Programs
IDENTIFIERS   Basic Educational Skills Project; *Gesell Institute
                of Child Development CT; Project Head Start

ABSTRACT
                The six sections of this guide offer information to
teachers about the Gesell Screening and Developmental Placement
Program for children entering kindergarten at Lincoln School,
Toppenish, Washington. After a brief description of the Gesell
program, Section I outlines aspects of planning the screening
program, specifically discussing the coordinator and screening
committee, data gathering, time line, roles, and responsibilities.
Section II focuses on the screening process, a standardized approach
to screening, and recordkeeping. Section III reports school district
placement policies, providing discussion of school district policies
and continuity between the Lincoln School and preschool staff. Also
included are descriptions and copies of the Head Start Child Progress
Report/Special Services Report and forms for irregular placement.
Section IV describes parent involvement, specifically discussing
parent information and awareness announcements, kindergarten
orientations for parents and children, a Gesell screening information
meeting for parents, ways to answer parents' questions, and
guidelines for conducting parent conferences. Section V states goals
of the prekindergarten classroom for those who score low on the
screening test and describes the prekindergarten learning
environment. Finally, section VI provides additional resources for
teachers. (RH)

Teachers

CHILD

Specialists

Parents

Pre-school

GESELL SCREENING GUIDE

May 1983

Prepared By: Anne Gauvin
               Education Specialist/Supervisor
               Basic Educational Skills Project
               Toppenish, Washington

Table of Contents

Table of Contents (continued)

This book is dedicated to all those who support and promote:

a Developmental Point of View*

"Understanding that growth is orderly, structured, and predictable."

"Respecting the fact that every child has his own rate and pattern of growth peculiar to him."

"Accepting the child as a total action system - his physical, social, emotional, and intellectual components depending upon and supporting each other."

"Appreciating that readiness for any given task has it's roots in the biological, maturational make-up of the child."

"Promoting educational programs for children in terms of development as it is now, not in terms of what one thinks it ought to be."

*Taken from One Piece of the Puzzle by Carll and Richard.

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Lincoln School
kindergarten teachers and the principal, Mr. Diaz,
for their trust and cooperation in completing this
guide. I hope the guide will assist them in their
continued efforts to implement a developmental
approach to placement and curriculum planning, and
provide information for others about what the
Gesell Screening process involves.

Although this guide has been prepared for the
staff, I also wish to recognize the parents in the
Toppenish School District, for their support and
cooperation. We must continue to meet their needs,
answer their questions, and support their role; for
this purpose, I have included a section on Parent
Involvement in this guide.

Lastly, I wish to thank my own colleagues here
at the Basic Educational Skills office for their
assistance and input via typing, re-typing,
translating, and editing.

INTRODUCTION

The Gesell Screening Program was adopted at Lincoln School as a way to (a) assess the developmental level of an incoming kinder-garten child for readiness, (b) assist the principal, teachers, and parents to arrive at placement which meets individual needs of the children, and (c) to guide the kindergarten staff in developing a curriculum which is developmentally appropriate at this level.

With more accurate information on the developmental level of a new student, placement can be more consistent with the actual abilities of the child, resulting in realistic objectives being set for each student. Three recommendations to parents, as a result of the screening, are possible:

1. That the child be in regular kindergarten class.
2. That the child remain at home or in Head Start or in a private preschool.
3. That the child be in the pre-kindergarten class.

The Gesell Screening process was initiated at Lincoln School beginning in the school year 1980-81. Assistance for implementation of this program was provided by the Basic Educational Skills Project. Additional information and reports are available from BES for persons interested in the implementation process.

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROGRAM

The Gesell Screening Program is a method for determining the
developmental or functioning level of children as they become of
age to enter the school system. The Gesell Program also advocates
that those children who are found developmentally young be provided
with an adjusted curriculum, one suited to their developmental needs.

The Gesell Screening Program calls for individual assessment
by a trained developmental examiner. For the pre-kindergarten
child, the standardized instrument, <u>School Readiness Screening Test</u>
of the Gesell Institute of Human Development, is used by the
Toppenish School District. The kindergarten teachers and other
specialists each took part in a one-week training preparation
conducted b the .esell Institute in order to become certified
examiners.

The screening process takes place in the Spring or Fall for
each school year in Toppenish. Beginning in 1981-82, a pre-
kindergarten room was created to increase placement options for
children who are not ready for the regular kindergarten curriculum.
The pre-kindergarten classroom has the services of an aide each
morning and is set-up in a learning center approach to provide
structure with some freedom for exploration.

The Gesell Screening and Developmental Placement Program
further includes a strong emphasis on parent education and parent

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involvement in the screening process and placement choice. Parental awareness, acceptance, and support are key factors to the success of this program.

Educational research on implementation of programs indicates that clear understanding of the program goals and activities must be grasped by all participants for greater success.

In order to clarify program goals and activities for partici-pants, during implementation of the Gesell Screening Program in the school district the BES staff used a framework developed in conjunc-tion with Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) staff. This framework defines a given program in terms of Objectives, Materials, Structure, Behaviors, and Values/Knowledge.

The definition of the Gesell Screening process recognizes that any program requires specific materials, structure, and behaviors which need to take place in order to reach the stated objectives. In the Gesell Screening Program these were defined for teachers, parents, and principal. The given framework also reinforces the concept that change and learning are individual, personal, and gradual processes. Values and knowledge are internalized and achieved over a long period of time, given specific experiences, and result in the individual's ability to accept given developmental principles and apply these to teaching and future learning situations for children. Lastly, the program definition which states the who, what, and how of the Gesell Screening Program are defined as follows:

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TOPPENISH DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING PROGRAM

I.   OBJECTIVES

   A. To assess the developmental level of incoming kindergarten
       children for readiness

   B. To assist the principal, teachers, and parents to arrive
       at placement which meets individual needs

   C. To guide the kindergarten staff in developing a curriculum
       which is developmentally appropriate

II. MATERIALS

   A. Teachers

       1. shall screen children using the standardized
           School Readiness Screening Test of the Gesell
           Institute of Human Development

       2. shall provide a rich environment for ready
           kindergarten children

       3. shall provide additional concrete and explor-
           ative materials for children in the pre-kindergarten
           classroom

   B. Parents

       1. shall receive informational literature about
           the screening program

   C. Principal

       1. shall assist the teachers to secure appropriate
           assessment materials

       2. shall direct and assist teachers in the selection
           of parent information materials

       3. shall direct teachers and help with procurement
           of curriculum materials

III. STRUCTURE

    A. Teachers

        1. shall schedule time for individual assessments

        2. only trained teachers will conduct the screening

        3. shall provide principal and parent a placement recommendation, based on screening results

        4. shall incorporate screening results in the curriculum plan

    B. Parents

        1. shall have opportunity to attend information sessions and have questions answered

        2. shall have final responsibility for placement decision, jointly discussed with examiner and principal in conference

    C. Principal

        1. shall schedule time necessary for screening process

        2. shall plan and schedule parent information sessions

        3. shall determine child placement based on teacher recommendation and parent approval

        4. shall assign an assistant for the pre-kindergarten classroom

IV. BEHAVIORS

    A. Teachers

        1. shall attend a one-week Gesell Institute Training Program prior to conducting screening

        2. shall screen children individually as per standardized practices

        3. shall conference with parents about the screening results and placement recommendations

4. shall conference with preschool teacher about the screening results and placement recommendations whenever applicable

5. shall design a curriculum plan which meets the developmental needs of children

B. Parents

1. shall attend information session

2. shall bring child for screening process as scheduled

3. shall conference with teacher and principal about placement options

C. Principal

1. shall conduct parent sessions with assistance of the staff

2. shall support the staff in the screening process

3. shall determine class assignment based on screening results and parent conference

4. monitor the classroom instruction for developmental appropriateness

V. VALUES AND KNOWLEDGE

A. Teachers

1. recognize and plan for individual differences among children

2. provide an adjusted curriculum for less-ready children

3. communicate with parents about children's development

B. Parents

1. recognize and appreciate the difference between chronological age and developmental age

2. consider the child's developmental readiness and ability to cope as the determinants for placement

3. communicate with the school staff regularly about their child's development

C. Principal

    1. values and promotes a developmental point of view
        throughout the education community

    2. supports and promotes the need for an adjusted
        curriculum for the less-ready children

    3. values and promotes communication with parents

PLANNING THE SCREENING PROGRAM

The Role of the Coordinator

Educational research and implementation studies repeatedly stress the need for effective coordination and instructional leadership as key factors in educational change. The role of coordinator of the Toppenish Gesell Screening Program belongs to the principal.

The principal will be responsible for the planning, implementation and evaluation of the yearly activities in regards to the screening schedules, classroom curriculum, placement choices and procedures, and education of the parents and education community.

The principal will determine who shall take part in the Screening Program and identify the role of the members of the Screening Committee and the specific tasks and responsibilities of the examiners.

The Screening Committee

The principal may invite the following persons to serve on the Screening Committee:

    Teachers - Kindergarten and Preschool

    Directors of Preschools and Head Start Supervisors

    Curriculum Specialists and Curriculum Director

    Special Education Staff- Psychologist, Speech Therapist,
                             Nurse, Motor Development Specialist

    Parents

These persons shall advise the principal about the screening needs, education needs, and evaluation feedback. Committee members shall also assist with planning by providing data regarding enrollment and schedule of events.

The Screening Team

The Screening Team shall consist of persons who have completed the training as Developmental Examiners with the Gesell Institute. The examiners shall be responsible for screening the children on an individual basis, evaluating the results and making a placement recommendation to the parents and the principal. For additional responsibilities, see Section II, Procedures. Other specialists may assist in the screening program to evaluate health concerns, auditory skills, and motor skills. The principal shall determine the schedule of events to complete the screening process.

Data Gathering

In order to plan the screening program effectively, the principal or coordinator will need the following information:

1. Number of children enrolled in preschool or during kindergarten registration which need to be screened; names and birthdates.

2. Dates of major activities in the preschool or community schedule.

3. Number of English and Spanish-speaking children to be screened; names and language dominance.

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4. Number of children with special needs; names and nature of problem.

5. Progress Reports and preschool teacher recommendations for place-
    ment; names, teacher, school.

6. Parent concerns and placement request if applicable.

Timeline

     A schedule of events to be accomplished follows. The Screening
Committee and principal may use this timeline to guide their activi-
ties and each year re-establish firm dates.

GESELL SCREENING TIMELINE FOR 19____

Tasks	Person(s) Responsible	Dates
Planning		
Identify Screening Committee	Principal	February_____
Committee Meeting: Establish Schedule	Principal/Screening Comm.	March_____
Data Gathering	Principal/Screening Comm.	_____
Implementation/Parent Involvement		
Publicity and Announcements	Principal/Secretary	April_____
K Orientation	Principal/Screening Comm.	_____
K Registration	Principal/Secretary	_____
Staff Planning Meeting	Principal/Screening Comm.	_____
Parent Meeting/Gesell Assessment	Principal/Screening Comm.	_____
Implementation/Screening Phase I		
Determine Dates, Rooms, Examiners	Principal/Screening Team	April_____
Arrange for Substitutes	Principal/Secretary	_____
Prepare Testing Materials	Secretary	_____
Staff Planning Meeting	Principal/Screening Team	_____
Head Start Screening	Screening_____	May_____
Preschool Screening	Teams_____	_____
Tribal Head Start Screening	_____	_____
City Screening	_____	_____
Review Child Progress Reports	Screening Teams, including Specialists/Pre-school Teachers when appropriate	May_____
Placement Recommendations to Parents	"	_____
Parent Conferences (Pre-K only)	Teachers/Parents/Principal	_____
Placement Recommendations to Principal	Teachers/Parents/Principal	June_____

Tasks	Person(s) Responsible	Dates
Implementation/Screening Phase II*		
Enrollment and Orientation	Principal/Secretary	August_____
Child Screening	T.S.D. Psychologist	As needed during September_____
Parent Conference	Principal/Psychologist	_____
Placement Recommendation	Principal/Psychologist/ Teacher	By Sept. 30th

*Students who register in the Fall and were not previously screened may need to be temporarily placed in a kindergarten classroom according to the principal's assignment.

