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ABSTRACT

The six major sections of this notebook focus on developing the abilities of preschool and kindergarten children in the areas of large and fine motor, social, auditory, visual, language, and mathematics skills. Each section contains several activities parents can do at home in brief and enjoyable practice periods to assist children's development. The notebook is designed so that teachers may select one or more activities relating to a particular child's development, copy the appropriate pages, and send them home with a letter to the parents explaining their use. Activities should take no more than 15 to 30 minutes. The notebook also contains definitions of the six developmental skill areas, a chart of behaviors expected from preschool and kindergarten children in the skill areas and several curricular areas, and the agenda for a teacher awareness session for explaining the notebook's use to teachers. Selected resource materials for parents concerning at-home learning activities cover the topics of: (1) writing a finger play; (2) ways in which preschool children learn through play; (3) storytelling; (4) visual perception activities; (5) language experiences; (6) cognitive development; (7) relationships between story reading and learning to read; (8) reading readiness; (9) arithmetic; (10) opportunities to learn which are offered in the home environment; (11) tips for parents; (12) parent-teacher cooperation; and (13) suggestions for over-the-summer learning. (RH)

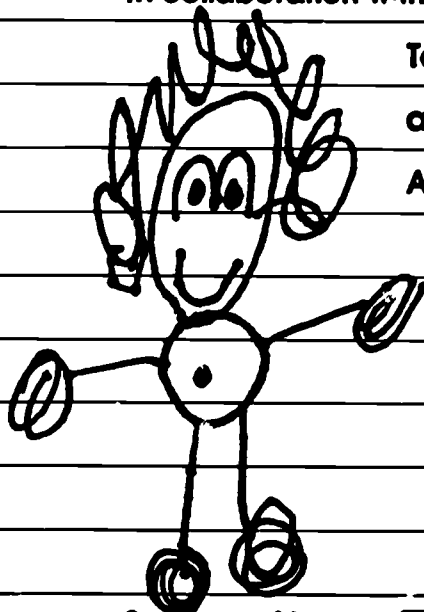
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The TEA--AEL
**Parent
Education
Notebook**

Developed by-- Brenda Beard,
Betsy Hunter,
Betty Lambert, and
Belinda Winters

In collaboration with--

Tennessee Education Association
and
Appalachia Educational Laboratory



Sponsored by-- **OERI**
Office of Educational Research and Improvement

For further information on parent involvement in home learning, early childhood education, or other educational research and development resources, contact:

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Contact TEA or AEL for additional copies of *The TEA--AEL Parent Education Notebook*.
Tennessee Education Association
598 James Robertson Parkway
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Introduction

The Tennessee Education Association and the Appalachia Educational Laboratory, the regional R & D lab serving Tennessee, cosponsored a study group of kindergarten teachers during 1986. The mission of the group was to examine research-based articles and programs and to produce a product of use to teachers in Tennessee and AEL's service Region.

During the group's first meeting, the members identified the need for activities parents of early childhood students could use with their children at home to foster their development in six skill areas. Members agreed that a wide range of development exists among kindergarten and transition-first grade students in the following skills: visual, auditory, social, large and fine motor, and cognitive math and language abilities.

The development of a collection of activities in these skills keyed to the level of the child (developmentally delayed, kindergarten appropriate, or advanced/accelerated) was the product identified by the group. The TEA-AEL Parent Education Notebook is the result of much development and selection of activities on the part of the four group members. AEL provided research/resource materials, supplementary materials development, evaluation assistance, and editing, layout, and copying services. TEA provided the site of the group's first meeting and printed multiple copies of the Notebook for use by Tennessee teachers.

Major sections of the TEA-AEL Parent Education Notebook focus on the six developmental skill areas. Each contains several activities with which parents may assist children's development in brief and enjoyable practice periods at home. The Notebook is designed so that teachers may select one or a few appropriate activities relating to a particular child's development, copy the activities, and mail or send them home with the child with a letter to the parents explaining their use. As explained in the parent letter, the activities should take no more than 15-30 minutes to complete.

The Notebook also contains definitions of the six developmental skill areas; a chart of behaviors expected in these skill areas and in several curricular areas for preschool and kindergarten children; the agenda for a Teacher Awareness Session to aid in explaining the Notebook's use to teachers; a letter to parents to accompany selected activities; a Parent Orientation Session agenda to aid Notebook users in introducing the activities to parents; and Selected Resources to Share with Parents--brief articles on the skill areas.

The study group members, TEA, and AEL appreciate your field testing the Notebook, completing the enclosed evaluation form, and returning the form to AEL or the study group member in your district. Your evaluation statements will be used to revise future editions of the Notebook. We hope you find the instructions clear, the Parent Orientation Session helpful, and the activities useful in involving parents in their children's development.

Acknowledgements

The TEA-AEL Parent Education Notebook came to fruition due to the efforts and tender loving care of four dedicated kindergarten teachers. AEL and TEA express thanks to each of those educators who recognized the need for parent involvement in student skill development and responded by producing a publication we hope they and many others find useful.

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Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN**

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**Developmental
Skills**

Developmental Skill Definitions

We do not know exactly how a child learns to read, but we do know that certain skills make the process of learning to read, write, and perform mathematics tasks easier. These skills have been given various labels, but the ones we have chosen to use in presenting some ways to develop these skills with your child are (1) motor skills (both large and fine motor), (2) social skills, (3) auditory skills, (4) visual skills, and (5) cognitive skills (both math and language).

Although these have been identified separately, there is much overlapping. This is appropriate because preschool children develop skills simultaneously as they experience learning with the total mind and body.

Motor skills refers to the ability of the child to coordinate the body to perform specific tasks. **Large motor skills** refers to the ability of the child to use large muscle coordination in performing such tasks as walking, running, jumping, skipping, and riding a big wheel, tricycle, and/or bicycle. **Fine motor skills** refers to the ability to use smaller muscles in the hands and fingers for painting with large brushes; putting together small toys such as Legos, Lockblocks, and Unifix Cubes; drawing; coloring; and eventually writing.

Children with good **social skills** can play and work within a group cooperatively enough to avoid major confrontations but independently enough for their own good mental health.

Auditory skills first includes the ability to locate the source of a sound, to identify familiar sounds, to identify likenesses and differences in sounds, to identify rhyming words and finally to hear beginning, ending, and medial sounds in words.

Visual skills involves seeing the likenesses and differences first in concrete (real) things, then pictured things, and finally in letters and words.

Cognitive skills refers to the way a child is able to process and interpret information with the brain. Involved in these skills at the four and five year old level are matching, identifying, counting, classifying and categorizing, sequencing, and comparing and contrasting. Some of these children will also be able to engage in some analyzing and synthesizing activities when presented on their level.

Most children will acquire these skills as they participate in ordinary, everyday, childlike activities, especially when they are accompanied by verbal interaction with loving adults.

If your child doesn't develop at the same rate as your neighbor's child or a brother or sister, do not become alarmed. All children develop at different rates, learn different

skills at different times, and mature at different rates. Your child is an individual.*

The activities presented here are suggested as supplements to already good parent-child relationships and as introductions to the wonderful world of learning for parents who wish to know some ways to initiate further learning activities with their children. The most important thing to remember is to keep it fun! The best gift you can give your child is a love of learning for a whole lifetime.

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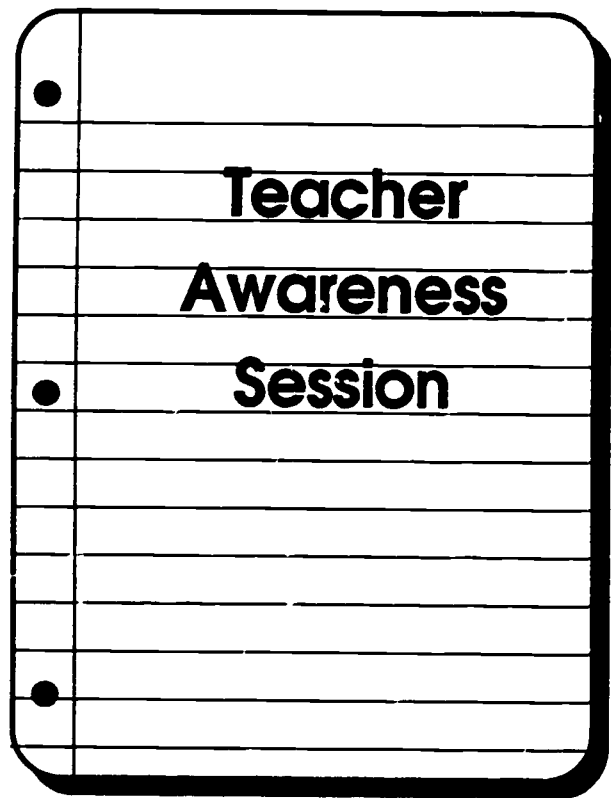
Behavior Expected in Preschool Children

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Curriculum Area

Expected Behavior

	At Three Years	At Four Years	At Five Years
Health and Safety	Judges how far to climb and return safely Urinate without help unless clothing is complex	Handles blunt scissors safely Knows that blood forms a scab to protect new skin Unzips, unsnaps, and unbuckles	Handles saw and hammer safely Puts away toys and closes cupboard doors Goes to bathroom by himself
Physical development	Walks a board holding adult's hand Stops or goes on the slide Likes to swing Climbs a ladder Learns to jump	Walks along a walking board Explores variations on the slide Learns to pump in swinging Goes down fireman's pole Learns to hop	Walks a narrow curb Swings by himself Cuts on the line Learns to skip
Social understanding	Enjoys his own birthday Enjoys simple house play and dressing up Learns to move with the group activities	Takes turns Enjoys birthdays and Christmas Extends dramatic play—doctor, store clerk, delivery man Explores leader or follower role in group activities	Waits for his turn Enjoys birthdays and other holidays Extends dramatic play further Enlarges his feeling of belonging to the group
Science	Knows where he came from Knows where his food goes Names several animals Observes what is pointed out	Knows death is part of life Knows sounds, nests, and other things about animals Makes his own observations	Knows how he was conceived Knows what foods different animals eat Reports what he observes
Geography	Knows relation of rooms indoors Recognizes his own home	Uses landmarks Can go around the block Recognizes his own neighborhood	Draws and uses a simple map Walks several blocks to school
Mathematics	Names a few numbers Lives in the present	Counts a few numbers Deals with the past and the future	Counts to ten Thinks of uses of numbers Uses a wider span of time in planning
Language development	Learns sounds used in words Uses simple sentences Learns new words	Increases his command of oral sounds Uses compound sentences Increases his vocabulary	Has mastered most word sounds Prints own name Uses adverbial clauses Increases his vocabulary
Stories	Likes short picture stories Does short pantomimes with adult	Likes realistic picture stories (e.g., about home) Pantomimes a simple story told by adult	Likes realistic and imaginative stories with little drama and a happy ending Dramatizes simple stories
Art	Likes easel painting Scribbles with crayons Enjoys several art media	Likes to use a brush or other tool Paints and draws with some design Enjoys a variety of media and several art tools	Makes designs and realistic portrayals
Music	Likes music Distinguishes "indoors" from "outdoors" voice	Creates dance movements to music Enjoys action stories to music Learns short songs by rote	Follows simple dance suggestions Tells high from low, soft from loud, fast music from slow Learns songs by rote Creates song phrases
Relating to others	Plays parallel to others	Plays with others or by himself Does dramatic play with others Expresses sympathy Finds his own emotional outlet	Increases his cooperative play Is more sensitive to the needs of others



Teacher Awareness Session Agenda

I. Objectives of Session

Upon completion of the Awareness Session, participants will be able to:

- A. Explain the purposes of the Parent Education Notebook.
- B. Select appropriate activities for parent use in skill areas.
- C. Use the parent letter or develop a memo to mail/send with any activity to parents.
- D. Conduct the Parent Orientation Session acquainting parents with the activities and the dos and don'ts of their use.