Beginning 1983-84, the Toppenish School District psychologist will be assigned to the Lincoln School during the first two and three weeks and remain available to conduct necessary screening on an individual basis. If time permits, kindergarten teachers may also conduct screenings at the end of their teaching time, from 2:30 to 3:00 p.m. and thus assist in establishing permanent child placement as early as possible in the school year. Spanish-speaking children will also be screened during September by a Spanish-speaking examiner.

All screening during the Fall shall be completed by September 30th and final placement shall be established no later than by October 1st of a given school year.

Teachers who wish to screen children who enter Lincoln School after October 1st shall have to make individual arrangements to screen those in their classrooms.

Lincoln School

GESELL SCREENING DATA for 19____

Center_____   Examiner_____

*To be completed by the Center Staff |*To be completed by the Examiner

Name of Child	DOB	Address/Telephone	Rm#	Dom. Lang.	Test Results	Rec'd Pre-K	Parent Conf.	Appro val	Follow-up Needed

Rm.#/Teacher's Name: Results: High, Medium, Low, Pre-K

1._____ 5._____   Follow-up Needed: Speech, Sp. Ed.,
2._____ 6._____   Mental Health, Medical/Dental
3._____ 7._____   Date of Screening(s)_____
4._____ 8._____   Page____of____

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TO: Kindergarten Staff

FROM: Fred Diaz, Principal

RE: Brainstorming

DATE: February 11, 1983

In an effort to improve our Kindergarten Program at Lincoln, we need time to discuss and share any concerns you might have.. These meetings should hopefully result in good interchange of ideas. Any recommendations should always consider:

    Is it educationally sound for children?
    Is it feasible? (Consider number, space, etc.)
    What are the advantages and disadvantages of my recommendations?

AGENDA:

1. Kindergarten Oli·ntation

        Screening Assessment - June
        Headstart

2. Gesell Testing:

    a. When?
        First week in May Headstart
        Parents of Pre-K

    b. Who?
        Everyone! First week in June, May 31 - June 2
        Spanish speakers for testing

3. Student Placement

    a. Pre-K
        Limit of 20 students per class. Five full time teachers
        Pre-K Parental permission all Pre-K levels.

    b. Bilingual

4. Budget Pre-Testing Substitute Days

TO: Kindergarten Staff

FROM: Fred Diaz, Principal

RE: Minutes of Brainstroming Session

DATE: February 11, 1983

During our January 31 Kindergarten meeting we agreed on the following:

1. Kindergarten Orientation:

    A. Orientation for parents and students will be held April 19, 1983.
    B. Kindergarten screening assessment presentation for parents wi_l
        be April 21, 1983 in the evening.
    C. A follow up meeting in June for parents of studer.ts recommended
        for Pre-K and/or "stay homers." A panel of paren:s for this
        evening presentation was recommended.

2. Gesell Testing

    A. Testing at Headstart would be done during the first week in May utilizing
        staff and BES.
    B. Recommendation was made to have Joyce Hernandez test in Spanish
        if Jovita was unable to test.
    C. City kids would be tested May 31 - June 3, 1983 depending on the
        affects of student contact time.

3. Student Placement

    A. Pre-K class should be limited to 20 maximum. It should begin
        with a small number possibly 15.
    B. Those Pre-K's who do not give parent consent can be grouped but
        must not be mixed.
    C. 20 limit for all Kindergarten rooms 22 maximum.
    D. We should be given final say on student placement by district policy.
    E. Budget mcney for next year for substitute days for testing new
        enrollees in the fall. Students should be tested before they
        are placed.
    F. Next meeting will have to be February 28, due to inservice
        during the week of February 14.

4. At our next meeting we will invite Jan Esquivel to review our recommendations.
    We will also explore the possibility of funding for all day, every day
    attendance for some students in need, i.e., migrants and/or non-English
    speakers, JOM, Pre-K, etc.

Gesell Planning Meeting

Present were: Fred Diaz, Diane Brunengo, Rex Crumrine, Bob Salazar, Anne Gauvin,
Bill Thach, and Debbie Keys

The following are events that were discussed and tasks that need to be accomplished
prior to or during each event.

1. Kindergarten Orientation - April 13, 1982 - at Lincoln School

    a) Notes-home to parents in sufficient time, Fred giving notes to
        Rex and Bob to send home.

    b) Orientation planning to be done at Lincoln staff meeting with teachers.

    c) Remind parents of Gesell Screening Presentation on 15th.

    d) Let parent know that Gesell Testing does not include K registration.
        K registration is April 19th-April 23rd.

    e) Make sure that parents know that K registration and Gesell testing are
        separate but, that both are required.

    f) K orientation is: 1 hour tour of school and rooms, parent questions,
        contact with school psychologist, nurse and secretary.

2. Gesell Screening Assessment Presentation - April 15th - Lincoln School - 7:30 pm

    a) Anne and Bill to meet with Lincoln teachers for Gesell Presentation
        planning at staff meeting.

    b) Promotions for Gesell Screening: notes home, newspaper, radio.

    c) Encourage both parents to come.

    d) Need to break parents into small groups in order to get concept across.

3. Gesell Testing - IMPD

    a) Anne will make arrangements with staff for testing English kids
        (April 12-16). Cleta Schell will help at Parker Heights.

    b) A Spanish speaking K teacher will be available one half day to test
        Spanish kids (April 19-23).

4. Gesell Testing - Region X - April 30th, '82 - at Parker Heights & Buena

    a) Bob and Rex to get list of names and addresses of children to be tested.

    b) Hard to contact families will be priority for April 30th testing.

    c) Head Starts to identify Spanish dominant children.

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    d) Work out who needs Spanish testers.

    e) Assign rooms to be used.

    f) Determine total number of people needed for each center.

5. <u>Placement Considerations</u>

    a) Child Progress report will be forwarded to Lincoln to assist with placement as soon as possible after last home visit and no later than June 8th.

    b) For kids who are borderline a special conference may be necessary between Head Start and Lincoln teachers. These conferences will be arranged between teachers in person or by phone.

    c) June 9 or 10 - testing to be completed and Lincoln teachers will give recommendations to Fred Diaz.

6. <u>Important Head Start Dates</u>

April 29	-	Last day of IMPD
June 4	-	Last day of Region X
April 19	-	Seasonal DSHS program begins
May 10	-	Summer IMPD begins

7. <u>Important Lincoln Dates</u>

April 13	-	K orientation - Parents and children - P.M.
April 15	-	Gesell Screening Assessment Presentation - Parents - Evening
April 19-23	-	K Registration begins
April 30	-	Lincoln teachers as Head Starts to test children
June 7-11	-	Gesell testing at Lincoln school

***MONDAY, MARCH 22nd, K TEACHERS PLANNING MEETING WITH FRED, BILL, & ANNE, AT 2:40 P.M. - BRING THIS WITH YOU.

NOTICE OF SPRING KINDERGARTEN REGISTRATION

Parents or guardians of children who will enter kindergarten in the Toppenish School

District in September, 1983, should register their children this spring. Children

must be 5 years of age on or before August 31st of the year entering and present proof

of same. Registration will be held the week of April 25-29 at Lincoln School from:

                    9:00 - 12:00   1:00 - 3:30

PLEASE BRING THE CHILD'S BIRTH CERTIFICATE AND/OR OTHER REASONABLE PROOF OF

BIRTHDATE AND IMMUNIZATION RECORDS, AS REGISTRATION CANNOT BE COMPLETED WITHOUT THIS

INFORMATION. UP-TO-DATE IMMUNIZATION IS REQUIRED BY LAW FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.

"KINDERGARTEN ORIENTATION"

There will be a "Kindergarten Orientation" for parents and students who will be in

Kindergarten this fall. The meeting is scheduled for:

   TUESDAY, APRIL 19, 1983   1:15 - 2:15   LINCOLN SCHOOL GYM

Purpose of the meeting is to acquaint the parents and the child with the teachers,

support staff and the school. Please bring your child who will be taken on a short

tour of the school during the meeting. Parents who may have questions or concerns

may phone 865-4555 or stop in at 309 N. Alder.
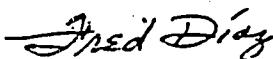
PLEASE NOTIFY NEIGHBORS AND FRIENDS

The Toppenish School District would like your help in notifying your neighbors of

this registration. If you know of children in your neighborhood who do not have

older brothers and sisters in school, please tell their parents or guardians about

procedures described in this letter.

"KINDERGARTEN ASSESSMENT & SCREENING"

There will be a "Kindergarten Assessment and Screening Orientation" for parents

only on Tuesday, April 21, 7:30-8:30 p.m. Purpose of the meeting is to discuss

and explain to both parents, our screening and assessment test, to meet the

teachers, ask questions regarding our program, etc. Childcare will be provided.

                    Sincerely,

                    Fred Diaz

                    Fred Diaz, Principal

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ESCUELA LINCOLN   (Sample)

NOTICIA DE REGISTRACION PARA KINDER

Padres o guardian de niños que piensan comenzar el grado kinder en el Distrito Escolar de Toppenish en septiembre, 1983, deben registrar a sus niños esta primavera. Niños tienen que cumplir 5 años de edad antes del 31 de agosto. Registración se llevará acabo durante la semana del 25 hasta el 29 de abril en la Escuela Lincoln de las:

> 9:00 - 12:00 a.m.   1:00 - 3:30 p.m.

FAVOR DE TRAER EL CERTIFICADO DE NACIMIENTO Y PRUEBA DE VACUNAS PORQUE NO ES POSIBLE LA REGISTRACIÓN SIN ESTA INFORMACIÓN. IMMUNIZACIÓN CORRIENTE SE REQUEIRE POR LEY PARA ASISTIR A LA ESCUELA.

ORIENTACION DE KINDER

Habrá una orientación de kinder para padres y estudiantes que estarán en el kinder este otoño. La junta se llevará acabo:

el martes, día 19 de abril, 1983 - 1:15-2:15 - en el gimnasio de la escuela

La intención de la junta es para familiarizar los padres y los niños con las maestras y otro personal de la escuela. Favor de traer a su niño/a quien ira en un corto excursión en la escuela durante la junta. Si ustedes tienen preguntas, pueden llamarme a la Escuela Lincoln, 865-4555.
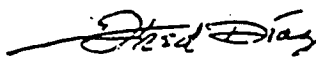
FAVOR DE NOTIFICAR A SUS VECINOS Y AMIGOS

El Distrito Escolar de Toppenish necesita su ayuda en notificando a su vecino o amigos de esta registración. Si usted sabe de niños en su vecindad que no tienen hermanos mayores en la escuela, háganos el favor de decirles a sus padres o guardianes de este anuncio. Muchas gracias.

AMILLARAMIENTO DE NINOS EN KINDER

Habrá una orientación para los padres de niños en kinder el jueves, 21 de abril, de 7:30-8:30 p.m. El intención de la junta es para descutir y explicar a los padres nuestro examen, hablar y conocer las maestras, preguntar preguntas tocante nuestro programa, etc. Vamos a tener personas que pueden cuidar sus niños durante la junta.

Sinceramente,

Fred Diaz, Principal

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THE SCREENING PROCESS

The Site

Once screening teams have been assigned, teachers shall report directly to the site early and set-up an appropriate space to conduct the screening on an individual basis. Testers may need to go to the classroom and bring the child back and forth to the testing area on their own.

Teachers will schedule in their lunch time and following the period for screening, staff should return to Lincoln School and complete their day.

A Standardized Approach

Examiners must follow the instructions of the Gesell Institute received during their training. The examiner should make every effort to help the child feel comfortable. The experienced and efficient examiner keeps good notes and registers the child's responses accurately. Children will be screened in their dominant language only.

Parents may be present during the screening. A chair for the parent can be placed slightly in the back of the child, out of his or her sight. If parents interfere and intervene with the screening process, they may be requested to leave.

THE SCREENING PROCESS (continued)

The Examiner's Checklist and Face Sheet should be completed
in full as soon as possible after the screening; additional comments
and concerns should also be noted if further assessment is deemed
necessary (i.e., speech therapy, etc.).

Recordkeeping

Completed exam booklets should be turned in to the school
secretary on a daily basis. The placement recommendation should
be marked on the booklet cover. If results are needed for parent
conferences, then examiners may wait to turn the records in until
after the time of the conferences. (For placement policies and
conferences guidelines, please refer to Sections III and IV.)

Gesell Screening records will be kept in a central office
file throughout the year and will be available for teachers' use
as necessary. These records will remain at Lincoln School for
some years for future reference. All records will remain confidential.

PLACEMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENTAL POINT OF VIEW*

The major emphasis of the developmental placement philosophy
is to "demonstrate and test effective educational strategies that
help young children acquire developmentally appropriate educational
skills." Guidelines for a developmental approach addresses the need
for instructional practices which meet individual needs of children.

> An individualized program does not mean isolating
> children or never working with children in groups,
> but does refer to planning carefully for each
> child. In addition to knowledge of child
> development and different approaches to teaching,
> this task requires knowledge of the specific
> developmental levels of each child. It calls
> for fashioning the child's educational program
> by using curriculum sequence of developmentally
> and educationally appropriate experiences.
>
> In summary, Basic Educational Skills Programs
> must attend to the individual child by:
>
> - Identifying and using curriculum that shows
>   concern for the total child and values
>   individualized instruction;
>
> - Providing experiences that are appropriate to
>   the developmental levels, interest, needs of
>   the child;
>
> - Providing a healthy physical environment and
>   intellectual climate to enhance the social-
>   emotional growth of the child;
>
> - Fostering a positive self-concept, including
>   seeing oneself as a successful learner;
>
> - Identifying and building on the child's areas
>   of strength.

*Taken from the Guidelines of the Basic Educational Skills Project

PLACEMENT POLICY - RETENTIONS AND PROMOTIONS

Like teachers, parents, administrators, and principals every-
where, the Toppenish School District staff has been struggling each
year with the realization that a significant number of students are
not ready to go on to the next grade. Based on educational research
findings, the emphasis of the Toppenish School District has been to
identify developmental and achievement lags as early as possible and
to prevent a series of negative experiences for the child.

In partial answer to this problem, the K-1 school, Lincoln,
established a K-1 transition room in 1979-80 as a placement option
for children who had completed kindergarten but who were not ready
for first grade. At the same time, a search began for screening
programs of entering students and a pilot effort of the Gesell
Screening Program was begun in the Fall of 1980-81. During the
school year, 1980-81, several kindergarten teachers along with the
principal and members of the BES Curriculum Committee expressed a
related concern that children whose Gesell screening results are
low and show lack of readiness, also needed a placement option not
yet available at this time. The pre-kindergarten classroom was
recommended for 1981-82 and following a Toppenish School District
board approval, became yet another placement option at Lincoln
School.

The various placement options at Lincoln School and within the Toppenish School District call for complex decisions by teachers, parents, and principal. In order to provide the best placement possible, a close relationship between home and school has continually been stressed by the school staff and strongly endorsed by the BES Project. In all cases which involve irregular promotion through the grades (i.e., pre-k, retentions or K-1 placements) the procedure involves:

1. teacher recommendations based on documented evidence

2. psychological referral and review, if necessary, and

3. parent conference and written approval

In view of these options at the K-1 school and in the interest of meeting individual needs of children as a BES goal, the principal and BES staff and Curriculum Committee members researched the issue of retention vs. promotion. An SEDL publication, RX - The Literature on Social Promotion Versus Retention, shed some light on this issue. (See Section VI)

According to research, "the policy of social promotion began to be practiced on the grounds that failing a child did not help the child academically, damaged the child's self-concept, and dis-criminated against the average, below average, and unwilling

student". (RX, page 3) The research paper also details arguments against retention, arguments against social promotion, and points out that many similar arguments can be made against both policies. Thus, the educator finds himself in a dilemma when trying to determine the best course of action. Fortunately, the research also indicates that some new approaches toward retention or promotion are working. The Finlayson Study (1977), for example, found that retained pupils actually increased their self-concept when compared to those promoted or borderline students. According to Finlayson, "the retained pupils, on the other hand, gained in self-concept, perhaps because they felt more competent within a more familiar environment".

Another study reminds educators that "academic deficiencies stem from different causes - for example, inadequate earlier instruction, poor study habits, dislike of a subject, general slowness in learning - different causes require different strategies for remediation". (Reiter, 1973)

According to the Gesell Institute, a requirement for implementation of the Screening and Placement Program is a "willingness by parents, teachers and administrative personnel to have any child who is inadvertently overplaced, repeat a grade".

CONTINUITY BETWEEN LINCOLN AND PRESCHOOL STAFF

Opportunities for cooperative planning and sharing of information about the children and the Gesell Screening Program should be provided frequently during the school year. Each group should be encouraged to initiate, contact, and thus support the process of screening and conferencing with parents for the benefit of the child.

The K-1 Lincoln School Principal is responsible for the coordination and data gathering schedule of the screening process and will meet with directors of local preschool programs in Toppenish to extend the goals of continuity to the preschool education community.

Head Start supervisors meet yearly with the Principal to plan the Spring Phase I of the screening. At this time, testing dates are scheduled and plans for parent notifications and conferencing are arranged.

The Head Start Education Specialist also initiated efforts to provide the sharing of information between the EPIC Head Start staff and the elementary schools in 1982. As a result, the EPIC Head Start staff will prepare a "Child's Progress Report" for each child who is of kindergarten-entering age each Spring. This report is presented to parents during the last home visit of the year and permissions are requested to send the information to the school.

CONTINUITY BETWEEN LINCOLN AND PRESCHOOL STAFF (continued)

A copy of the Child's Progress Report is sent directly to the public
school in May and is available to the kindergarten teachers on
request.   Teachers should ask the school secretary for a copy of the
report when needed and the Child's Progress Report should be studied
and considered in the final placement recommendation. A copy of the
EPIC Head Start Child Progress Report and instructions for completion
follow.

EPIC Head Start staff also prepare a "Special Services Report"
at the year's end which documents special services provided during
the Head Start year. The school copy of these reports will be sent
directly to the Special Education Coordinator and this person will
be responsible for the continuation of special services as identi-
fied.   A copy of the Head Start End of the Year Special Services
Report form follows.

Lastly, the support of the Head Start and preschool staff should
be fostered in conference with parents about placement options.
Preschool teachers and Head Start staff can assist with parent
contacts and in some cases Head Start teachers may be invited to
sit in on the parent conferences.

Purpose

The purpose of the Child Progress Report is to give a narrative summary of the child's progress this year in Head Start. It is a way to draw together the information from the preschool profile and classroom observation to share with the child's parents and to pass on to the child's teacher next year.

Instructions

You will fill out a progress report for each child in your class before the final home visit. Type or print neatly (the report will be useless if nobody can read it). Comment briefly on each of the heading areas. Comment on whether a child's skills are at, above or below age level in each of the areas and give some examples of skills the child has acquired this year. Emphasize strengths, weaker areas and areas where improvement has been seen and what "works" with the child, special interests, etc. Be objective. Describe the child's behavior without being judgemental or interpreting "why". The report is meant to <u>help</u> the teacher next year to know the child and what his/her experiences were in Head Start, <u>not</u> to prejudice him/her in any way or stigmatize the child.

<u>For children with Spanish speaking parents</u> try to translate the information in each box into Spanish directly under the English. If you have too much to say, it may be necessary to write up the NCR copy in English and a separate non-NCR copy in Spanish for the parents and give the parents both an English and Spanish copy.

Health, Attendance, Self-help Skills

Is the child generally healthy? Did s/he have frequent colds, runny nose, ear infections? Was s/he absent a lot? Could s/he take care of his/her own needs such as washing, brushing teeth, following routines, mealtime procedures? Does s/he know personal information such as name, sex, address? Nutritional concerns? See self-help skills on preschool profile.

Social, Emotional, Behavioral

Does the child get along with peers? Did s/he have special friends, play mostly alone or get along with everyone? How did the child respond to limits? Were there special disciplinary techniques that the child responded well to? Does s/he prefer the company of children or adults? Was s/he clingy or avoid adults? Does s/he seem confident and willing to try new things or is s/he hesitant and fearful in new situations? Reflective or impulsive? Mental Health concerns? See social/play skills on preschool profile.

Motor Skills

Check whether the child is left handed, right handed or not established.
<u>Fine Motor</u> – Are the child's fine motor skills at age level according to the preschool profile. Give examples of some of the most advanced fine motor tasks a child can do in the areas of cutting, tracing, copying shapes, numerals and letters. See fine motor skills on preschool profile.

<u>Gross Motor</u> – Are the child's gross motor skills at age level? Balance? Speed? Endurance? Coordination? Climbing skills? Strength? Does s/he enjoy physical activity? Running? Playing games? Riding trikes? Creative Movement? See gross motor skills on preschool profile.

<u>Cognitive, Pre-academic skills</u> – Does the child learn new concepts quickly? Can s/he match, sort, classify objects, colors, shapes, numerals, letters? Counting skills? Can s/he name colors, shapes, numerals or letters? Can s/he order by size? Reproduce a design with blocks, pegs, beads? See pre-academic skills on preschool profile.

Language Skills

Language Dominance - Some schools (including Head Start) do class or small group placement by language dominance and so would like to know what the child's dominant language is and how language dominance was determined. If a combination of parent interview and child observation was used check both those boxes. If a test was used to determine language dominance indicate which test. Check balanced bilingual only if the child functions equally well in both languages. Does the child speak clearly? Is s/he understood by children and adults? Can s/he express him/herself? Does s/he use 2-3 word phrases or complete sentences? Does s/he ask questions? Listen attentively? For how long? Does s/he follow 1, 2, 3 step directions? Can s/he repeat a tapping or clapping sequence? Did the child receive speech therapy this year? See understanding language and oral language on preschool profile.

Recommendations:
Include recommendations of some activities the parents could do with the child over the summer. If the child will be going on to public school and is ready recommend that s/he attend kindergarten in the Fall. If the child is eligible for Head Start the next year recommend that s/he return to Head Start in the Fall. If the child is in IMPD s/he is not usually eligible for the adjacent IMPD program (i.e., Winter to Seasonal or Seasonal to Winter) unless the child has a handicapping condition, is in need of special services from Head Start on a continuing basis or there are some special needs or circumstances where you would recommend ongoing placement in an IMPD classroom. This recommendation (to continue a child in the adjacent IMPD program) should be discussed with your parent coordinator and program supervisor before making that recommendation.

The Final Home Visit
Final home visits will be done April 14-29 for IMPD at Sunnyside, Parker Heights and Buena and May 17-June 5 for Region X and Yakima IMPD classrooms. Make sure you have all the following information before going on the final home visit:

1. The Education Progress Report (from teacher).
2. The Health Summary form (from nurse).
3. Special Services Report (from speech or mental health therapist if child not continuing in Summer IMPD).
4. The updated Preschool Profile.
5. The Individual Program Sheet.

1. Share all this information with the parents verbally.

2. Go over the preschool profile and individual program sheet with the parents.

3. Have parents sign the Education progress report and indicate if they want it forwarded on to the child's next school.

4. Write the name and address of the school the child will be attending next year on the education progress report and the Special Services Report.

5. Have parents sign for release of which information on Special Services Report (if they wish us to forward that information to schools).