II. Background

- A. Rationale--need for parent assistance with child development
- B. Formation of study group and notebook development process

III. Notebook Overview (pass out materials)

- A. Format--organization of notebook, section contents
- B. Skill List--emphasis on range of age-appropriate developmental levels
- C. Sample Activities-- describe children's behaviors (delayed and accelerated examples included) and ask participants to select activities; emphasis on many choices for repeat assistance and matching to parent's skill level
- D. Parent Letter
- E. Research Articles on Skills
- F. Reference List

IV. Parent Orientation Session

- A. Emphasis on importance to increase parent's motivation to assist and comfort in using activities
- B. Discussion of sample parent questions
- C. Explanation of opportunity to enlist additional parent support or volunteers

V. Evaluation

- A. Importance to TEA and AEL for notebook improvement and wider dissemination
- B. Notebook evaluation
- C. Parent Orientation evaluation

VI. Assistance

- A. State, regional, and district resource personnel contact information
- B. Your name and school phone number
- C. AEL's toll-free number (800/624-9120)

VII. Teacher Input

- A. Importance of each user's evaluation of present activities and addition of new activities or articles
- B. Future use in state and Region (KY, VA, WV)

VIII. Questions

●	
	Communications
	with Parents
●	
●	

Dear Parent,

Children in kindergarten often develop at different rates in different areas of learning. For instance, a kindergartener may have math skills that are common for six-year-olds and at the same time have motor skills that are at the four-year-old level. Another child may have very advanced language skills and have the social skills of a younger child. This is not unusual and does not necessarily mean the child is behind or ahead of other kindergarten students.

Parents often ask me how they can help their children do well in school. There are many things parents can do with their children at home that will build on skills being developed during school hours. The enclosed activity sheet(s) may give you some new ideas about how to spend enjoyable time with your child each day, and at the same time help your child develop some new skills in important areas of learning. I suggest that you select a regular time you and your child can devote to the activities such as after school, after dinner, or before bedtime. The activities take 15-30 minutes to complete.

Remember that learning should be fun, that your child reflects your attitude toward school, and that each small step is important. Praise your child's progress and show your support.

If you have questions about the activities or your child's skill development, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Parent Orientation Session Agenda

I. Overview of Kindergarten Program

- A. Describe teacher responsibilities**
- B. Describe parent responsibilities**
- C. Describe student responsibilities**

II. Skill Development

- A. Define six skill areas**
- B. Discuss range of developmental levels of kindergarten students**
- C. Discuss early warning signs of developmental delays**
- D. Provide resource personnel contact information**

III. Parent Education Notebook

- A. Describe development of notebook**
- B. Discuss purposes of activities**
- C. Explain how to use activities to work with the child (use example activity)**
- D. Outline cautions in working with children**
- E. Explain how parents can contact you for more explanation/assistance or additional activities**

IV. Questions

**Large and Fine
Motor Skills**

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

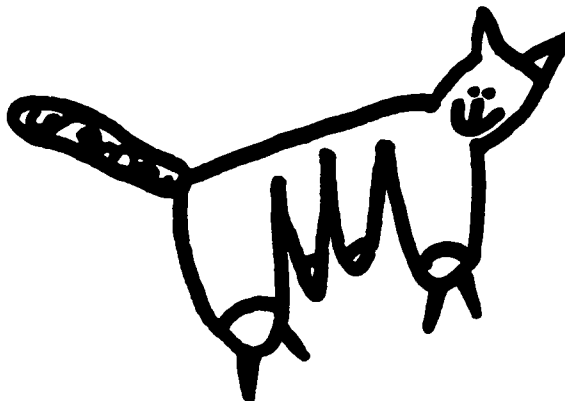
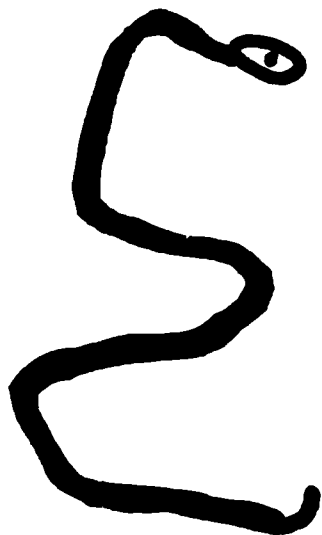
"If you were a"

Tell your child you are going to play a pretending game. Pretend to be an elephant. Talk about how an elephant looks, how it moves, and maybe how it sounds when it moves. Encourage your child to be creative in figuring out how to be each animal or thing.

Examples:

snake
mouse
lion
kangaroo
growing flower
bee
duck
crab
seal
frog
tin soldier
rag doll
robot
monkey

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN



Safe and Free Play

1. See that your child has many opportunities for running, climbing, swinging, seesawing, and otherwise using and developing large body muscles. See that a safe area is available and that safety rules are established.

For running, a grassy area is best, but a dirt area that is free of hazards is also satisfactory.

A tree with low branches or the jungle gym at a nearby schoolground or park is excellent for climbing.

An old tire and a sturdy rope combine to make a good swing.

Encourage the child to jump over safe objects. A ball, box, or toy work nicely. For motivation, you might chant the little poem:

Chuck (use your child's name) be nimble,
Chuck be tall,
Chuck jump over the yellow ball!

2. Place a "blob" of shaving cream on a tray or flat baking pan. Show your child how to finger paint in the shaving cream. Allow free play the first few times, then show the child how to make circles and lines in the lather.
3. Provide play dough for squeezing, pounding, and shaping with the hands and fingers.

Homemade Play Dough

Mix: 1 cup flour
 1/2 cup salt
 2 tsp. cream of tartar
 1 tbsp. cooking oil
 1 cup cool water
 (food coloring, if desired)

Mix well, and cook over low heat until the mixture is like thick mashed potatoes. Turn out on waxed paper and knead until smooth and cool.

After each play session, store in a two-cup plastic margarine tub with tight fitting lid.

Betty Lambert
Kindergarten Teacher
Montgomery County, TN

Skill Level:
Kindergarten

Coordination and Creativity

- 1. Demonstrate walking heel-toe (tight-rope style) first on a line on the sidewalk, on a brick wall, on a tire placed on the ground, and finally on a 2" by 4" board. Encourage your child to join in the fun.**
- 2. Provide a set of small building blocks that fit together to make streets, buildings, cars, etc.**

and/or

Provide sandbox play including building structures with small sticks and stones.

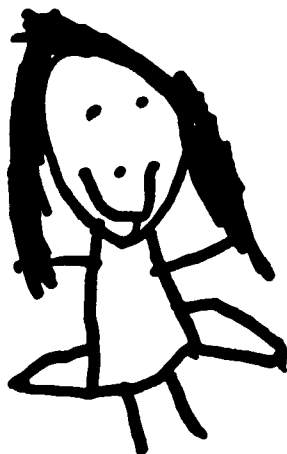
The same muscles used to manipulate these small items are getting little fingers ready for writing.

- 3. Provide large easel brushes or felt-tipped markers for your child to draw pictures. Allow much experimentation using large opened up grocery bags or old newspapers to paint or draw on. Show the child how to hold writing implements correctly--thumb and index finger on top of writing implement, middle finger on bottom.**

When your child begins to ask how to draw things, rather than demonstrating, encourage thinking about the shapes of objects. For instance, if the child wants to draw a cat, ask, "What shape is the cat's head? What shape is its body? tail? ears?"

Always find something nice to say about your child's picture--about the colors, the designs, etc. Don't be concerned if the finished product is not outstanding. A child is interested in the process more than the product.

**Betty Lambert
Kindergarten Teacher
Montgomery County, TN**



**Skill Level:
Prekindergarten**

"It's More Fun When You Help!"

The following is a list of activities you can do at home with your child to develop large muscle coordination. Help your child to:

1. Ride a tricycle or big wheel.
2. Develop balance by walking a concrete wall, curb, or 2" x 4" board.
3. Jump over objects--Start with a small object such as a shoe and use larger objects as skill improves. Also, jumping distances will help develop muscles. Start with a short distance and increase distance as needed.
4. Jump rope.
5. Play ball--catching, throwing, rolling, and bouncing. Start with a large ball at first.
6. Hop--one foot (make sure to use each foot), both feet.
7. Go through an obstacle course--This can be fun! Set up chairs to crawl under, blocks to jump over, tables to roll under, boxes to climb over, etc.
8. Skate.
9. Play with hula hoops.
10. Play Simon Says.

**Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN**

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten

Blocks

Materials: blocks (if you have them), cans, bottles, salt boxes, various sizes of boxes, anything your child can stack

Provide your child with a variety of stacking materials. This is a great motor skill activity. If your child is having trouble, take the time to help. Give ideas for things to build, and encourage the child's own ideas.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level:
Kindergarten

Paper Chains

This activity develops fine motor skills. You will need colored paper cut into 1/2" x 4" strips. Demonstrate how to glue the pieces together and at the same time interlock them to make a chain. You are making circles of paper.

Make a sequence pattern to follow: a red circle, a blue circle, a yellow circle, a red circle, a blue circle--what comes next?

Make a chain to use as a countdown for an important event: birthday, Christmas, Dad coming home, etc. Each day the child would use scissors to cut one more circle off and then count to find how many more days to go.....

Brenda Beard
Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN

Skill Level:
Kindergarten

Peeling Carrots

Use large carrots and a flat vegetable peeler. Demonstrate how you always peel away from the body. Let your child peel with the peeler. When finished, serve the carrots for lunch or dinner. Tell everyone who peeled the carrots.

You may later use the peeler for other vegetables, such as potatoes.

Brenda Beard
Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN

Skill Level:
Kindergarten
Advanced

Writing

If your child shows an interest in writing, demonstrate how to write her first name, using a capital letter followed by lowercase letters. Write other simple words as requested by your child. Use the alphabet below as a model.

Teach the child to hold the pencil or crayon correctly--between the index finger and thumb while resting on the middle finger. Remember, wrong habits in writing are very difficult to correct.

Betty Lambert
Kindergarten Teacher
Montgomery County, TN



Skill Level:
Kindergarten

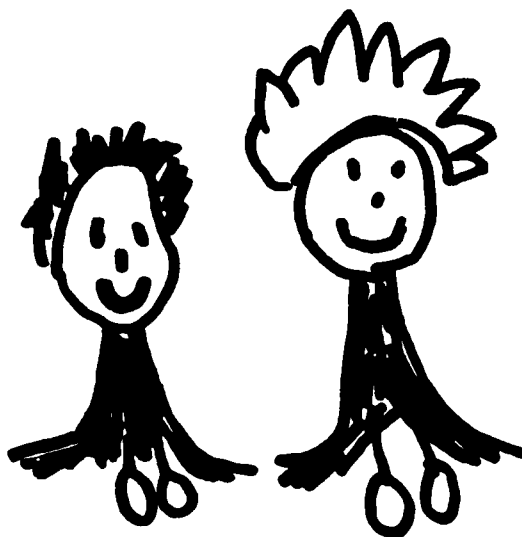
Getting Along With Others

1. Invite a compatible friend near the same age as your child over to your house to play. Give the children as much time as possible without adult intervention to work out their own problems, but be close by to help them think through problems and come up with good solutions on their own.