6. Give parents the yellow copies of the Education progress report, Health summary form and Special Services report.

7. After the home visit file the white copies back in the child's permanent file. Staple the pink copies together and sort by school where the child will be

EPIC
CHILD PROGRESS REPORT
Reporte De Progreso Del Niño

CHILD'S NAME   CENTER   DATE OF
Nombre de Niño_____ Centro_____   CONFERENCE
                                                                Fecha de la_____
                                                                Conferencia
BIRTHDATE   TEACHER   SCHOOL ATTENDING
Fecha De Nacimiento_____ Maestro_____   NEXT YEAR_____
                                                                Escuela Asistiendo proximo
GRADE OR LEVEL_____   año
grado o nivel

HEALTH, ATTENDANCE, SELF-HELP SKILLS
Salud, asistencia, habilidades de ayudarse asi mismo

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL-BEHAVIORAL
Social-emocional-comportamiento

MOTOR SKILLS   ____Left-Handed   ____Right-Handed   ____Handedness Not Established
habilidades motoras mano izquierda   mano derecha   no establecido

   FINE MOTOR
   Habilidades de musculos finos

   GROSS MOTOR
   Habilidades fisicos de musculos grandes

COGNITIVE - PRE-ACADEMIC SKILLS
habilidades pre-academicos

LANGUAGE SKILLS   ENGLISH DOMINANT____ SPANISH DOMINANT____   BALANCED BILINGUAL____
Habilidades de lenguaje dominante Ingles   dominante Español

LANGUAGE DOMINANCE DETERMINED BY ____Parent Interview ____Child Interview ____Test
lengua dominante fue determinado por entrevista de padre/observacion del niño/examen

RECOMMENDATIONS
recomendaciones   FORWARD TO SCHOOL __Y __N
                                                        Manda a la escuela

PARENT SIGNATURE   TEACHER SIGNATURE

EPIC

Head Start End of Year Special Services Report

Child's Name_____ Date of Birth_____Age_____

Date of Report_____ Center_____

Head Start Teacher_____ Center Address_____

_____

_____

Person Completing Report_____
Position_____

Evaluation Dates and Summary:

Special Services Provided in Head Start:

Results of Treatment:

Recommendations:

Parent permission to forward this report to school:

_____School Attending Next Year_____

   Parent Signature   Grade_____School District_____

                           School Address_____

                           _____

                           _____

Other information available from Head Start Center upon receipt of parental permission:

_____Tests _____Developmental Profile

_____IEP _____Diagnostic Report   _____

_____Health History   Parent Signature
                           Parent permission to forward to school

_____Other_____

white to Head Start Center; yellow to Parent: pink to Next Year's School

Toppenish School District procedures require a parent's signature whenever a child is retained or special placement is recommended. <u>The final authority of the placement choice is a parent's right</u>.

Following a conferencing process, which must include the principal, parents are asked to sign the following forms. In case of difficulty in reaching the parents, a minimum of two notices shall be sent home; this failing, the principal may provide teacher time for a home visit. Children whose parents cannot be reached must be placed in regular kindergarten. Additional guidelines for parent conferences are included in Section IV, Parent Involvement.

Sample copies of the parent notice and approval forms follow:

(Sample)

Lincoln School

Toppenish, Washington

Date _____

To:

The Gesell Screening assessment on _____
has been completed. The results of our assessment indicate some
areas of concern. We would like the opportunity to discuss the
test results with you and request your input in determining the
placement of your child next year.
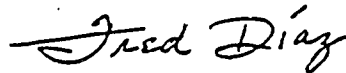
Where? <u>LINCOLN SCHOOL, 309 N. Alder, Toppenish</u>

When? _____

Time? _____

<u>Your attendance is a must!</u> Failure to attend this meeting could
mean improper placement for your child. If you are unable to
keep this appointment time, please let us know by calling
Lincoln School at 865-4555, and we will be happy to reschedule
a more convenient time. Thank you for your cooperation. We
look forward to seeing you.

Sincerely,

Fred Diaz

Fred Diaz, Principal

_____
Examiner

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ESCUELA LINCOIN

Toppenish, Washington

Fecha_____

Estimados Padres de_____   ⌐

Hemos terminado el exam Gesell con su hijo/a_____.
Los resultos de nuestro examen ha indicado varias areas de importancia.
Nos gustaria tener la oportunidad de discutir los resultos del examen
con usted. Hemos arreglado una cita para colocar a su hijo/a con la
ayuda de ustedes.

    ¿DONDE?   ESCUELA LINCOLN, 309 North Alder
    ¿CUANDO? _____
    ¿HORA?   _____

Su asistencia es muy necesario. Si no asisten esta junta podra
resultar en un impropio colocacion para su hijo/a. Si ustedes no
podran venir, favor de dejarnos saber - llame a la Escuela Lincoln
865-4555 y arreglaremos otra cita mas conveniente. Gracias por su
cooperacion. Esperamos verlos.

                Sinceramente,

                Fred Diaz

                Fred Diaz, Director

              Examinador/a

Lincoln School
Toppenish, Washington

(Date)

The Gesell assessment on _____ has been

completed by the staff. The areas assessed are listed below with a (✓)

indicating the areas in question.

                Gesell test assessment
                of emotional, social,
                and developmental skills_____

                Immaturity   _____

In the professional judgment of the Lincoln staff assessment team, we

feel that your child appears not to be developmentally ready for regular

kindergarten. We are recommending that in the best interest of your

child you should consider the following options:

1. Keeping the child home one more year, or

2. Placing the child in the pre-kindergarten room (child would then go
    into kindergarten the following year).

_____

The test and recommendations have been discussed with me.

_____ I agree to keep my child at home next year.

_____ I agree to place my child in the pre-kindergarten room.

_____ I do not agree with the recommendation and prefer that my
            child be placed in a kindergarten room.

Escuela Lincoln
Toppenish, Washington

_____
(Fecha)

Hemos terminado el exam Gesell con _____.

Las areas examinadas estan marcadas abajo con un (✓).

Exam Gesell de
habilidades emocionales,
sociales y desarrollos   _____

Madurez   _____

Las maestras de la Escuela Lincoln estan de acuerdo que su hijo/a no

esta listo para asistir el grado kinder. Estamos recomendando que la

mejor decision para su hijo/a es una de las siguientes:

1. Deje que se quede en casa el ano proximo para que pueda avanzar
   en madurez y habilidades sociales y emocionales, o

2. Que venga a la escuela, pero colocarlo en el cuarto pre-kinder
   (y el siguiente ano entrar al grado kinder).

_____

El exam y recomendaciones se han discutido conmigo.

_____ Estoy en acuerdo que mi hijo/a se quede en la casa.

_____ Estoy en acuerdo que mi hijo/a asista el cuarto pre-kinder.

_____ No estoy en acuerdo con la recomendacion y prefiero que mi
           hijo/a este en el kinder regular.

_____
Firma de Padres o Guardian

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

As stated earlier, parental awareness, acceptance, and support of the Screening and Developmental Placement Program are key factors to its success. Parent involvement opportunities regarding the Gesell screening take the following forms:

1. Awareness and informational literature and announcements. Samples of this literature can be found in Section VI, Resources.

2. Orientation and tour for parents and children. At this time parents and children come to Lincoln School to tour the facilities and meet the various staff members who might interact with the children during the coming year. A sample orientation meeting agenda follows.

3. Gesell Screening Parent Meeting. This meeting is specifically planned to familiarize parents with the Gesell screening process and to answer questions about placement options. Typically, the principal introduces the purpose of the program, talks about the kindergarten program, the screening process, and the pre-kindergarten program in a large group situation. Following this introduction, the parents are divided into small discussion groups lead by the teaching staff and the screening tool is demonstrated. The rationale for small groups was to promote greater input from individual parents. A sample meeting agenda follows.

PROCEDURES FOR KINDERGARTEN ORIENTATION

April 19, 1983
1:15 - 2:15

1. Tag new students at the door.

2. Welcome to parents and students by Mr. Diaz.

3. Introduction of the Kindergarten Teachers.

4. Assign students to Kindergarten Teachers.

   Take students to room for orientation, songs, games, etc.
   Short tour of school facilities.
   Refreshments for the students in the "K" room.
   Return children to gym at approximately 2:15 p.m.

5. INTRODUCTIONS: 2-3 minutes presentations

   1. Mr. Diaz - Lincoln School Principal

   2. Mrs. Herrera - School Secretary

   3. Jan Esquivel - Administrative Assistant

   4. Harlan Lyso - Motor Perception Specialist

   5. Linda Slentz - Speech Therapist

   6. Dr. Kelly - School Psychologist

   7. Elsie Kerr - School Nurse

There will be a "Question/Answer" period.

KINDERGARTEN TEACHERS

Mrs. Doris Schultz
Mrs. Jovita Castilleja
Mrs. Heidi Castilleja
Mrs. Mary Ann Tobia
Mrs. Loretta Fendell

Gesell Screening Meeting Agenda

7:30 – 8:30 p.m.

Lincoln School

I.   Introduction by the Principal

II.   *Film: "Seattle's Kindergarten"

III.   The Purpose of the·Screening ⟩ Large group with principal
       Placement Options

IV.   The Pre-Kindergarten Program ⟩ Pre-K teacher

V.   The Gesell Screening Tool
                                    ⟩ Small groups with K teachers
       Question & Answer Session
          (English & Spanish)

*Films are available from E.S.D. Others which can be
used are "What is Kindergarten?" or "Foundations of
Reading and Writing".

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES (continued)

4. Answering Parents' Questions About Placement. Teachers may also

    review the "Some Frequently Asked Questions about Developmental

    Placement" reading which follows in preparation for the meeting

    and/or individual conferences. If some questions are particularly

    difficult to answer, practice with others through role-play is

    extremely helpful and is highly recommended.

    In interviews conducted by the BES Education Specialist in 1982,

    the Lincoln kindergarten staff reported that the following

    questions were the most frequently asked by parents about the

    Gesell screening:

    Type A - About Placement

    Ex: "Where will my child be placed after pre-kindergarten?"

         "Can I request placement in regular kindergarten if the
          Gesell score recommends pre-kindergarten?"

         "How does my child compare with others in the class?"

    Type B - Other Parent Concerns

    Ex: "What are you testing?"

         "How can I help my child be more ready for school?"

         "How much growth takes place during the summer months?"

    These questions were the most difficult to answer:

         "Why is my child not ready for regular kindergarten?"

         "Do you think my child will have trouble learning to read?"

         "How do I know if the Gesell test is valid?"

         "Aren't you labeling kids with this test?"

Q. Why is so much emphasis placed on the first year of school?

A. The first year is the educational foundation upon which the remainder of a
person's life preparation is built. Success breeds confidence and self-
assurance, while failure leads to frustration, uncertainty and feeling of
inadequacy. Children who begin an academic program before they are ready
may suffer for the rest of their lives because of this one mistake in timing.

Q. Even if my child isn't ready developmentally, why can't he catch up during
the year? After all, children are highly adaptable.

A. The child placed in first grade before being ready developmentally feels
pressure to perform beyond his present abilities. He finds he cannot do
what is expected of him, no matter how hard he tries. He begins feeling
stupid and inadequate and trapped. He knows his parents are disappointed
in him but he can't do anything about it, and because he is humiliated by
failure day after day he soon hates school and eventually himself. Such
self-deprecation can cause lifetime emotional scars.
    This child is usually an early candidate for remedial classes, where
more often than not his feeling of unworthiness and inadequacy block his
learning there too. An unready child is sometimes made to pay a very high
price for his unreadiness.

Q. What is meant by "school readiness?"

A. School readiness means a child's total preparedness to master school tasks.
Readiness depends upon physical, neurological, emotional and social maturation,
as well as upon previous learning. The "ready" child learns and usually
experiences you in learning.

Q. What is maturation and what is meant by maturational levels of development?

A. Maturation is the process of orderly growth according to the individual's
own biological "time table." Physical, intellectual, emotional and social
development follows a sequential pattern which is determines by genetic
factors. Maturation can take place without learning, but learning must al-
ways be preceded by maturation.

Q. Isn't too much importance attached to maturation?

A. No, maturation is an essential ingredient of all readiness. We can neither
produce it, hurry it, nor ignore it. The only wise course is to wait with
patience for it to develop.

Q.   Is it true that children vary greatly in the rate of development?

A.   Yes, normal first grade children may vary as much as two years.
     Generally girls develop more rapidly than boys. At six, the average
     boy is six months behind the average girl. However, one must not
     assume that all girls develop faster than boys. These are only the
     averages.

Q.   My little boy won't be starting kindergarten when all his friends do.
     When I did my best to explain today, he cried quite a bit and just
     looked sort of hurt, as if he couldn't trust me. What can a parent do?

A.   At first he may be terribly disappointed, but as educaters and parents
     we have the responsibility of providing what is best for our children.
     We certainly wouldn't let a child ride a bicycle in the street before
     he could control his balance...even if it did disappoint him. How can
     we be less intelligent when thinking of his education? Most important
     is the parent's attitude. If parents accept the placement, feel it is
     best and support it, the child will more readily accept it.

Q.   What are the long range advantages of developmental placement?

A.   At every grade level the child will experience academic success which
     should make him more interested in school. The student will be more
     able to make mature decisions all through his school career.

Q.   Why aren't children taught to read in kindergarten or readiness class?

A.   Reading is a complex process which must take place amid a myriad of
     mental and physical activities. Most of these can be performed only
     after maturation of nerve, muscle, visual, auditory, coordinating and
     general intellectual components of the child's anatomy has taken place.
     Oral language is the foundation upon which written language is built.
     Readiness activities include listening, hearing, seeing, feeling, moving,
     experiencing and expressing in an organized environment.

Q.   My daughter is presently reading at a third grade level or better. I think
     she should be at least in second grade but the school says no, that she
     belongs in first grade. That's not sensible, is it?

A.   Many children who are "born readers" are considerably farther ahead in read-
     ing than in any other subject. Though reading has in the past often been
     used as a basis for determining grade placement, it can be so far out of
     line with the rest of a child's academic performance and general behavior
     maturity that we have learned to be very wary of it as an indication of what
     grade a child should be in. Be glad she is a good reader, see to it that
     she has plenty to read and let it go at that.

Q. The teacher said my son is immature and isn't ready for first grade this fall. However, the law says he can enter first grade. Don't we have a right to insist he be admitted?

A. Your son's November birthday would alert us at once to questioning his readiness. And we can practically quarantee that if the teacher says he isn't ready for first grade she knows what she's talking about. The most important thing is ready and able to do the work assigned. You do have a legal right to insist your son enter first grade, but we can assure you that doing what is good for him educationally is a lot more important than insisting on his legal rights.

Q. Why so you so often say "he" rather than "she" when speaking about children in trouble? Are you implying that boys have more trouble than girls?

A. Most behavior clinics find that many more boys than girls are referred to them. It is conservatively estimated that five times as many boys as girls get into serious difficulty. Nobody seems absolutely certain whether ther is someting in the male organism which makes it harder for boys to grow up, or whether it may just be that in our present culture the conventional demands of home and school are easier for girls than for boys. We do know that boys develop more slowly than girls do in the early years, which makes it desirable for them to be a little older than girls are when they start school Since schools seldom take behavioral levels into account in actual practice, boys may have more trouble because they are expected to do school work they are not ready for.

Q. My son is eight years old and starting third grade. I know now that he is not ready for school when he started first grade. Near the end of the first year his teacher told me he was just not getting the work. Although I suggested he be retained in first grade, she thought a little summer tutoring was all that was needed.

At the end of second grade, I again suggested that he be retained. The teacher said she had considered it but decided against it since he was an "on the fence" case. Some days he studied well, other days not. Again summer tutoring was recommended. The principal also insists my son be kept with the same group in spite of poor work and inattentiveness, saying he will get better as he grows and matures.

My son rather likes the idea of repeating second grade, as some of his best friends were held back. Should I insist he be put back into second grade now? I have worried about this so much, as his brother also was too immature when he started school and later dropped out of high school.

A. We are by no means against tutoring or remedial help but we do not approve of giving nonready boys lots of summer work in an effort to keep them afloat in a grade where they don't belong. We strongly advise having him put back into the second grade now. Although he may well be one who is better at living than at learning, you might be surprised at his academic success if he is allowed to repeat. You have a great advantage in that he himself likes the idea.

Q. Our school superintendent is all in favor of social promotion, but some of us parents wonder. It seems to us that if a child is not ready for promotion you're not doing him a kindness to promote him.

A. Social promotion, the automatic promoting of all children merely to avoid hurting their feelings by holding them back, is in our opinion the depth of error. Of all strange educational notions of the last decade, this is one of the worst.

Social promotion is like staying away from the doctor and pretending you are not ill in a case of serious illness. Subterfuge and pretending and soft speaking really don't fool or protect anyone.

Although social promotion is intended to keep a child happy, no child is happy being required to do work that is way beyond him. Honesty in school as elsewhere is unquestionably the best policy.

Taken from <u>One Piece of the Puzzle</u>, Carll and Richard

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES (continued)

5. __Parent Conferences__. Although routine teacher-parent conferences

are scheduled throughout the year, special conferences are also

required whenever the screening results indicate that the child

may not be ready for kindergarten. __The principal must be__

__present at parent conferences for special placement__.

> PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES ABOUT PLACEMENT: GUIDELINES
>
> Parent-Teacher conferences are critically important for at
> least two reasons:
>
> 1. Decisions must be made about placement, level and kind of
>   parent involvement sought by teacher, and the teaching
>   environment most effective for a given child.
>
> 2. This is a time to gain cooperation and support, prevent
>   misunderstandings, convey the school's concern about
>   readiness, and together share information about a student.
>
> Therefore, the following approach is suggested in order to
> facilitate the conference. The goal is for both parents and
> teachers to come away feeling good, with real and relevant
> information having been shared in non-threatening ways and
> decisions about the student, the role of the parent, and the
> process being clear to all involved.
>
> 1. Make a checklist and have it in front of you during the
>   conference. Include the following:
>
>   a. Reason for meeting, i.e., give information about,
>   get information about, make a decision, etc.
>
>   b. Written materials needed, the child's work
>
>   c. Other documentation; handouts, samples, written
>   explanation of tests, may be helpful to put things
>   in perspective.
>
> 2. Begin the conference by reviewing the __purpose__, __process__,
>   and __importance__ of this time with the parent. *If
>   previous information was given or is needed by the
>   parent for this meeting, __review__ the main points briefly.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES (continued)

    a.   Include in your discussion, statements of purpose:

        "We are here to . . . share information about your child.

                . . . explore placement options.

                . . . determine the best placement choice."

    b.   Stress the importance of this decision and <u>concerns for his/her success</u>:

        "Our goal is to . . . determine the best education program
                        possible for your child.

                . . . make sure he is successful in school.

                . . . prevent failure and frustration."

    c.   Emphasize that the decision is to be reached together:

        "We want to know . . . your concerns as a parent.

                . . . your intentions about his/her school
                      experience.

                . . . if the process is clearly understood."

3.   Discuss the procedures and alternative for placement:

    a.   The recommendation

    b.   Parental rights

    c.   The options: stay home or in preschool, pre-k, kindergarten

    d.   The future placement

4.   <u>Ask questions</u> to find out:

    a.   If parent understands the procedures.

    b.   If parent agrees or has concerns or feelings about the
        process or the information you have just reviewed.

    c.   Ask for parent's concerns about their own child and ask
        for information about the student relevant to your concerns,
        recommendations, or observations of student.

5.   Share your information beginning with points of agreement with
    parent and make your recommendation clear. Stress that your
    primary concern is to have the child placed in an environment
    where s/he will experience success.

6. Summarize the discussion by pointing to all positive or negative factors agreed upon and those you strongly believe in and then use this to arrive at the decision. Take notes on the perceptions of the parents, especially if they are different than yours.

7. Get parent's agreement. If there is reticence, ask what items they have a concern about or if there is additional information they would like to request.

8. Ask the parent to sign the placement form.

9. If this has to be explained to a spouse for approval, offer to write the main points affecting the decision for the parent to take home, or to meet again with the other parent if desired.

10. Thank the parents for their cooperation. Encourage the parents to communicate frequently in the coming year about the child's progress, and to stay involved in the child's learning. Suggest that parents work with their child at home or perhaps help as classroom volunteers in the future.

PRE-K PLACEMENT CONFERENCE CHECKLIST

Materials Needed:

1. Child's screening forms.

2. Head Start Progress Report, preschool teacher's comments
    and/or notes from conference with previous teacher. Name
    of preschool_____ and teacher_____.
    (Progress Report is available in late May. See the school
    secretary if needed.)

3. Copies of other Gesell papers for comparison (no names).

4. Data about placement/retention trends which support the
    process for early identification.

5. Forms requiring parent's signature.

                              AGENDA

1. Review purpose of meeting. Introduce yourself and the
    principal.

2. Review the rationale behind the screening and placement
    process.

3. Ask about parent's perceptions of child's:

    maturity____
    coordination____
    ability to stay on task____
    reactions and behavior in large groups____
    shyness or aggressiveness____
    reactions to frustrations____
    academic (numbers, letters, language)____
    things and activities the child really likes to do____

4. Share results and recommendations - check for
    misunderstanding, clarify.

5. If parent agrees, get signature and explain that child
    will be placed in pre-kindergarten this coming year and
    then be in kindergarten the year after.

6. If parent disagrees, get signature and explain that the
    child will be placed in kindergarten this coming year.

    After the conference, complete your notes, attach all
    together, and give Gesell Form and Placement Form with
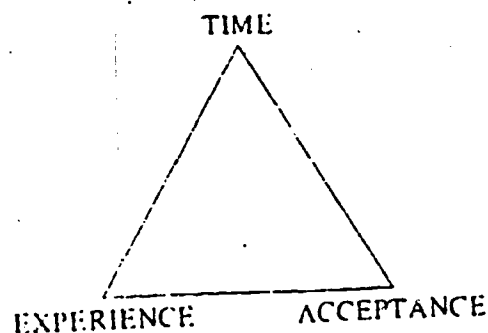   notes to the office for documentation.

THE PRE-KINDERGARTEN ROOM

Children who scored below the 5 year-old developmental age
on the Gesell Screening Assessment are usually recommended for
placement in the pre-kindergarten room. Also considered in the
placement recommendation are the preschool teacher recommendation,
the family situation, and parental choice.

It is the general recommendations of the Gesell Institute,
confirmed by the kindergarten teachers, principal, Toppenish
School District psychologist, and the BES staff, that these
children need a program designed specifically for this level.
The pre-kindergarten curriculum needs to focus on language develop-
ment, large and small motor coordination skills, self-concept, and
child initiative as well as socialization skills.

A curriculum approach which is compatible with a learning
center's design and calls for small group interaction with the
teacher and some time for child-initiated activities is preferable.
Visual and auditory training, motor training, ideas and concepts
development, oral language development, and other readiness skills,
such as pre-writing, should be provided systematically.

The Goals, Objectives, Learning Environment, and Center's
Equipment for the pre-kindergarten room are prescribed in the
Gesell book, One Piece of the Puzzle, parts of which follow:

```
                    TIME
                     /\
                    /  \
                   /    \
                  /      \
                 /        \
                /          \
               /_____\
          EXPERIENCE    ACCEPTANCE
```

The Pre-Kindergarten room exists to provide the child with:

TIME to grow and develop as nature intended him to. There is no pushing, or attempt to "get him ready." but a respect for nature's timing and the patience to let his readiness emerge.

EXPERIENCES through which he can make discoveries about things, about life, about himself. Involvement of the whole child is a reality, not a cliché.

ACCEPTANCE without condition: respect for the unique human being he is: and trust in his goodness and capabilities.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PRE-KINDERGARTEN ROOM

To help the child develop a strong sense of self - to allow him to "blossom from within."

To provide an environment rich in equipment and materials, where experiences are direct and concrete, to build the foundation for later, more abstract experiences.

To provide movement experiences for development of physical and motor skills.

To promote growth in visual, auditory, and tactual perception . . . to sharpen the senses.

To provide an opportunity to learn and practice patterning of all kinds . . . visual, auditory, kinesthetic.

To provide listening activities.

To provide many and varied opportunities for oral expression.

To build a foundation for sophisticated math concepts through manipulation of concrete materials.

To build a foundation for chemistry, physics and biology, through discovery and play with blocks, and natural materials such as water and sand.

To help the child relate to others socially and to be a part of a group.

To help the child develop problem-solving techniques.

To promote creative expression through art, dance, music, cooking, story telling.

To help the child develop the habit of success.