For instance, if they both want to play with the same toy, make the statement, "You have a problem, don't you? Can you tell me what it is? How many ways can you think of to solve this problem? Which one is the best way?"

2. Make a game of teaching your child some good old-fashioned manners such as saying "Please," "Thank you," "Excuse me," etc. Hopefully you have been modeling good manners for the first five years of your child's life. If good habits have not yet developed, this is the time to begin working on them. You might call them "Magic Words" because people are happier when they use them. **DO NOT DEMAND** that the child use these words but instead use gentle guidance into the joy of their use.
3. As a reward when good manners have begun to take hold, take the child on a special outing to a museum or to the fire station. Help him write a thank-you note to the person in charge and illustrate it with a drawing of his own.

Betty Lambert
Kindergarten Teacher
Montgomery County, TN



Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

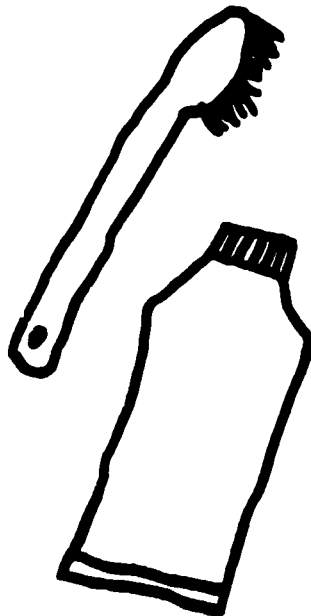
I Can Do It Myself

Your child develops trust and understanding of others by first feeling secure.

Encourage your child to develop self-confidence by doing some of these tasks:

- 1. Put on a coat.**
- 2. Get the mail.**
- 3. Put away toys.**
- 4. Brush teeth.**

*Day Care and Home Learning Activities
Plans, Appalachia Educational Laboratory,
Alice M. Spriggs, General Editor, Vol. 2,
No. 21-9, Miami, FL: Educational
Communications, Inc., 1978*



**Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten**

Feelings and Behavior

Take some everyday experiences and discuss with your child how to react to the situation. Make sure your child expresses appropriate behavior for the circumstances.

Examples:

Your child is playing with the blocks and another child knocks down his building.

A girl on the playground falls and skins her knee.

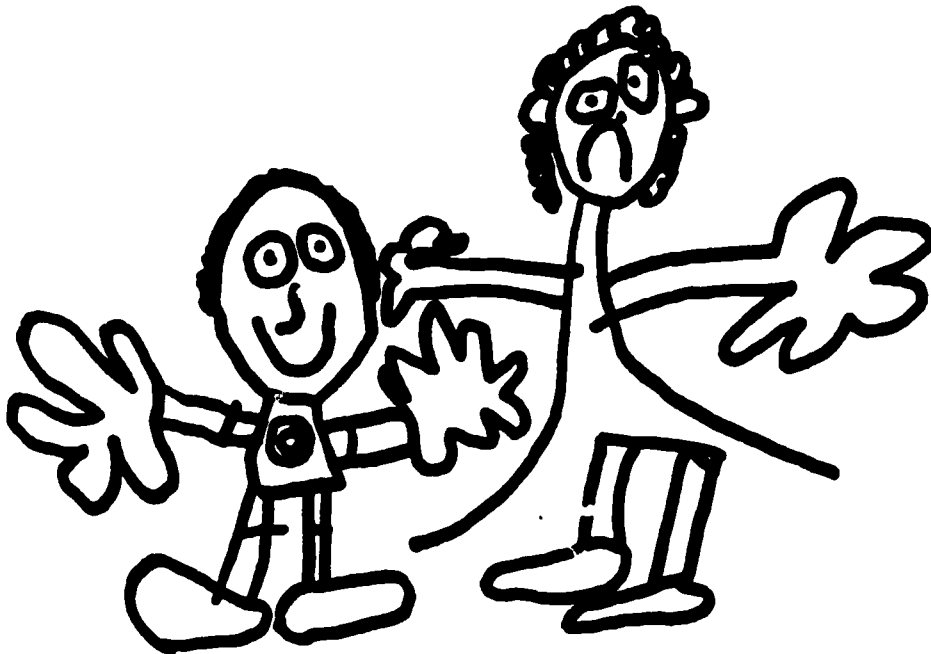
Your child can't find any crayons, but Sherry has a brand new box.

Sam has a box of candy in his coat pocket.

The teacher spills a box of felt-tipped markers all over the floor.

In the cafeteria, John starts throwing his peas.

**Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN**



Responsibility and Sharing

- 1. Encourage your child to take care of personal items. See that there is an appropriate place to keep clothes, toys, and books. Praise the child each time things are put away properly. You will need to help at first, making a game of the chore. For instance, "You put away all the trucks and I'll get all the cars." Stand back and look at the finished task together talking about how good it makes one feel to do a job well.**
- 2. Emphasize the importance of sharing and taking turns. The young child is naturally self-centered, but by four or five should be able to begin to think about treating friends as he would like to be treated.**
- 3. Talk about feelings with your child:**

"How do you feel when a friend has an apple and you have none?"

"How do you feel when your friend shares with you?"

"How do you feel if Jay is riding his big wheel but yours is broken?"

"How do you feel when Jay gives you a turn riding on his?"

Forcing a child to share and take turns is not recommended. Your goal is to use friendly persuasion to show the good feeling that comes with sharing and taking turns.

**Betty Lambert
Kindergarten Teacher
Montgomery County, TN**

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

Rules

Set rules at home for behavior and responsibilities. Make sure you follow through consistently. Also, praise your child for success in meeting responsibilities or following your rules.

Examples:

Make up your bed every morning. (Remember, it won't be perfect.)

Brush your teeth after meals.

Keep your toys put away in the proper place.

Put your clothes away.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

Following Rules

Materials: cards, games such as Candy Land, Shutes and Ladders, or Sorry

Play games with your child. Before beginning, make sure your child understands the rules. Do not allow making up rules in the middle of the game. Always encourage the child to finish the game whether she is winning or losing. Let your child make up her own games, but help her understand that once she makes a rule, it must stand until the game is completed. This can be a creative experience while learning fairness and self-control.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Auditory Skills

**Skill Level:
Kindergarten**

Comparing Sounds

1. Listen for and talk about loud sounds, soft sounds. Some examples are:

Loud

combine
radio
siren
baby crying
dog's bark

Soft

sewing machine
lullaby
water dripping
baby cooing
kitten's purr

2. Talk about sounds that are alike and different:

Alike

water dripping/rain
radio/tape player
truck brakes/bus brakes

Different

siren/train
duck's quack/dog's bark
chicken's cluck/rooster's crow

Advanced

3. Using the beginning sound of your child's first name, see how many things he can find that begin with that sound (i.e., Sam—soap, sandwich, salt, soda, etc.). Repeat on another day with names of brothers, sisters, parents.

Write the words with a pen or felt-tipped marker. Write them in a list as follows so that your child can see that they all look alike at the beginning. He may even notice that his name is spelled with a "big letter" and the other words begin with a small one.

Sam
soap
sandwich
salt
soda

Betty Lambert
Kindergarten Teacher
Montgomery County, TN

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten
Advanced

Repeating

Say, "We are going to play a game called 'copy cat.' I will say a sentence, and you are to be the copy cat and repeat exactly what I say." Then you should say the following sentences one at a time and let your child repeat each sentence. The sentence should be repeated exactly as you say it, allowing for speech problems. If your child has problems with a certain sentence length, stop and practice more sentences of that length. When you feel the child is ready, move on to more difficult sentences.

You can also use the number sequences following the same pattern.

4 words

Sally likes to swing.

5 words

Can you see the dog?

6 words

Robert went to the grocery store.

7 words

Go get the red and blue cup.

8 words

Debbie has a green bicycle with yellow handles.

9 words

Please put the flower pot on the red box.

10 words

At the circus we saw monkeys, clowns, and big elephants.

Number sequences

2 - 3

4 - 3 - 8

5 - 9 - 6 - 2

6 - 2 - 1 - 9 - 8

3 - 8 - 4 - 5 - 1 - 7

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level:
Kindergarten

Identification of Familiar Sounds

Home materials: Collect a few simple items that can be used to make noises, such as sheets of paper, scissors, keys, pencils, ball, pitcher, and water.

Stand behind a piece of furniture so that the child cannot see you make the noise. Make these sounds, and ask your child to tell you what they are:

- (1) knocking on a door (just knock on the wall) or floor
- (2) rattling keys
- (3) clapping hands
- (4) tapping a pencil on the wall
- (5) stamping feet
- (6) cutting or tearing paper
- (7) bouncing a ball
- (8) snapping fingers
- (9) jingling two spoons together
- (10) shaking connected measuring spoons
- (11) pouring water

It is also important for the child to be able to tell whether a sound is loud or soft. Ask your child to make sounds. Some examples to use are:

- (1) the sound of a big bell, then the sound of a small bell
- (2) the sound of a big dog, then the sound of a puppy
- (3) the sound of a big duck, then the sound of a baby duck

Children love to make animal sounds. You can play this game using other animals if your child enjoys the activity.

Day Care and Home Learning Activities Plans, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Alice M. Spriggs, General Editor, Vol. 1, No. 6-5, Miami, FL: Educational Communications, Inc., 1978.

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

Memory

This activity needs to be done on an everyday basis. Give your child a task to do, stating clearly what you expect in two steps at first. Use directions such as: "Take the trash can in the kitchen and put the trash in the trash can outside," or "Go to the bathroom and brush your teeth," or "Go to your bedroom and bring me the dirty clothes." Always make sure you watch closely to see if directions are followed in order and that the task is finished. Adding steps once your child has mastered two steps will extend this activity.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten
Advanced

Repeats Stories

Reading to your child is an activity that should be done daily! Encourage your child to ask questions as you read and make speculations about what will happen next. When you are finished with a story, have your child retell the story. If your child has trouble retelling the story in proper order, look at the pictures for clues. Do this daily, using a variety of stories until your child can retell them without clues. Once your child can retell the stories, continue reading and encouraging your child's interest in books and words.

Betsy Hunter

Skill Level:
Kindergarten
Advanced

The Mistake Game

Explain this game to your child. Say, "I'm going to do something wrong. You are to watch me and tell me what I am doing wrong."

You can do a number of things, putting in a wrong action or step. For example: Read a familiar story such as *Little Red Hen*. Each time you come to the word *hen*, make a "mistake" and say *rooster*. Your child will love to correct you.

Day Care and Home Learning Activities Plans, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Alice M. Spriggs, General Editor, Volume II, No. 34-4, Miami, FL: Educational Communications, Inc., 1978.

Skill Level:
Kindergarten

Secret Noises

Home materials: transistor radio, tape player, kitchen timer, or ticking alarm clock

Have your child leave the room. Turn on the transistor radio and hide it—in a drawer, under a box, behind a curtain, in a kitchen cabinet, in a closet, under the couch. When your child comes in, ask, "Where is the noise?" You can participate by letting your child hide the radio while you hunt for it.

Day Care and Home Learning Activities Plans, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Alice M. Spriggs, General Editor, Vol. I, No. 6-14, Miami, FL: Educational Communications, Inc., 1978.