SOME BASIC IDEAS WHICH WILL FACILITATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNING:

<u>Movement is intense communication.</u> There should be freedom of movement throughout the day as well as some times set aside for exercise of the large muscles and exploration of space. All learning is based upon movement. The child that has control of his body has control of the world.

<u>Social Interaction is a way of learning about oneself and others.</u> Basic to a sense of self is a knowledge of oneself in relation to others. Learning takes place much more rapidly when there is communication - a sharing of ideas and experiences. Children should be free to interact, and equipment should be provided for those children who find communication difficult - e.g. telephone, walkie-talkies, puppets, etc.

<u>Problem Solving is a way of controlling the environment to enhance one's natural development.</u> The child who has not developed this skill is at the mercy of anyone wishing to manipulate him - he has no power. Children learn to solve their own problems through social interaction, through taking responsibility for their own decisions, and through manipulating such materials as blocks, water, and sand.

<u>Discovery of scientific principles, mathematical laws and relationships is exciting to young children.</u> It fosters a joy and eagerness for learning. This discovery takes place when materials are provided for exploration - not when the teacher is looking for answers. When a child is "told" an answer, he is cheated out of many chances of discovering or creating an answer within himself.

<u>Creativity through art, music, dance, and cooking, provides an outlet for individuality</u> - a way of sharing oneself with others. There should be opportunities daily for each child to experiment with a creative medium. Following a model should be discouraged, although children do get ideas from others and this should not be considered copying.

<u>Language development in the young child is oral.</u> When a child is ready for reading, he will read - but only what he can speak; and he can only speak about that which is in his experience. Again, he must come into contact with all kinds of experiences - which he can explore, assimilate and talk about.

<u>The Senses - seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling are the pathways to knowledge.</u> Children need all kinds of opportunities to sharpen these senses and talk about what they perceive.

<u>Realness develops as one gains a sense of self and the freedom "to be."</u> It comes from knowing "I like myself," "I am worthwhile," "I am needed," "I have good ideas." It is the key to happiness and is fostered by a teacher who is real herself and values the child as an individual being - capable of making decisions for himself which will foster his own development.

<u>Skills lead to competency, a feeling of being independent.</u> But skills without basic knowledge and understanding are meaningless.

A rule of thumb about skills development - If the child <u>needs</u> the skill, <u>asks</u> for it, appears ready for it, give it to him. If there is any doubt - WAIT. If he is really ready, he will attempt it on his own.

The environment is structured, not the children or the program. The room is usually set up in activity centers with abundant materials in each center for the child to explore and manipulate. These centers are not for the child to go to after he has completed his work, they are his work.

Emphasis is on learning, not on teaching. The teacher takes her cue from each child and helps him move in his own direction - to explore those activities which interest him. She has no preconceived idea of what he must learn or the order in which his learning must take place.

There are group activities as well as individual activities. Teacher and children work together to become a "family" with concern for one another. Group meetings are held frequently, and rules established when needed.

Routines and rituals are established to provide security, but are flexible enough for each child to make his own adjustment, and few enough so that creativity isn't stifled.

The environment is organized so that each child knows the use and place of each piece of equipment. The children are responsible for keeping materials in order and for tidying up the room. Enough material is displayed to encourage exploration, but not so much as to cause confusion. Displayed material is changed often.

Every child is valued for the unique human being he is, and because HE is valued, so is his work valued. Teacher and child work together to make something the child is proud of, thus helping him to be proud of himself. Beauty is also valued, and teacher and children work together to make the room a beautiful place in which to live.
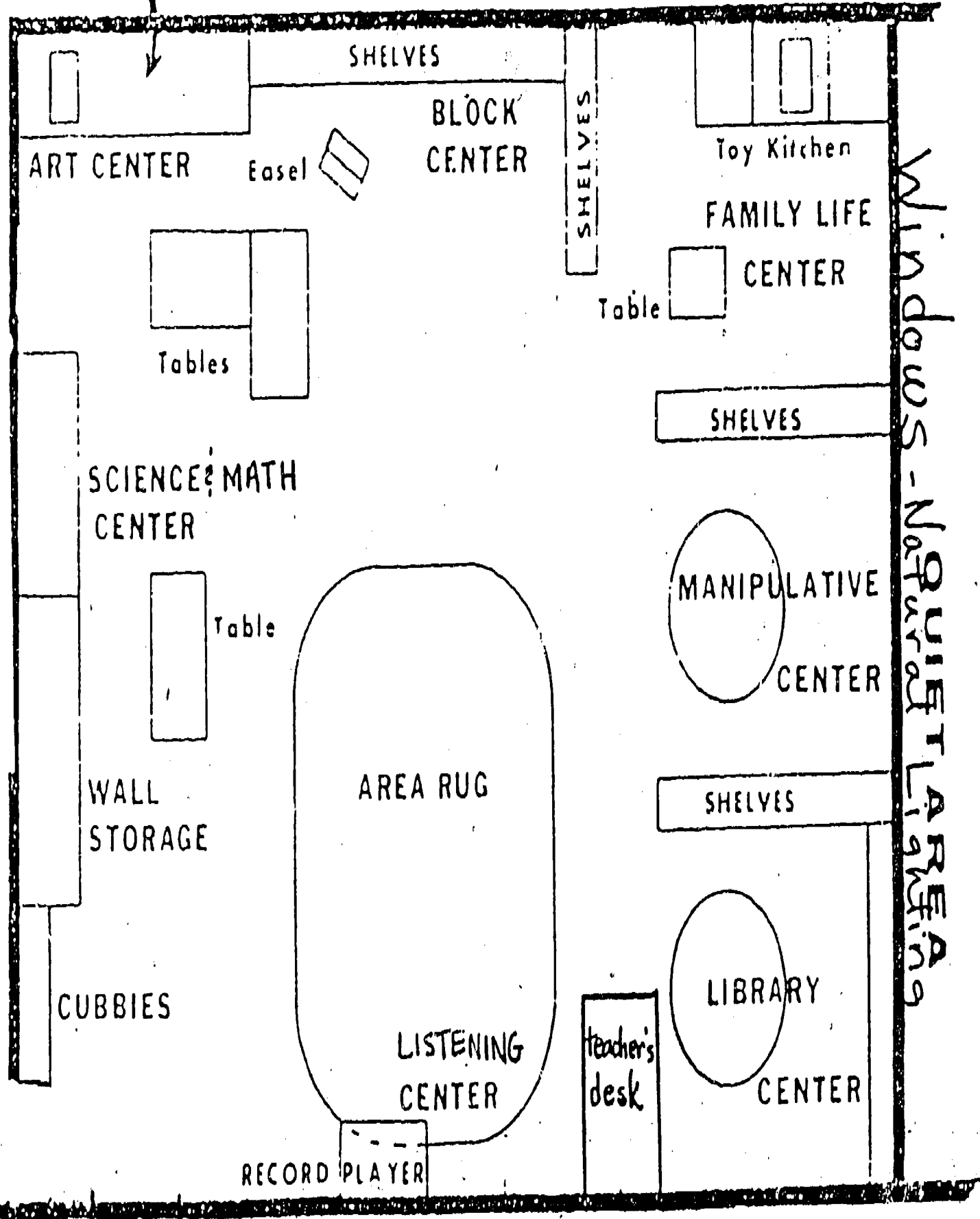
Teaching in the Pre-Kindergarten is an art. The learning that takes place depends upon the creativity, humanness, and knowledge of child development on the part of the teacher and the interests and needs of the children. Not all teachers are comfortable in such an open environment.

ACTIVE AREA

built-in sink

SHELVES

ART CENTER

Easel

BLOCK CENTER

SHELVES

Toy Kitchen

FAMILY LIFE CENTER

Table

Tables

SHELVES

SCIENCE & MATH CENTER

Table

MANIPULATIVE CENTER

AREA RUG

SHELVES

WALL STORAGE

LIBRARY

CUBBIES

LISTENING CENTER

Teacher's desk

CENTER

RECORD PLAYER

SUGGESTED FLOOR ARRANGEMENT

(Sample)

Windows-Natural Lighting

QUIET AREA

! A suggested floor plan to be used for adapting a regular classroom into a "learning center." This is not a building plan.)

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1. Anderson, Luleen, "When a Child Begins School," <u>Children Today</u>, July-August 1976, pp. 16-19

2. Carll and Richard, "Assessment of School Readiness", <u>One Piece of the Puzzle</u>, Modern Learning Press

3. Ilg, Frances and Bates, Louise, "Your Child May Be in the Wrong Grade," Reader's Digest Reprint, August 1966

4. Meisels, Samuel J., <u>Developmental Screening in Early Childhood, A Guide</u>, NAEYC, 1980 (excerpts only)

5. Moore, R. and Moore, D., "When Should Your Child Go to School?", Reader's Digest Reprint, October 1972

6. National School Public Relations Association, "A Parent's Guide to That First Day at School"

7. SEDL Rx Exchange, The Literature on Social Promotion Versus Retention (excerpts only)

8. Kindergarten Programs in the Lower Valley

NOTE: Several sections appearing in the Appendixes of the
original document contain copyrighted material and
are not available for ERIC reproduction. These
sections contained the following articles:

"When a Child Begins School," by Luleen S. Anderson.
Children Today; Jul-Aug 1976, p16-19.

"The Assessment of School Readiness," by Barbara Carll
and Nancy Richard. One Piece of the Puzzle.

"Your Child May Be in the Wrong Grade at School," by
Frances L. Ilg and Louise Bates Ame . The Reader's Digest;
Aug 1966, p1-5.

"A Parent's Guide to That First Day at School," by
National School Public Relations Association, 1978.

"When Should Your Child Go to School?" by Raymond S.
Moore and Dennis R. Moore. The Reader's Digest;
Oct 1972, p143-47.

"The Literature on Social Promotion Versus Retention."
(Excerpt). Southwest Educational Development Lab.,
Austin, TX, Sep 1981.   ED 243 216

"Kindergarten Programs in the Lower Yakima Valley."

"Have Someone Heading to Kindergarten Next Year?"
Somerville Journal; March 3, 1977.

INTRODUCTORY QUESTIONS

What is early childhood developmental screening?

Early childhood developmental screening is a brief assessment procedure designed to identify children who may need further evaluation and educational intervention. Screening serves as the first step in an evaluation and intervention process that is intended to assist children in achieving their maximum potential. A developmental screening instrument surveys a child's abilities in areas such as language functioning, reasoning, gross motor, fine motor/adaptive, and personal-social development. The intent of early childhood screening is to determine quickly and efficiently whether a child should be more closely evaluated to find out if that child might have difficulties in school.

Screening is only the initial phase of an educational assessment. For children who are suspected of having learning problems, it is followed by evaluation and subsequently by specific intervention or remediation.

What is the rationale for early childhood screening?

Early childhood screening is performed in order to identify children who might profit from early educational intervention or from medical treatment. Screening can be utilized preventively, to identify the potential existence of a problem or disability in a child at a very early stage.

In general, screening is based on the premise that a child's skills and intelligence are not fixed or immutable. Studies (Bronfenbrenner 1974; Caldwell 1970; Hunt 1961; Tjossem 1976) have shown that early intervention can significantly change a child's abilities and developmental potential. When developmental screening is included as part of a comprehensive system of evaluative and programmatic options, it should contribute to reducing the number of children who experience failure and who need special services in later school years.

What is the difference between screening and evaluation?

Compared to evaluation, screening is a limited procedure. Screening can only indicate that a child may have a problem that should be further investigated. It cannot definitively describe the nature and extent of a disability. Screening must be followed by evaluation in order to confirm or disconfirm the suspicions raised by a screening procedure. Thus, screening tests are used to select children who may have special needs; evaluative instruments are used to identify those children who have special needs.

Children who have obvious or severe handicapping conditions should not be required to participate in screening. These children can usually be identified during the initial referral or childfind process, and can enter the evaluation phase immediately.

Screening should not be used to label children, nor should it be used to develop intervention procedures. It is only through comprehensive evaluation that the existence of a disabling condition can be determined definitively, that an individual educational plan can be developed, and that the most appropriate services can be specified.