Skill Level:
Kindergarten

Echo Game

Position yourself across a room from your child. Tap, snap, or clap, etc. four or five times. Now ask your child to echo back the same sequence of taps or sounds.

As your child develops, the sequences can be lengthened, thus increasing the level of difficulty.

Brenda Beard
Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN

Skill Level:
Kindergarten

Thumbs Up!

Say two words to your child. Example: man, mud. If the words begin with the same sound, your child gives you a "Thumbs Up" sign. If the two words do not begin with the same sound, the child gives you a "Thumbs Down" sign.

This can be played almost anytime, anywhere. To make it more challenging, use three or more words.

Adapted from Teacher's Edition of *Animal Crackers* of the Ginn Reading Program by Theodore Clymer and others, © Copyright, 1982, Silver, Burdett & Ginn, Inc. Used with permission.

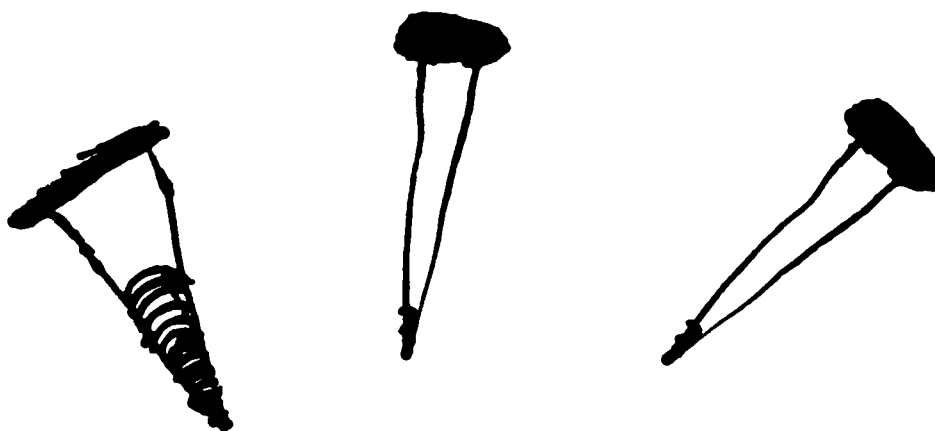
Visual Skills

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten

"Same" and "Different"

1. Using canned goods from the cupboard, encourage your child to put all the ones together that are the same color. Repeat with spools of thread, rocks, shells, or other appropriate items.
2. Take your child when you go grocery shopping. Talk about all the red things on the produce shelf, all the green things, all the yellow things, brown things, etc.
3. Place two rocks and a shell on the table. Show the child how the rocks are the same but the shell is different. Repeat with two ears of corn that have been shucked, and one that has the shucks still on it. Show how the first two are the same and the third is different.
4. Place two nails and a screw on the table. Ask the child to tell you which are the same and which one is different.

Betty Lambert
Kindergarten Teacher
Montgomery County, TN

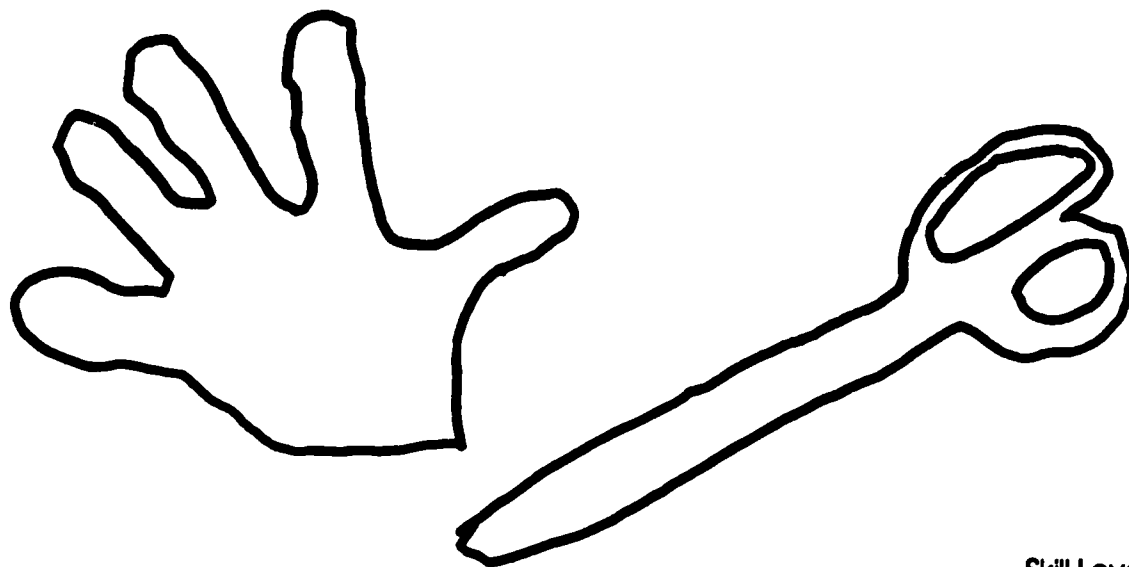


**Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten**

Outline Matching

Collect a variety of small objects such as scissors, paper clip, key, clothes pin, etc. Trace around each object on paper. Ask your child to match the object to the correct outline.

**Brenda Beard
Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN**



**Skill Level:
Prekindergarten**

Real Objects with Outlines

Materials: drawing paper, pencils or crayons, small objects to trace such as spoons, a fork, keys, scissors, popsicle stick, paper clips, a penny, etc.

Begin by drawing or tracing the outline of each object on paper. Let your child help you do this. While you are doing this, talk about what you are doing. Say, "Help me draw a picture of the penny. I'll draw around the edge while you hold the penny. There, I'm all finished. What do you think is under the penny? Let's look and see." Talk about each object as you trace it. Discuss how each object is different, and help your child think of as many descriptive words as possible for each object.

When you finish all the objects, make a game out of matching the object with its outline.

Adapted from: *Day Care and Home Learning Activities Plans*, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Alice M. Spriggs, General Editor, Vol. 3, No. 51-1, Miami, FL: Educational Communications, Inc., 1978.

**Skill Level:
Kindergarten**

Matching Letters and Name Recognition of Letters

Materials: sheets of paper, crayons, magazines, newspapers, glue, scissors, magnet for refrigerator

Starting with the letter Aa, print a large capital A and a small a on one of the sheets of paper. Have your child cut out both capital A's and small a's from magazines and newspapers.* Then glue all the A's on the Aa paper. This may take more than one day to finish. About 15 minutes at one time is all you should spend on this project. Your child can always work on it again the next day. When the letter sheet is finished, attach it to the refrigerator. Talk about the new letter for several days, then continue to letter Bb, etc. Save all the letter sheets to use as flash cards or to practice putting in alphabetical order when the whole alphabet is completed.

*Alternate suggestions: Have your child write the letter all over the sheet, cut out pictures of objects that start with the letter (consonants only), or use sandpaper letters so your child can practice feeling the shape of the letter.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

A a B b C c

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten
Advanced

Visual Memory

Materials: up to 10 familiar objects (clothespins, pencil, penny, crayon, fork, barrette, toy figures, bar of soap, rubberband, etc.)

Begin with two objects. Let your child view the objects for 5-10 seconds, then cover and ask her to name the objects. After doing this 2-3 times using different objects each time, place two objects on table. Let your child view these objects, and then have her cover her eyes while you remove one object. Show the object that you did not remove, and ask your child to tell you what is missing.

Play this game until you feel your child is ready to go to three objects. Follow the above instructions. Some children may be able to continue to four or five objects.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level
Kindergarten
Advanced

Visual Memory

Materials: up to 10 familiar objects

Begin by laying three objects on the table in a specific order. Let your child view for 5-10 seconds (longer if necessary). Cover the objects and have child name the objects in order. Do this several times using different objects. Once your child has mastered three objects, then add one more. Continue this procedure by adding one more object each time the task becomes easy.

You can extend this activity by removing one of the objects while your child has his back to the table. Have him turn around and name the missing object.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten
Advanced

"Look, What Comes Next?"

Assemble a large variety of small objects (bottle caps, pennies, buttons, acorns, small blocks, rings, etc.). Lay out a sequence pattern such as:

button, button, acorn, block, button, button, acorn, _____

Ask your child, "What comes next?" Continue with various patterns of different degrees of sequence difficulty.

You may also use beads of various colors and shapes.

Brenda Beard
Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN

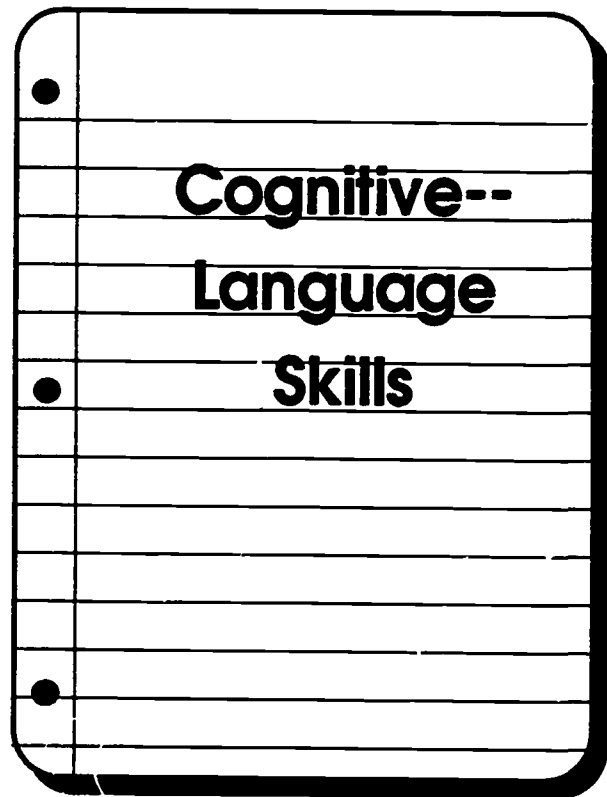
Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten
Advanced

"I Spy"

Find or plant an object or objects in your child's room and then say "We are going to play a game, a game with our eyes. I will give you a clue (hint) and you guess what I am talking about. I spy with my little eye something red."

If child does not guess correctly, give another clue. "I spy with my little eye something red and round." Continue until your child names the object. Now, give the child a turn.

Brenda Beard
Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN



Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

First, Last and Middle

Materials: 5 pieces of food such as pieces of cereal, marshmallows, carrot sticks; 5 buttons, pebbles, or sticks; 5 different colored squares of construction paper: red, blue, yellow, orange, and green

Form a row of the 5 buttons, pebbles, or sticks. Say to your child, "Hand me the first button, the last button, and the one in the middle." (Put the button back each time.)

Now, place 1 red, 1 blue, 1 yellow, 1 orange, and 1 green square in a horizontal (side by side) row and tell your child, "Give me the first red square. Give me the last green square. Give me the yellow square in the middle." (Let your child put back the square after each time.)