How is developmental screening different from readiness testing?

Although some individual items that appear on readiness tests are identical or similar to those included on screening instruments, the two procedures serve different purposes. Screening instruments are designed to identify children who may have a handicapping condition that could affect their potential for learning. Developmental screening focuses on a child's growth in a number of key areas such as language development, large and small muscle control, eye-hand coordination, and the development of reasoning and number skills.

In contrast, readiness tests are designed to identify a child's relative preparedness for benefiting from a specific academic program. Readiness tests focus on current skill achievement and performance, rather than on a child's developmental potential.

Excerpts from: <u>Developmental Screening in Early Childhood</u>, A Guide by Samuel J. Meisels, NAEYC, 1980

THE LITERATURE ON

SOCIAL PROMOTION VERSUS RETENTION

A Study of the Effect of Retention on the Self-Concept

The key role played by the self-concept in both retention and promotion is apparent in the arguments both pro and con. In 1977, Harry J. Finlayson reported the results of a study he conducted of the effect of retention on self-concept development at the elementary level.

Finlayson compared pupils who had been promoted with those who had been retained, including what he calls "borderline cases," pupils who were experiencing difficulties similar to the retained students, but who were promoted anyway on the basis of teacher judgment and mental ability. Thus his basic design corresponds to Gregg Jackson's third type.

The students were followed through two school years, 1973-74 and 1974-75. The FACES Scale, developed by Jack R. Frymier at Ohio State University, was administered to the pupils on four separate occasions. The Scale contairs 18 questions about feelings toward family, school, friends, and self. The first year sample included the first grade pupils in two suburban school districts who had not been previously held back. The second year sample, from the same schools, included three groups of students: (1) retained, (2) borderline, and (3) promoted. The ultimate question Finlayson posed was "whether a poor self-concept contributes to school failure or whether school failure contributes to a poor self-concept" (Finlayson, p. 205). It is the old "chicken and egg" dilemma.

Finlayson believed that the only valid way to attack this problem was to study children before they have failed and then follow their self-concept development after they failed. He predicted at the outset that the self-concept of the promoted and borderline (also promoted) groups would remain stable over the two years; while the retained group would remain

stable during the first year (before they were retained), and then would
became significantly lower than the self-concepts of the ones who had
been promoted.

The results of Finlayson's study did not corroborate his predictions
and in fact overturned some of the assumptions that have been made over the
years about the effect of retention on the self-concept of pupils, at
least at the elementary level. Finlayson found that "after nonpromotion,
the nonpromoted group of pupils continued to increase their self-concept
scores significantly, while scores of the borderline and promoted groups
dropped slightly, but not significantly, during the second year of the
study" (Finlayson, p. 206). At the fourth and final measurement, the
self-concept scores of the promoted and retained groups were virtually
the same! See Figure 1, reproduced from Finlayson's report.
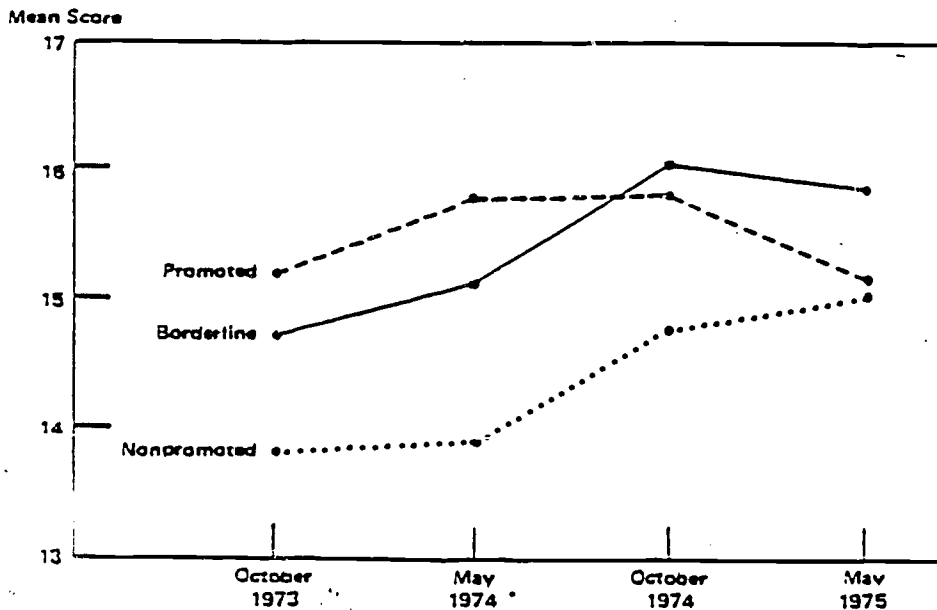
Figure 1. Interaction of Self-Concept Scores for the
Three Promotion Groups over a Two-Year Period

(from Harry J. Finlayson's "Nonpromotion and Self-Concept Development."
Phi Delta Kappan, Vol. 59, No. 3 [November 1977] , p. 206.)

Finlayson offers as a possible explanation of his findings the fact
that the self-concepts of promoted pupils may become less positive as
they progress through the primary grades. He reasons that as the promoted
students interact with their environment more, they develop a more realistic
self-image than they had earlier. The retained pupils, on the other hand,
gained in self-concept, perhaps because they felt more competent within
a more familiar environment (Finlayson, p. 206).

Finlayson supplemented his FACES Scale data by interviewing both
parents and teachers of the retained children. He asked the teachers
about their perceptions of the children's self-concepts; and he asked the
parents how the children reacted to school, how the retention affected them
in general, and how the parents felt about the retention policy. Teachers
did not report a negative effect on the self-concepts of most of the
retained children; and most of the parents reported positive results in
their children (Finlayson, p. 206). Even if more research is needed,
certainly Finlayson's study calls into question many of the assumptions
educators have been making about the effects of retention on the self-concept
of children in the primary grades and the attitudes of parents as well.

Schools Can Make A Difference

In 1973, Robert Reiter's review of the literature for the Philadelphia
School District (The Promotion/Retention Dilemma: What Research Tells Us, 1973)
caused him to conclude that, rather than adopting a single policy to be
applied to all children, schools must consider what is best for the individual
child. Reiter reminds us that it is the teachers rather than the policy
makers who play the key role in a child's education, for they are the ones
who can make sure there is a "creative provision of appropriate learning
tasks in which the individual pupil can experience success" (Reiter, p. 3).

Reiter also reminds us that academic deficiencies stem from different causes--for example, inadequate earlier instruction, poor study habits, dislike of a subject, general slowness in learning--and different causes require different strategies for remediation (Reiter, p. 3).

Reiter reiterates a theme familiar to recent educational literature-- the overwhelmingly strong influence of the home, family and demographic variables on the way pupils perform in school (Reiter, p. 12). The feeling that such variables as race, culture, and socio-economic status are practically insurmountable obstacles for the school to overcome has infused much of educational writing and thinking in the last decade. It has been used not only to explain why certain minorities do less well as a whole than other students, but also why certain innovative programs in education have apparently failed to have any effect on children's learning. This attitude has been attributed to sociologist James Coleman's report of 1966, Equality of Educational Opportunity, whose findings suggested that schools don't make a difference and that family background has the most influence on a child's achievement. It should be noted that Coleman's methodology has been called into question on several counts. For example, his conclusions were based on data from large cities where school desegregation had never been ordered (Taylor, p. 14).

Now, in 1981, a new report by Coleman is out. "Public and Private Schools" is part of a major longitudinal study titled High School and Beyond, which was commissioned by the National Center for Education Statistics. And while many educators have criticized its highly publicized findings that private schools are doing a better job of educating children than are public schools, there is a positive message contained in the report which is contrary to the 1966 report. The 1981 report suggests that schools do make a difference.

Coleman found that in Catholic schools the "achievement levels of students from different parental educational backgrounds of black and white students, and of Hispanic and non-Hispanic white students are more nearly alike in Catholic schools than in public schools" (Ravitch, "The Meaning . . ." p. 719). It is the way students are treated, not their family backgrounds, that determines achievement. The following school factors are described by the Coleman report as apparently resulting in academic success: (1) high rates of engagement in academic activities (time on task), (2) more homework, (3) more rigorous subjects, (4) the effectiveness and fairness of discipline, and (5) the degree of teacher involvement in students (Ravitch, "The Meaning . . . ," p. 719).

Ronald Edmonds, a Harvard University education professor, also found in his research that effective schools, wherever they are located, have certain characteristics that set them apart from ineffective schools: (1) the principal takes a strong, effective leadership role in the area of instruction; (2) both principals and teachers have high expectations for their students; (3) the schools tend to be orderly without being rigid; and (4) pupils' progress is frequently monitored (Savage, p. 22).

Coleman's and Edmonds' conclusions are consonant with Reiter's three keys to maximum learning for each student: (1) the school's atmosphere; (2) the instructional practices in each classroom; and (3) the interaction between the teacher and the pupil (Reiter, p. 14).

Schools today are taking a new look at the social promotion versus retention controversy. Educators realize that merely eliminating social promotion and retaining failing students will not work. Special programs must be provided so that failing students will not simply be cycled through programs that did not work for them the first time and great care must be taken in selecting which students to retain, which to promote (Cunningham and Owens, p. 29). The next section describes some of the new approaches schools are taking.

SOME NEW APPROACHES

Of course educators realize that simply abolishing social promotion
will not solve any problems. Solutions are occurring, in fact, at several
levels in the educational system and with varying degrees of comprehensive-
ness. At some schools individualized remediation strategies are being
adopted for particular pupils; in other instances, school districts are
deciding to implement a selective retention/promotion policy, based perhaps
on a competency-based program. The latter option has the potential for a
wide variety of configurations.

The following describes guidelines to use when selecting which child
to retain; lists some single strategies for individualizing instruction or
otherwise approaching the promotion-retention issue; describes four models
of "retention" found in four school districts in the nation; describes one
widely publicized example of a district which abolished social promotion
and reorganized its schools; and, finally, reports the experiences of a
single teacher who decided on her own not to adhere to the school's social
promotion policy.

In the examples given, different strategies and programs are used for
primary and for secondary grades, based upon the social-emotional maturity
and remediation requirements of the students. The examples illustrate the
importance of realizing that it takes time to implement a change in the
educational system and also illustrates the strength and variety of the
nation's educational system, with its ideal of local control.

Selecting the Child to Retain

When making a decision about promoting or retaining a child, factors
pertaining to the child, to the family, and to the school must be taken

into consideration. For the most part these relate to attitudes, to available resources, and to the reason for the retention itself. Each factor listed below can be used to argue for or against a particular retention, and it is the social, emotional, and mental development and school history of the individual child which determines how each of the factors ought to be rated.

FACTORS AFFECTING DECISIONS
ABOUT PROMOTION OR RETENTION

Child Factors

. physical disabilities
. physical size
. academic potential
. pychosocial maturity
. neurological maturity
. self-concept
. ability to function independently
. grade placement (when is it
  appropriate to retain?)
. chronological age
. previous retentions
. nature of the problem (behavior or
  learning rate as basis for retention)
. sex
. chronic absenteeism
. basic skill competencies
. peer pressure
. child's attitude toward retention

Family Factors

- geographical moves
- foreign language immigrants
- attitude toward retention (personal history of retention; cultural attitudes; pressure from friends, neighbors and relatives)
- age of siblings and sibling pressure
- involvement of family physician

School Factors

- system's attitude toward retention
- principal's attitude toward retention
- teacher's attitude toward retention
- availability of special education services
- availability of other programmatic options
- availability of personnel

(Lieberman, pp. 40-44)

Single Strategies to Implement

In reviewing the literature of social promotion versus retention, Robert Reiter, whose emphasis is on the attention the individual child should receive rather than on policy, found the strategies listed on the next page to be used in schools or to be recommended by educators.