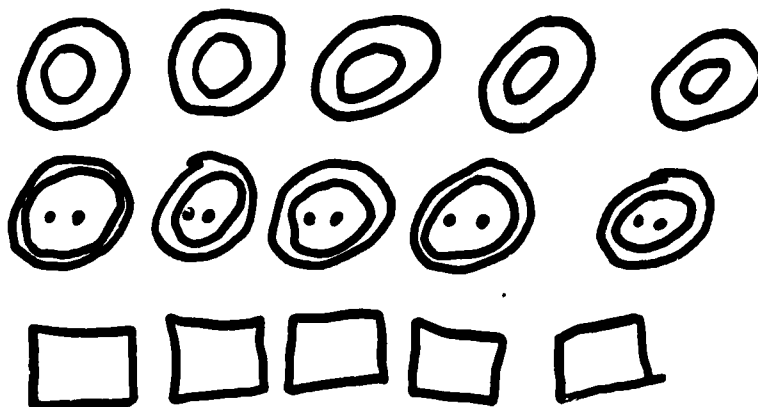
Now place the same 5 squares vertically (up and down) and ask your child the same questions.

Place the squares in a pile. Ask your child to find the red square and place it first. Then get a blue square and put it next, then the yellow square next to the blue, place the orange one next, and the green square last.

Place the five pieces of food in a row. Ask your child to eat the piece in the middle, then the first piece, and then the last piece.

Discuss other examples of this concept that happen around the home. Ask: "Who gets up first every day?" "Who comes home last?" "Who sits in the middle of our car?"

Day Care and Home Learning Activities Plans, Appalachia Educational Laboratory, Alice M. Spriggs, General Editor, Vol. 1, No. 9-7, Miami, FL: Educational Communications, Inc., 1978.



Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten
Advanced

Thinking Activities

Observing:

1. Show a picture of something occurring. Ask your child to tell what is happening.
2. Give your child opportunities to touch various textures, taste and smell different foods, and smell different odors. Have your child describe each experience.

Comparing:

1. Have your child compare two animals or two people in a story read by you.
2. Have your child compare different types of work.

Classifying:

1. Have your child classify an assortment of blocks, buttons, etc.
2. You group a number of items and then ask your child to determine how those items were grouped. (By color? shape? size? etc.)

Summarizing:

1. Ask your child to summarize the funniest, saddest, most exciting part of a story.
2. Ask your child to suggest captions, titles, endings for pictures or stories.

Testing for Assumptions:

- Show your child two differently-shaped containers each holding a quantity of water. Ask which contains more water. (Help the child to understand that the only accurate way to determine which container holds more water is to measure it.)
2. Ask your child to look at the sky and to predict the weather. Help the child to understand that these are guesses. Perhaps a discussion about qualifying words would help to clarify here. There's a difference between saying, "It's going to rain," and "It looks as if it might rain!"

Criticizing:

1. Ask, "What did you like best in school today? Why?"
2. After reading a story, ask, "How did you like that story?"

Decisionmaking:

1. Ask your child, "What people in stories, movies, TV, etc. would you like to invite to a party?"
2. Ask your child, "What would you do if you were the teacher?"

Imagining:

1. Ask your child, "What would you do if you had 100 blocks?"
2. Ask your child, "What would you do if you were lost in the woods?"

Adapted, by permission of the publisher, from Raths et al. *Teaching for Thinking--Theory, Strategies, and Activities for the Classroom*, new edition (New York: Teachers College Press © 1986 by Teachers College, Columbia University. All rights reserved.)

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten
Advanced

Make Use of Everyday Activities!

1. When walking or riding down the street, point to words, letters, and numbers on traffic signs.
2. When shopping at the grocery store, ask your child to find things for you.
3. When you get home from the store, have your child help you put things away.
4. Talk with your child while doing things together: folding laundry, driving in the car, cooking, working in the yard.
5. Ask your child to sequence the events of the day at dinner or bedtime.
6. Discuss what you have seen on TV or read together. Ask questions: "Who was your favorite character? Why? What would you have done? What do you think will happen next?"
7. Sing songs.
8. Repeat favorite nursery rhymes and stories.
9. Encourage questions from your child and try to answer them.
10. Point out interesting things that are happening: a house being constructed, a road being paved.
11. Discuss and explain different ways to group objects: color, shape, size, weight, texture.
12. Give your child responsibilities at home.
13. Encourage your child to make predictions about events and about consequences of those events.
14. Show your child that you enjoy reading!
15. Read to your child--every day!

Adapted from "A Briefing for Parents: Reading at School and at Home" by Madelyn Stover, copyright 1981 (Stock No. 0871-5-00). Reprinted with permission from the NEA, Washington, D.C.

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

Body Parts

1. Play this touch game with your child. Can you touch your:

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 1. nose to knee? | 5. elbow to leg? | 9. ankle to knee? |
| 2. chin to chest? | 6. chin to wrist? | 10. wrist to waist? |
| 3. elbows to hips? | 7. elbow to waist? | 11. knee to chest? |
| 4. toes to nose? | 8. wrist to ankle? | 12. wrist to hip? |

2. Ask your child to make these movements:

- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. close your eyes | 5. stamp your feet | 9. bend your ankle |
| 2. clap your hands | 6. tap your chest | 10. grab your waist |
| 3. wiggle your nose | 7. rub your chin | 11. slap your hips |
| 4. bend your knees | 8. touch your
elbows together | 12. twist your wrist |

3. Teach your child this fingerplay:

Eye Winker

Eye Winker (point to eye), Ear Hearer (point to ear),
Nose Smeller (point to nose), Mouth Eater (point to mouth),
Chin Chopper (tap chin), Chin Chopper,
Chin Chopper, Chin Chopper, Chin.

4. Materials: Cardboard, scissors, glue, 13 paper fasteners, movable figure

With your child's help, make a cardboard person. Put it together with paper fasteners so that the head, neck, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees, and ankles are movable. Have your child move a part of the person and name the part that is moved.

5. Play "Simon Says." Ask your child to touch the parts of the body named above. You should touch the parts on yourself as a model, if necessary. Perhaps your child would like to be "Simon" and name parts for you to touch.

*Day Care and Home Learning Activities
Plans, Appalachia Educational Laboratory,
Alice M. Spriggs, General Editor, Vol. III,
No. 50-1, Miami, FL: Educational
Communications, Inc., 1978.*

Skill Level:
**Prekindergarten
Kindergarten**

Sequencing

Materials: peanut butter, crackers, knife

Tell your child that you are going to make peanut butter and crackers, and she must tell you how to do it. Explain that you are going to do exactly what she says to do. Sometimes children do not clearly see the steps that events must take. Follow your child's instructions to the letter, giving clues when things don't go properly (such as putting the peanut butter on the cracker with your fingers because no one told you to use a knife). This can be a fun learning experience for you and your child. Laugh and have a good time and help your child better understand that most events take place in an ordered sequence.

You can do other activities in this same way, such as making pudding, making your bed, brushing your teeth, etc.

**Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN**

Skill Level:
**Prekindergarten
Kindergarten**

What Happened Next?

- 1. Have your child retell a favorite story.**
- 2. Tell the first part of a familiar story and let your child finish it.**
- 3. Make picture cards of scenes from a story or a familiar activity. Sometimes comic strips can be cut up. Have your child arrange them in proper sequence.**

**Brenda Beard
Kindergarten Teacher
Robertson County, TN**

**Cognitive--
Math Skills**

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten

Counting

Counting is an activity you can do every day with your child. Count out loud the steps on the stairs, count ice cubes as you put them into a glass, count apples you put into the bag at the store, and any other activity where you have to count. You can use numbers when speaking to your child: "Bring me four forks," "Put on two shoes," "We need three eggs for the recipe," "Put these two letters in the mailbox," etc. Help your child use numbers by making counting an everyday activity.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten

Memorizing

Memorizing the numbers 1-10 gives your child the language skills to further explore numbers.

1. Read beginning counting books to your child.
2. Make up a tune or verse to count the first ten numbers.
3. Watch "Sesame Street" on TV--they always have fun with numbers.
4. Buy a set of wooden or plastic numbers at the store and make up games with them.
5. Play the card game "War" and have your child say which wins, the 5 card or the 7 card.
6. Practice using ordinals--first, second, third, etc. Put this shirt in your third drawer, turn to the second page, etc.

Memorizing and Sorting Activities, p. 161
in *What Did You Learn in School Today?* by
Bruce Baron, Christine Baron, and Bonnie
MacDonald. Reprinted with permission.

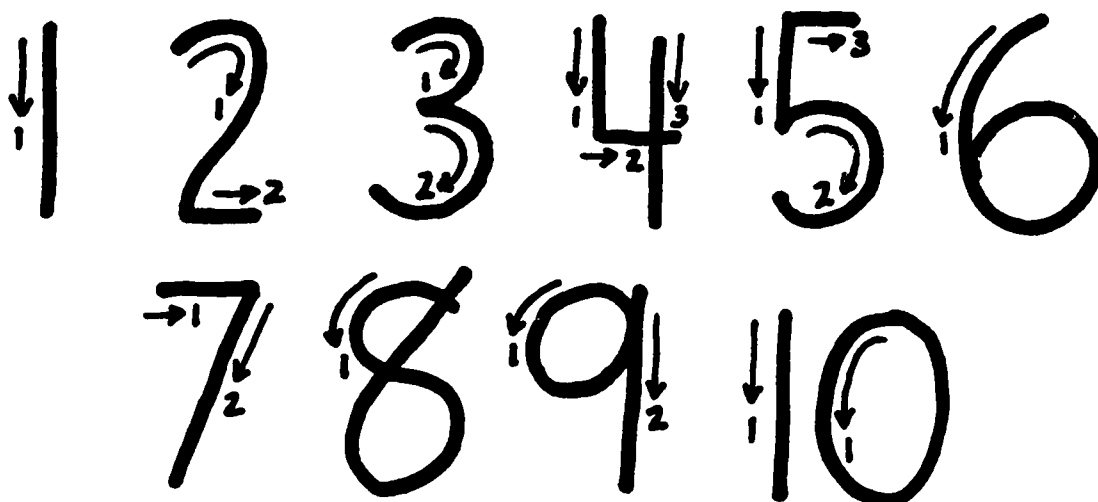
Skill Level:
 Prekindergarten
 Kindergarten
 Advanced

Numerals 1-10

Here are some numeral poems we use at school to help the children learn to write the numerals 1-10. You can use these at home with your child to help reinforce what is taught at school. Say the poem with your child as you write the numerals. NOTE: All the numerals start at the top.

1. A straight line one is fun.
2. Up, around, slant down and back on the track, two, two.
3. Around the tree and around the tree, that's a three.
4. Down and across and down once more, that's a four.
5. Fat old five goes down and around, put a flag on top and what have you found?
6. A line and a loop, six rolls a hoop.
7. Across the sky and down from heaven, that's a seven.
8. Make an S and then don't wait, go right back up and you will have an eight.
9. A loop and a line, that's a nine.
10. A one and a zero, we have ten fingers you know.

Brenda Beard
 Kindergarten Teacher
 Robertson County, TN



Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

Match Numerals 1 to 10

- 1. Materials:** 10 cards (3" x 5" or bigger) with the numerals 1 to 10 printed one to a card, small objects such as pennies, rocks, marbles, nails, bottle tops, etc.

Place all 10 numeral cards on the table face up. Place a number of objects in front of your child. Have your child find the numeral card that tells how many objects you have placed in front of her. Do this activity until your child is able to do it easily. This is an activity that can be done anytime. Do not spend more than 15 minutes on this activity unless your child is really enjoying it. If she needs more practice, continue the game another day.

To extend this activity, have your child choose a card and count out objects that match the numeral.

- 2. Materials:** two sets of numeral cards with 1 to 10 printed on them.

Lay both sets of cards face down on the table in mixed-up order, one set on the left and one set on the right. Have your child pick a card from each set. If they match and your child can name the numeral, he may keep the cards. If not, turn the cards back over and you take a turn. Continue until all matches have been found. Once your child easily knows 1 to 10, add numerals up to 25.

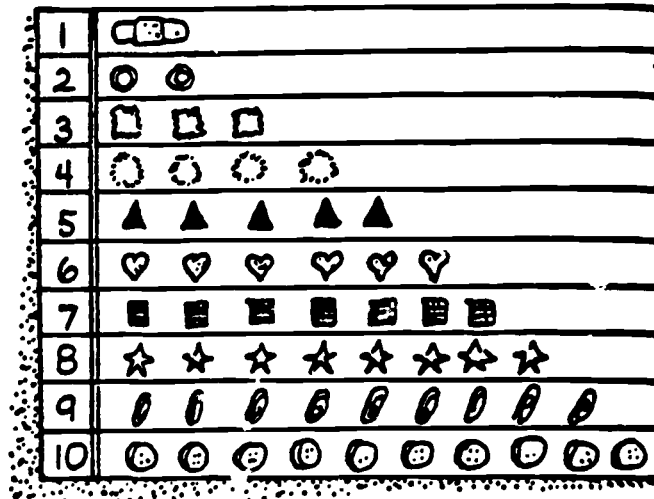
Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN

Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

"Touchable Counting Poster"

Collect some interesting small objects that are alike. Some suggested objects are: buttons, small bandages, cotton balls, stamps, paper clips, dried beans, small pebbles, colored paper shapes, etc. You will need ten of one object, such as buttons, nine of another object such as paper clips, and so on. On a large sheet of poster board or cardboard, draw ten evenly spaced lines about two inches apart across the page. Neatly draw the numeral 1 on the first line and glue one object on that line to go with it. Continue writing numerals and gluing objects until you reach the numeral 10. Your child could help you make the poster. Touching the objects will aid in counting. The poster will also help your child see at a glance the fact that eight is more than two.

From *Power Pak*, IPD #259, p. 170, by Claudette Gronski and Judith Meeker. Copyright © 1984 by Incentive Publications, Inc., Nashville, TN 37215. Used by permission.



Skill Level:
Prekindergarten
Kindergarten

One to One Correspondence

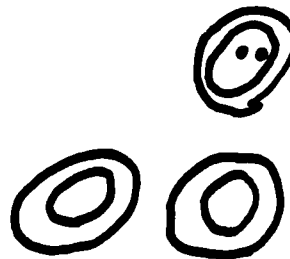
Materials: small objects such as buttons, bottle tops, poker chips, nails, pennies, screws, rocks, clothespins, etc.

Tell your child you are going to play a matching game. Place one object on the table. Ask your child to make a set* with the same number of members** as your set. The child does not have to use the same kind of object you used, but must have the same number of objects (in this case, one object). Continue this game using different numbers of members in your set each time. Let your child make the set and you make an identical set. Make a mistake and see if your child can find the mistake. Always be positive with your child even during times of difficulty.

*Set—a group of objects that go together in some manner.

**Member—one object of the set.

Betsy Hunter
Kindergarten Teacher
Sumner County, TN



**Selected
Resources to
Share with
Parents**



How to write a finger play

By Carol Ann Piggins

Finger plays are a great help in teaching concepts to preschoolers but sometimes it's impossible to find the exact play that goes across a concept you want to teach. You search the library, comb the magazines and solicit all your colleagues until you're ready to give up. Don't. You can write your own finger plays more easily than you think.

Begin by identifying your concept and then follow these simple guidelines:

- Keep it simple. A complicated finger play is confusing to children and difficult for you to remember.
- Keep the lines short, about three to six words each, keep the number of lines to a minimum, say, four, six, or eight.

The author is Executive Director of Creative Education Associates, Racine, WI.

• Use rhyme when possible—it makes the finger play easier to remember and provides practice in rhyming for the children.

• Use repetition when possible. Repeating words, phrases, patterns or effects can serve as a memory aid for you and the children.

• Relate the content of the finger play to something with which the children are familiar. A finger play about a mouse will have much more impact than one about a microprocessor.

• Keep the movements simple. If the movements are too complex, the children will worry more about the "doing" than the meaning of the words.

• Teach only one or two concepts at a time. Don't try to teach colors, numbers, directions and beginning sounds all in the same finger play.

• Make sure to have a natural closure, don't let your finger play just "dribble" off. The listener should know the play has ended. Use the completion of a pattern, a

final action, action of departure or final-sounding words such as *done*, *none*, or *away* to achieve closure.

Now let's put all these guidelines to the test. Imagine you wanted to write a finger play dealing with the concepts of *over* and *under*. Following the guidelines, you might come up with a finger play like this:

Line 1: *Here is a bed*. To make the "bed," hold your left arm, bent at a 45 degree angle at the elbow, parallel to the ground, palm facing down.

Line 2: *Here comes a mouse*. Show the mouse creeping with two of the fingers of your opposite hand.

Line 3: *Over he goes*. "Jump" two of your fingers over the bed.

Line 4: *And under he goes*. Move two of your fingers in a crawling motion under the bed.

Line 5: *Then he runs home to his house*. "Run" two of your fingers back to the house.

You're going to be a finger playwright in no time. ↓

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Behavioral Indicators Of Self-Esteem

PASS ON TO PARENTS

Erin Searle and Karly Backer find a quiet place to rest. These four-year-olds are in the preschool program at the University of St. Thomas School for Young Children in Houston, Texas.

By Dr. Susan Rae Miller

FOR LEVELS PRE-K THROUGH 4

What could be as important to children as having a healthy self-concept? Not too many other things. Just as teachers test for developmental skills, it's also possible to learn more about how children view themselves. With these insights a teacher and parent can take the vital steps necessary to improve a faltering self-image which, if unchecked, could profoundly affect a child's development.

Self-Awareness Somewhere between the ages of three and five, children's sense of self begins to affect virtually every action. They try out new skills, attempt to master their environment and, in general, start to establish their autonomy. Through their successes and positive feedback from people who are important to them, they adopt a good self-image. Furthermore, they begin to differentiate their self-feelings into separate developmental areas or domains—physical, cognitive, social, and emotional self. In other words, they begin to develop self-esteem regarding their performance in physical skill areas; their ability to solve problems; their success at interacting with peers; and their confidence in expressing emotions to others.

It's at this stage of development that adults can observe the emergence of var-

ious forms of child behavior, and begin to notice patterns in young children which may indicate how they feel about their different "selves." This expression of self-esteem often appears in common, everyday behaviors such as eagerness or reluctance to engage in new activities.

A Checklist Through the use of a simple, observational checklist, preschool teachers and parents can collect meaningful data concerning a child's self-esteem. Although standardized and more direct measures of self-esteem are available, most of these assessment instruments involve open-ended verbal or written responses which are not appropriate for the preschooler. The instrument which follows was designed to be used as an initial screening device for preschool teachers, daycare personnel, and parents who wish to gather informal data regarding how self-esteem is manifested in children's behaviors.

In addition, the checklist correlates behaviors with one or more developmental domains. Teachers can then have more specific information on which aspects of a child's self-esteem are especially positive, and which areas seem to need improvement. If the behavioral instrument seems to indicate that a child has excessively negative or low self-esteem in one or more areas, further observation and testing of a more specific nature

could be conducted by a child psychologist or school counselor.

Building Self-Esteem With some children, teachers may feel further testing is not necessary, but that it would be appropriate to begin some form of immediate remediation to enhance the child's self-esteem in one or more areas. For example, children's books or films, open-ended art projects, role-playing and large group discussions during circle time all encourage self-expression and positive attitudes in young children. Suggestions for specific activities to improve self-esteem in each developmental area can be found in a variety of sources. Two especially helpful books for teachers are: *Enhancing Self-Concept in Early Childhood*, by Shirley C. Samuels (Human Science Press, Inc., 72 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10011, 1977), and *100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers and Parents* by Jack Canfield and Harold C. Wells (Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632, 1976).

When preschool teachers have administered the checklist, developed classroom activities for remediation, and referred selected students for further testing, they can be confident the first steps have been taken to help their students develop that all-important feeling of positive self-esteem.

Indicates: High or positive self-esteem Low or negative self-esteem	Behavioral Indicators Of Self-Esteem In Young Children	Correlation with Developmental Domains*			
	BEHAVIORS	Physical	Cognitive	Social	Emotional
	Often says, "I can do that "	*	*	*	
	Rarely speaks in large group or circle time		*	*	
	Volunteers to answer teacher's questions during circle time		*	*	
	Maintains direct eye contact when speaking with others			*	
	Avoids looking at others; looks down towards floor when speaking			*	
	Takes care of school property; returns materials to proper place			*	
	Destroys classroom materials			*	
	Enjoys playing different roles in the housekeeping or dramatic play center		*	*	
	Often asks other children to join in play activities			*	
	Prefers to play alone			*	
	Has good posture; stands and walks upright	*		*	
	Sucks thumb	*		*	*
	Bites nails or fingers	*		*	*
	Cries excessively for no apparent reason				*
	Clearly and eagerly expresses feelings when excited or upset				*
	Whines rather than expresses needs or feelings in words				*
	Always "tells teacher" about another child's misbehavior		*	*	
	Works out peer problems with peers, rather than always telling the teacher		*	*	*
	Has poor posture; slumps when standing and walking	*		*	
	Is willing to share materials with others			*	*
	Tears up papers and "starts over" if one error is made		*		
	Often verbalizes negative feelings about others (e.g., "He's dumb")			*	
	Makes positive verbal comments about friends, family, and teachers			*	*
	Helps other children when they need assistance		*	*	
	Suggests alternative, innovative methods and new ideas for completing projects		*		
	Is reluctant about trying new activities		*		
	Offers suggestions for solving problems		*		
	Participates eagerly in outdoor play activities	*		*	
	Will not engage in gross motor play or outdoor group games	*		*	
	Upon arrival at school, always waits to be told what to do		*		
	Seldom laughs or smiles			*	*

Using the Chart

1. Instructions: Read the following list of behaviors. If the behavior is part of the child's pattern, make a check mark in the box to the left of the description. (To help identify behavioral patterns within the developmental domains, each behavior has been coded(*) to one or more areas of development.)

2. After completing the checklist, add the number of checks in the two columns. If there is a considerable difference between the two numbers and the largest total is in the column of positive behavioral indicators, the child is probably feeling good about himself/herself and hence has high self-esteem. If the totals are equal or the largest number is in the column of negative behavioral indicators, the child may be having self-doubts and therefore low self-esteem. Additionally, if the negative behavioral indicators appear to be clustered in one or two developmental domains, it is possible that the child is experiencing low self-esteem concerning those areas only and may not have poor self-esteem in all respects (for example, negative behavioral indicators might appear in the social and emotional areas while the child had high self-esteem about physical skills) ↓

Susan Rae Miller is Assistant Professor and Director of Early Childhood Programs University of St Thomas Houston TX

Preschoolers Learn Through Play

Larry, can't you play with your toys? Mother has to prepare dinner now." Throughout the country, many mothers experience at least once each day the familiar problem of directing their children's interests.

Perhaps Larry doesn't enjoy his toys. Many preschoolers do not find pleasure in their toys. Often parents do not understand the importance of play and toys. They may wish expert advice in the supervision of play or guidance in choosing the right plaything.