SINGLE STRATEGIES
FOR SOLVING SOCIAL PROMOTION VS RETENTION

. Offer individualized education plans, individualized instruction, diag-
  nostic and prescriptive teaching: all based on the idea of success in
  small tasks, building up to more difficult tasks;

. Establish close communication between school and home in order to
  communicate the idea that promotion and retention are not rewards and
  punishments but placements intended to maximize learning;

. Change the retained child's teacher, or make sure the same teacher
  doesn't appear to have lost faith or to be using unsuccessful strategies;

. Set minimum standards for each grade level, but don't apply them to
  pupils two years behind age mates; then provide students with individual-
  ized instruction;

. Provide counseling by school counselors to help pupils set realistic
  academic and career goals;

. Set up flexible scheduling, to allow marginal students to take some
  subjects of interest to them;

. Establish alternative programs for slow learners, apart from regular
  curriculum;

. Reduce compulsory attendance to age 14 (suggested by the National Commis-
  sion on the Reform of Secondary Education in 1973);

. Abolish grades at the primary level; de-emphasize promotion (the McKinley
  School Project, Warren, Ohio, combines non-grading with team teaching);

. Apply standardized tests earlier in the year so teachers can use results;

. Replace the high school diploma with an "exit certificate" which indicates
  the specific level of academic proficiency attained;

. Group retained students with other over-age students..

(Reiter, pp. 14-19)

A recent study by Bobby J. Woodruff, "Two Tennessee Studies of Kindergarten
Relationships to Grade Retention and Basic Skills Achievement" (1980),
found that attending kindergarten significantly lowered the rate of retention
for children (Woodruff, p. 13).

Four "Retention" Models

The four models described are from Margery Thompson's "Social Promotion:
Going, Going . . . Gone?" (The American School Board Journal, January 1979).
Additional examples can be found in the Phi Delta Kappan's special issue on
the miminum competency movement (May 1978), and in other literature on the
subject. Some of the single strategies reported by Reiter can be found in
the four models described below.

1. Local Option

Subdistricts in the Chicago Public School System established minimum perfor-
mance standards in 1976 which gradually were adopted throughout the city's
schools. These standards were not mandated by the state.

- Standards for high school graduates were set first: passing a
  basic skills proficiency test was required;

- Promotion policy for elementary schools was set next: students
  had to pass 80% of key objectives in language arts at certain grade
  levels; one year of remedial work possible.

2. "Placement" Policy

In Wake County, North Carolina, schools set a placement policy which differentiated between middle schools and high schools.

- At the middle school level, socially and physically mature students are not retained with very immature students;

- High school students are grouped by ability into basic, average and honors groups; students are not frozen into these groups however, and can move from one to another.

3. Remediation Model

Denver, Colorado, students have to pass proficiency tests in mathematics, spelling, language arts, and reading before they are graduated. This has been the case since 1962. During the 1977-78 school year, similar requirements were set for grades 7-9, and in 1979, minimum skill levels were required in all elementary grades for promotion.

The Colorado State Department of Education requires that if such standards are set, schools must undertake the following:

- Give tests twice a year, beginning in the 9th grade;

- Provide instruction based on test results;

- Provide remedial and tutorial services during the day until the students are able to pass the examinations;

- Provide tutorials with special teachers and institute peer tutoring.

4. Selected Retention

Caroline County, Maryland, practices selected retention according to grade groupings. The State Department of Education has set minimum progressive reading levels for promotion from grades 2-12, with tests given at grades 3, 7, 9, and 11; 1982 graduating classes will be required to show a functional reading ability.

- K-3: can hold back one year;

- 4-6: can hold back one year, with remedial programs provided.

(Thompson, pp. 30-32)

The Example of Greensville, Virginia

Much is made in the literature, both pro and con, about the Greensville, Virginia, approach to retention. It is a significant example and deserves to be described in detail. In 1973, the Greensville school board decided to change its policy toward social promotion. Thereafter, students would be promoted "only if they pass standardized achievement tests given twice a year" ("When Schools . . . ," p. 5). No longer would children be promoted on social grounds.

The Greensville school board knew that merely abolishing social promotion would not solve the problem of the slow or unwilling learner, and immediately took steps to provide students with the kind of backup programs they would need. These steps represent a significant reorganization of the Greensville schools. They appear to be guided by a sense of age appropriateness, the students' capacity for concentration, and the need for students who are not academically inclined to be prepared for a job when they leave school.

Briefly described, these are the steps taken by Greensville:

- Students were evaluated on standardized test results, report grades, and teacher assessment;

- Students were assigned to one of two kinds of schools--(a) by age alone or (b) by achievement level, if different from age;

- Only three courses were taught per semester, on the grounds that limiting the number of classes makes concentration easier and achievement greater;

- Classes were to last one hour and fifty minutes, twice the usual time, again for reasons of improving concentration;

- Students could be promoted one semester at a time;

- An occupational training program was created for students not doing well academically, which consisted of: (a) job-related skills and (b) instruction in basic skills.

    ("When Schools . . . , " p. 5; Cunningham and Owens, pp. 27-28)

Greensville made some other provisions to assist students with this new system. Instead of placing retained students in the same classroom the second year, so that they are with students taking that grade level for the first time, retained students are grouped with other over-age students. In assigning students to schools, age is taken into consideration. Younger fifth grade students are grouped in one school, for example; and older fifth grade students attend another school which has mostly sixth and seventh grade students (Cunningham and Owens, pp. 27-28).

For grade repeaters, a record of previously used curriculum materials is maintained. Thus, repeaters are not presented the same curriculum. Half-step promotions are used whenever possible. Enrichment classes in English and mathematics are offered in the junior high. Students unable to move into the regular eighth or ninth grade classes are required to take these enrichment classes.

The occupational training program lasts four years, and the minimum age for beginning the training is 14 years. Those 14-year-olds who are two or more grades behind their age group and who are making unsatisfactory progress are given the opportunity to enroll. The training consists of two parts: (1) job-related skills and (2) instruction in developmental reading, speaking, writing, consumer mathematics, mathematical measurements, and physical education. When they finish the occupational training program, students are given a certificate stating what job-related skills they possess (Cunningham and Owens, p. 28).

One Teacher's Solution

In the Fall of 1978, Janice Maahs Hagen, a fourth grade teacher in Denver, Colorado, was dismayed to discover that a large number of students arriving in her class had skills appreciably below grade level. Seventeen out of a class of 26 ranked below grade level on at least one area of the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS), which is given students both at the beginning and at the end of the school year.

Retention of students was not considered an acceptable alternative in the district at the time, but Hagen decided that she would not promote students who were several grade levels behind at the end of the school year. By carefully planning beforehand exactly what steps to take, Hagen was able to raise the scores of all the children in her class, so that by the end of the year, only 8 were retained. The following describes what Hagen did, indicating the school year timing.

At the Beginning of the Year

- Analyzed results of CTBS test and prepared charts showing results for each child.

- Shared general findings with all parents at parents' night, announcing that at the end of the year, children incapable of completing fourth grade would be considered for retention.

- Established weekly policy of sending home all papers completed by each child, together with a note indicating all papers not completed and a cover sheet listing all papers assigned for the week. Parents were asked to look over each paper, check off the assignments viewed and return sheet on following Monday; students would be permitted to make up any missing work or redo papers with low marks; students would be graded according to ability, but records would be kept of where each child was in relation to grade level.

- Held individual conferences with parents in order to explain exactly what scores meant and how to interpret child's progress during school year.

. Arranged for remedial help for students with problems: individual tutors, diagnostic teachers, or special education teachers.

After First Grading Period

. Issued report cards which contained letter grades, an indication of which subjects students were working up to ability but below grade level in; and attached notes to the cards of those students who seemed in danger of being retained if their work didn't improve substantially.

. Held second official parent conference to discuss report cards.

Throughout First Semester

. Added notes to cover sheets attached to work sent home, singling out certain assignments in order to indicate that student was not doing fourth grade work.

. Established regular, personal contact with parents of failing students.

Throughout Second Semester

. Made daily homework assignments and gave grade on report cards for "homework completion," to help parents become aware of any difficulties.

. Analyzed results of second CTBS test, comparing them to results of first test.

. Scheduled individual conferences with all parents; and on the basis of report card grades, CTBS results, and judgment, recommended retention of selected students.

(Hagen, pp. 47-48)

Hagen's plan took a great deal of time, but it had dramatic results, as illustrated by the charts reproduced on p. 27.

PRE-TEST (FALL 1978)*

LANGUAGE

MATH

EXPECTED GRADE LEVEL

READING

POST-TEST (SPRING 1979)*

LANGUAGE

MATH

EXPECTED GRADE LEVEL

READING

1st grade	2nd grade	3rd grade	4th grade	5th grade	6th grade	7th grade	8th grade	9th grade

The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) results from the fall testing of a fourth-grade class. Letters stand for the same students in both pre- and post-test charts, and asterisks indicate those students ultimately recommended for retention. (Data is converted to grade level equivalency.)

CTBS results from testing the same class in the spring. (Data is converted to grade level equivalency.)

(from Janice Maahs Hagen's "I Kept 8 Students Back . . . and I'm Still Alive to Tell About It." _Teacher_ Vol. 98, No. 1, pp. 48-49.)

At the end of the year, Hagen recommended that 10 of the students be retained. For 4 of these, the parents requested that their children repeat the fourth grade because "they didn't want him or her to struggle so hard only to always be at the bottom of the class" (Hagen, p. 48). Each of these children grew up speaking a language other than English. Three of the others recommended for retention were behind because they consistently failed to complete their assignments.

The parents were asked to sign a statement which was to be placed in the student's cumulative file and noted on the student's report card. The statement explained that it was the recommendation of the school that the child be retained in a particular grade for the school year in question. Parents were asked to indicate if they agreed or disagreed with the retention, and both parents and teachers were required to sign the slip. Parents of all but two of the children agreed to approve retention.

Hagen's humorous title, "I Kept 8 Students Back . . . and I'm Still. Alive to Tell About It," suggests the trepidation which many teachers feel in going against the accepted practice of social promotion. Hagen was repeatedly asked to justify her actions by the district's administrative personnel. She now feels there is some short term data which gives such a justification.

The four students who grew up speaking a language other than English became solid, average students who felt successful and confident, reports Hagen (p. 49). The three who failed because they refused to complete their assignments learned that "promotion is based on achievement and mastery of standard grade-level curriculum" and were passed to the fifth grade (Hagen, p. 49), having completed their work the second time around. Of the two that were promoted at their parents' request, one was retained the next year in the fifth grade, at her parents' request; and the other continued to

spend the greater part of the school day with a special education teacher.
Hagen reports no adverse affects on self-concept or any negative peer
treatment of those students who were retained (Hagen, p. 49).

Hagen's example seems to buttress the argument that a team approach
is one effective way to make sure that retention is a positive step. Such
a team can consist of the child's teachers, child's parents, and specialists
such as the school nurse, psychologist, reading consultant, and counselor.
Not only should careful documentation be kept of the child's progress (or
lack of it), but a written record should be maintained describing all the
steps taken to provide the child with special services. Throughout, it is
imperative that the child's parents be kept informed and that a record of
parental contact be maintained (Brown, pp. 348-349). A suggested set of
action steps, with accompanying time line for such a team approach is
reproduced on page 30.

A TEAMWORK APPROACH

Action Steps	Suggested Time of Action— School Month(s)
1. Observe child's progress and document	Months 1 and 2
a. Use school-adopted reporting system b. Use current test interpretation with emphasis on child's performance in each subject area c. Consult with counselor	
2. Determine if child is performing at or below grade level	Months 2-4
3. Inform parents honestly and specifically	Months 2-4
4. Consult with the pupil personnel team and obtain a group assessment of the child's performance	Months 2-4
a. Determine possible causes of difficulty b. Make recommendations about possible solutions c. Determine information to be shared during the conference with parents; identify pupil personnel team members to participate in conference	
5. Conduct parent conference	Months 2-4
a. Inform parents of apparent difficulty b. Seek additional input from parents c. Share with parents the recommendations of the pupil personnel team d. Reconcile any differences between parent vs. school perception of the child's problem	
6. Follow through on recommendations and continue to observe the child's progress	Months 2-6
7. Repeat steps 1-6	Months 2-8
8. Review all information on the child's performance: make recommendation about promotion or retention	Month 8

END

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