When you are toy shopping, ask yourself whether the toy you are considering for your preschooler will afford him opportunity to develop manual or bodily skills. Will it stimulate artistic and emotional expression? Is it suitable for a child his age? Is it so complicated that your youngster will easily become discouraged in trying to use it? Is it sturdy enough to last as long as the child is interested in it?

A vital factor related to choosing a toy is the amount of time a child is expected to play alone. And there is also the question of how to train him to be willing to play by himself. However, forcing a child to play alone for long periods of time may hamper him in developing emotionally and socially. Also, you will want to keep in mind that the attention of preschoolers is limited.

The right kind of toy helps a child learn how to use his mind and body. It teaches him to share and to get along with others. Choose a toy in relation to the physical abilities of a child, whatever his age may be. Before his school years begin, he must learn to use his large muscles. He is not ready to handle materials requiring the coordination of fine muscles. Those skills are developed during childhood and improved throughout adolescence.

During the child's toddler stage, the family's furniture will probably be in for a beating. Why not provide the child with a small, but sturdy, chair that he can push around? This activity will aid him in developing the muscles he needs for walking and running. A small wheelbarrow will provide him enjoyment and will allow him to exercise also.

Picture books, especially the ones which contain familiar objects, fill a real need for the preschooler. Young preschoolers particularly prefer trains, automobiles, and animals to the fanciful and the faraway, which have no immediate meaning in their lives.

By using the captions and simple texts in picture books, you can begin early to read aloud to the preschooler. Read slowly, allowing plenty of time for comments.

An important factor often overlooked is the cultivation of the preschooler's sense of touch. Sand and water are exciting. Even the feel of grain under tiny bare feet is enjoyable. Soap bubbles, soft dolls and animals, clay, finger paints, and mud pies allow the preschooler to develop his sense of touch. Mention to the child how soft the woolly bear is or how firm the modeling clay is. This will help him to associate words with the sense of touch.

Recordings fascinate children at an early age. But your two-year-old will be interested only in simple music. As he grows older, you will want to provide more elaborate compositions. If music is a normal sound around the home, the child may derive pleasure from it without your being aware of his interest. But as he develops enough to move around under his own power, note his reaction to music at this stage!

Choose music with clear, incisive rhythms, smart paces, and simple melodies. Happy folk songs and marches are ideal. A joyous movement from a Mozart serenade and the sturdy, foursquare momentum of a Bach composition will appeal to a youngster. Vary spirited music with calm, soothing melodies that will be restful to the child's nervous system.

If a child's life is full of opportunities for getting about and exploring his home and if he has materials and toys in his room for creative experiences, he may to a large extent be left free to express himself as he wishes. However, toys may be meaningless unless they are supplemented by life's experiences. Toys should be viewed as materials by which the child will learn about the world he lives in.

You will want to remain alert to opportunities to play spontaneously with your child. Plan activities that will help him develop in body, mind, and spirit. Help him to learn unselfishness and thoughtfulness and consideration toward others. Teach him to become self-reliant, courageous, and honest. And, remember, toys can be used effectively in your child's development, but only if balanced with meaningful interaction with persons. □

Robert L. Carl is a free-lance writer from Santa Ana, California.

Parents, you too are dreamweavers

By Carol Hurst

Storytelling's not a lost art (we all hold stories inside us, some old, some new) it's just your technique needs a little brushing up—master storyteller Carol Hurst tells how

FOR LEVELS PRE-K THROUGH 12

Storytelling

Tell me a story
Take me there!
To Camelot and Arthur's knights
And lovely Guinevere
Tell me about Olympus
And the gods that ruled the air

Tell me a story
Set me free!
In the land of thorn-walled castles
And the magic number three—
Three bears, three pigs, three billy goats
And wishes—always three.

Tell me your story
Make me know!
What you did and what you liked
And where you used to go
What made you cry and laugh and love
So many years ago

Tell me my story
Let me see!
The laughing tiny baby that
I used to be
Tell me why I'm special and of
The love you have for me

And when you've told those stories
Tell me more!
The world is full of stories once we
Open up the door.

Carol Otis Hurst

My world as a child was full of stories. Sometimes my father would tell stories before we went to bed. After closing up the gas station, he'd clean up, then pick up the youngest child and rock while we all listened to the stories of pirates and knights. Sometimes he'd sing story-songs of *Clementine* and *Sweet Betsy from Pike* in a voice that was wonderful, though always off-key.

My older sisters told stories from the thick fairy tale books of Grimm, Andersen and Lang that they brought home

from the library. Sometimes two of them would have a "telling bee"—just one tale after another, each trying to best the other—while I reaped all the benefits.

Grandma Clark had her stories to tell as well. We'd all sit on the cushioned rockers on her front porch and she'd tell tales of a young boy and girl from feuding families who fell in love, of murder in a Scottish castle, of an old man cruelly turned out by selfish daughters. Occasionally, she'd include a kind of poetry in her stories. Often, I couldn't quite understand the poems, but I loved their music. Those stories paid extra dividends—not only did they keep me wide-eyed on the front porch, but high school Shakespeare never threw me, for I recognized the characters and their soliloquies. I often wonder if Gram planned it that way.

Grandpa Otis was also a storyteller. His were stories of growing up in the hills of Western Massachusetts, of the antics of hired men and town characters and of the tricks played on city slickers. Some of his family had gone west to homestead in Montana, while others searched for gold in California. Their stories came to us through Gramp and, without ever having met most of them, we knew all about them and their adventures.

School held stories, too, for in sixth grade I found Miss Grout. She'd been to every national park in her '36 Packard. Through her I saw and felt every wonder in Yellowstone. I even touched the very tip of my finger, for an instant, in the boiling water of Morning Glory Pool and wound up with a blister. I haven't been to Yellowstone since then. I'm afraid they might have changed it since Miss Grout and I were there.

Dusting Off A Lost Art. I'm sure the storytellers in my youth were not unique and you probably had your own, but how many storytellers are in your children's

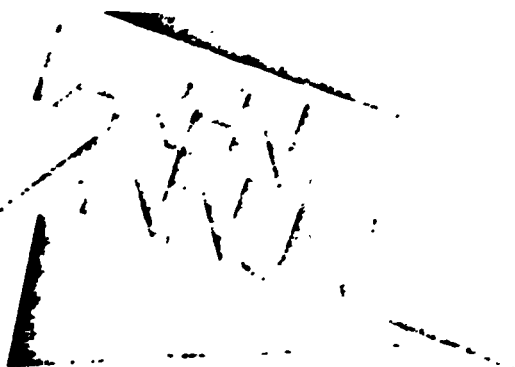
lives? Are TV and movies their only sources of stories? If they are, your children have no chance to visualize. All their stories are fantasized, acted out and recorded for them. These stories are only absorbed passively while your children stare at the screen; kids' imaginations don't get a chance to exercise themselves that way.

These days, many children probably have little chance to hear family stories. Grandparents and other extended family members used to tell stories, but now they seldom live in the same house and holiday visits are usually too frantic to promote much storytelling.

And, it's sad but true, most schools don't offer many story-hearing experiences either, although the best teachers are usually crackerjack storytellers. Somehow, we've let audio-visual materials take over that role in most classrooms.

But be of stout heart! All is not lost! You can come to the rescue for your head is full of stories. First of all, if anyone ever told you a story, you haven't really forgotten it. It lingers somewhere in the attic of your mind. Dust it off. Oh, sure, some of its edges are a little worn and it's cracked in a few places, but a little imagination and inventiveness can fix it up in no time.

Continued on page 50



DREAMWEAVERS

Continued from page 27

All a story needs to succeed is a beginning, middle and end. You've got to know what it's about and what the problem or conflict is and then you've got to remember how the characters solved the problem or were defeated by it. Then you've got to wrap it up with a "happily ever after" or its equivalent. Any details you remember will also help in making the story more vivid, the characters more fully drawn.

You know other stories, too, from the books you've read and movies you've seen. Do your children know Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn? Have they met Long John Silver? Long before they are old enough to sit through a reading of many of the classics, your children can be fascinated by hearing some of their episodes. If you know some plots, try them out on your kids; you may whet their appetites for more.

Then of course, there are your family stories. These stories help your children gain some sense of who they are. They also help them gain some perspective on you as well. Tell them about you when you were growing up. Don't gild the lily too much—it's good to tell them about some stupid or naughty things you did as well as about the times you acted bravely and altruistically.

Tell them stories of your ancestors, too, if you know them. Why did your family come to this part of the world? What was life like in the country they left? You say you don't know? Find out together

and then tell these stories to each other.

If a special relative is about to celebrate a birthday or anniversary, or for a really outstanding Christmas present for grandparents, you can help a child give a wonderful and unforgettable gift. Have the child, a group of children, or even the whole family learn the life story of the person to be honored. This recitation is guaranteed to bring down the house and it won't cost a cent. Furthermore, it just might bring about a mutual respect that was not always in evidence before. The material for the story isn't hard to come by. It's there for the asking.

Of course it's hard to start telling stories. If your children are used to only here-and-now conversations with you, they certainly will be taken aback when you suddenly turn off their favorite TV program and launch into your own rendition of *The Prince and the Pauper*. So, give yourself a chance for success. Don't choose such a time for your debut. Wait until you're on a long car trip and have exhausted all of the word games—when even arguing has lost its venom. If long trips aren't in the offing, there's always a chance of a blackout when you're all staring at a candle. Mealtimes make good launching times, too, except the storyteller always ends up with a cold dinner.

Intimate Communication. Whatever time you choose to tell a story, don't make a big deal out of it. Just tell your story simply (there are seldom talent scouts in the audience) and your kids will love it. They've probably never seen that

side of you before. You don't need many stories to be in great demand as a storyteller, either. I started with Br'er Rabbit stories for my own kids and I'm still getting mileage out of them. Your kids will ask for the same ones over and over, you'll see.

After all this are you still thinking "Why bother?" Storytelling will help your kids get to know you better. They'll see what makes you laugh or cry or cringe with horror. Your very choice of story will tell them a whole lot about you. There's an intimacy about sharing a story that's hard to duplicate, it's a way of communicating without lecturing, scolding or nagging.

You'll get to know your children better, too. Look straight at them as you tell a story. (We don't look at one another enough.) That way, you can watch a smile begin tentatively and then erupt into a guffaw. You'll also spy a tear as it slides down a cheek or watch mouths literally drop open as a story takes hold.

You'll probably uncover other storytellers, as well. Don't be surprised if another family member takes courage from your success and tries to get into the act. Soon you'll have a host of stories and storytellers. You may even start to give the TV set a run for its money. Stories have a way of taking over and a family with a fund of stories in common just has to be closer than a family without one. Come on now and try it! Once Upon A Time . . .

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Visual perception activities for parents

By Dr. Peggy Glazzard

EY Contributing Editor Peggy Glazzard provides parents with the ways and means to help children develop in visual perception

FOR LEVELS PRE-K THROUGH 1

Many of the activities children work on in the primary grades require them to gain mastery of skills such as coloring, cutting, discrimination and matching. Students with poor perceptual motor skills will have difficulty following directions requiring these skills. Writing letters and numbers requires even more eye-hand coordination, a skill that can be practiced at home, under the supervision of parents. As a matter of fact, parents can be very effective in this area and the practice very helpful for their youngsters.

Shape discrimination is a precursor to discriminating between letters and numbers. Matching likenesses and differences leads to later fine discrimination between similar words such as *read* and *road* or *can* and *cat*. Many educators believe that children can't be trained in perception skills. However, I believe that eye-hand coordination practice is beneficial for young children; mastery of cutting and coloring gives kids more confidence to try new readiness activities at school. That's a big plus.

Drawing attention to details such as word endings or medial sounds helps in

focusing the perception skills children already have. Doing extra practice at home with activities that are fun can be very beneficial for children. And parents are excellent tutors when given a program of skills that are in concert with those used by the teacher in the classroom. Just remember, if one is concerned about reading skills or spelling, one should work on those skills. If one is concerned about writing skills, work on writing skills with letters and not with isolated mazes or randomly selected dot-to-dot activities that may not build on skills a child already has. As a general rule though, parent-child practice sessions should be non-threatening and should be kept brief.

Teachers—feel free to duplicate and send home the following activities with your students.

- On paper, draw straight, curved and spiral lines with a broad-tipped felt pen



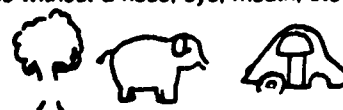
Ask your child to cut along the lines with scissors.

- Find several large, relatively simple pictures in old magazines or newspapers and outline them with a broad-tipped felt pen. Invite your child to cut them out. Later on, progress to smaller, more detailed pictures.

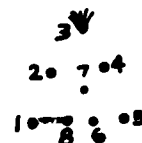
- Give your child plenty of chances to manipulate objects with his hands—encourage your child to describe the likenesses and differences between all kinds of objects. After you've gone grocery shopping, for instance, have your child stack the canned goods in the cupboard according to contents—all the beans together, all the corn together, all the pears together, etc. Younger children can sort the silverware into the silverware tray—knives together, forks together, tea-

spoons together, tablespoons together

- Copy simple illustrations such as these on paper and invite your child to supply the missing elements a tree without a portion of the trunk; an elephant without a trunk; a car without a wheel, a face without a nose, eye, mouth, etc



- Children love connect-the-dot pictures and they're easy to make at home. Start out with drawings of simple objects expressed with large dots, then go on to more complicated drawings using smaller dots. Here are two examples—



- Copy simple geometric shapes on paper (rectangles, squares, triangles, circles) including several of each kind. Show your child the paper and ask him to tell you which shapes are the same and which are different. Then, if you like, ask your child to copy a shape you point to on the sheet or to cut out a shape you point to.

- Fold a sheet of paper several times. Ask your child to first trace over the folds with his finger and then to draw along the folds with a crayon.

- Have your child trace (follow the lines with his finger) comic strip characters from the newspaper. While he traces, or afterwards, have him describe what he traced—what body part or article of clothing for example.

These ideas were developed by the Special Education Interdisciplinary Team of the University of Kansas Medical Center, Kansas City, KS. Dr. Glazzard is Special Education Coordinator with the Children's Rehabilitation Unit, IAF, University of Kansas Medical Center.



PARENTS & KIDS TALK, TALK,



How parents can provide a wide range of language experience activities for their children

By Drs. Gary and MaryAnn Manning

Parents are powerful allies in the reading curriculum for they can provide a multitude of language experiences for their children. There are just so many communication activities to be found in daily home life; teachers can be a great and welcome aid in helping parents provide these experiences. Teachers have a store of suggestions that they can share with parents—either through a parent newsletter, during parent meetings or perhaps even in an informal meeting with individual parents.

The following activities are just perfect for parents to use at home with their children. Not only are they designed to help those pre- and early readers, but just as importantly, they provide learning experiences that both parent and child can share in together.

Speaking. Children need to be able to express themselves verbally before they begin reading activi-

ties. The home is where the child learns to talk and so parents should be encouraged to increase their verbal interaction with their children.

Parents can:

- Talk about everyday sights and experiences with their child and encourage him to talk with them.

- Remind their child of enjoyable occasions such as trips, visits to relatives, birthday parties, excursions to the zoo, etc. They should talk frequently with their child about these experiences.

- Use verbal and visual experiences—oral reading, the child's art, a televised children's story, a recorded story—as a basis for conversation. They can ask their child questions about the experience to stimulate discussion.

Visual Expression. Painting, drawing, sculpting and other art activities are important ways in which children communicate their feelings.

Parents can:

- Provide different art materials for the child; paints, crayons, chalk and clay are inexpensive media.

- Set up an art space at home—any small space will do. In good weather they might bring the art outdoors on the lawn or sidewalk.

- Have play dough available for their child. They can either buy this sculpting material or make it (mix one part salt, one part flour and one part water then stir over low heat until thickened). (Teachers: Almost any object can be made from salt/flour dough, but for some starter ideas, see the article "The Twelve Gifts of Christmas" in the December '80 issue of *Early Years*.)

- Create a display area for their child's artwork. The refrigerator door, or any door, a shelf or wall are possibilities. They can print the child's name in large letters on paper or cardboard and post it in the display area.

Creative Dramatics. Children grow through opportunities to act out their fantasies. Help parents realize what a great source they are for stimulating their child's imagination.

Parents can:

- Set up a dress-up area in their

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TALK IT UP

child's room or in the family or recreation room. There, they can place old clothes, party dresses, work clothes, coats, hats and jewelry and parents can encourage their child to invite friends to play with the clothes.

- Help their children exercise their imaginations. When children offer pretend candy, for instance, parents can thank them and tell them how much they like the flavor. Responding positively to imaginary pets and friends is important . . . these fantasies are natural growing experiences for children.

- Engage in creative dramatics with their child by pretending to have telephone conversations or by acting out different characters, re-enacting scenes from television programs, guessing the actions of animals, etc.

- Encourage all creative endeavors.

Singing. Children (and parents) usually enjoy singing—an outlet for self-expression that should be encouraged.

Parents can:

- Sing familiar songs to their child. Children enjoy listening to their parents sing and it encourages them to explore their own voices.

- Look in their library's collection of records or in a music store for collections of children's songs for the home. Bookstores too, often have collections of appropriate songs. One suggestion is the recording *Mockingbird Flight*, available from The Economy Company, 1901 North Walnut, P.O. Box 25308, Oklahoma City, Ok. 73125.

- Encourage their child to create new melodies, adding original lyrics or nonsense syllables to the invented tunes. They might even try some spontaneous composition with their child and create melodies for familiar nursery rhymes.

Movement and Rhythmic Activities. Let parents know that formal

dance instruction is not the only way to encourage self-expression through dance. Children can learn to explore their life spaces by moving in new ways in the informality of their own homes.

Parents can:

- Help their child imitate animals by asking them to walk like an ele-

phant. They can just turn on the radio and move to different kinds of music.

- Help their child create dances to music. Children can begin by imitating dancers on television or by creating original dances. Using long scarves or lengths of soft, floaty materials for props also helps motivate creative dance.

“Help parents become aware of the value of everyday experiences in the home and community.”

Reading. Many parents read aloud to their children and the importance of this practice cannot be over-emphasized. The home is the major source of motivation for reading.

Parents can:

- Have as many books in the home as they can afford. Books need not be costly to be useful. They can glean a wide selection of titles from discount stores or garage sales.

- Read aloud for as many minutes each day as their schedule permits and read some of the books over and over again in response to their child's requests.

- Read their own books, papers, or magazines in front of their child for children need to see that adults enjoy reading.

- Retell stories they've heard or have told to their child. Parents can tell these stories over and over again to their child if interest is shown. They might even ask other family members such as grandparents or uncles and aunts to tell their child stories they know.

Writing. Children can learn much about our written language through seeing adults write. Many common writing activities that occur daily in the home help children understand that writing is actually talk written down.

Parents can:

- Let their child see them write and draw attention to the way they make shopping lists, write letters, make out checks, etc.

- Print family members' first

Continued on page 84 27

TALK, TALK

Continued from page 27

names on paper for their child to see and attach the names to the refrigerator door or in some other prominent place.

- Record what their child says. For example, after a trip to the supermarket or department store or other activity such as a trip to the circus or zoo, parents can ask their child to tell about the activity and then write what he says. Parents can then display their stories.

"Experience" Words. Having all kinds of experiences helps increase a child's vocabulary. Help parents become aware of the value of these everyday experiences in the home and community.

Parents can:

- Take their child to the places they usually frequent in their community. They can talk about the things and occurrences commonly seen at the hardware store, supermarket, city hall, etc.

- Go on as many family outings as possible to places like the park, zoo, library, museum, circus, etc., and then talk about these experiences and discuss them for as long as the child shows interest.

The activities we've listed are only a few of the ways parents can promote communication growth—you might also want to look into a great book on this topic written by Claryce and Roach Van Allen titled, *Language Experience Activities* (Houghton Mifflin, 2 Park Street, Boston, Ma. 02107).

Parents will be sure to welcome these suggestions and everyone—parent, teacher and child—will share in the positive results. ↓

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Charles Dewese

Cognitive Development: What Is It?

Sybil Waldrop

"A, b, c, d, e, f, g . . ." sings five-year-old Eric, as he waits his turn to go down the slide. And this is not all he can do. He can count to one hundred, identify colors, and point to a pink spot on the globe and say: "This is Texas. My grandmother lives here."

To the unknowing observer, it appears that Eric is maturing early in the area of cognitive development. What Eric demonstrates through his repertoire of verbal skills is not his superior cognitive level. Rather, he demonstrates the fact that his language ability far exceeds his cognitive ability.

Cognitive development is often confused with learning specific skills and isolated pieces of information which Eric's behavior exemplifies. Cognitive development is not reduced, on the one hand, to learning the three R's; nor is it equated with the growth that occurs during a child's spontaneous play.

Cognitive development, much more broad and comprehensive than either of these views, refers to intellectual capacity. It can be defined as growth in the ability to manipulate and process the information which one acquires.

Significantly more important than the ability to quote facts is the ability to think and solve problems. An old saying expresses this with great poignancy: "Give me a fish, and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish, and I eat for a lifetime."

Dr. Benjamin Bloom of the University of Chicago, after summarizing voluminous research, has amazed us with the fact that the child develops approximately half of his intellectuality [cognitive growth] by the age of four. By the time the child is six, he has developed about two-thirds of the intelligence which he will have as an adult. Bloom's evidence supports the conclusion that the environment

has maximum impact on a characteristic during the period of its most rapid growth.²

In view of this startling information, what do parents and teachers need to know about how thinking develops?

The work of the Swiss psychologist, Piaget, provides the best source for the answer to this question. After years of reputable research, Piaget has discovered that there are four stages of cognitive development: sensorimotor (birth until about eighteen months), preoperational thinking (eighteen months through seven years), concrete operational (seven through eleven years), and formal operations (eleven years on). The ages are merely suggestive. Each person progresses through the stages in the order given, each at his own rate. A stage cannot be skipped.

The sensorimotor period is foundational to later development. The major tasks of this period are as the name implies—to gain control over the physical body (motor development) and to enrich the mental structures with numerous and meaningful sights, sounds, textures, flavors, and fragrances (sensory development). Through many experiences with real objects and people, the child learns that objects exist even when they are removed from sight. The child who cries when his mother leaves him illustrates this milestone in development. This means that the child has a mental representation of an object. The onset of object permanence and the increased use of language signal the transition to the preoperational stage.

During this second stage in which most kindergartners are classified, thinking is limited and illogical and unlike adult thinking.

Remember five-year-old Eric who was singing the alphabet? Let's take a look as he performs a typical thinking task.

Mr. Wall makes two rows of five pennies each, one right under the other. Eric understands that each of the two rows has five pennies.

As Eric watches, Mr. Wall spreads the pennies in the bottom row. Then he inquires, "Now, do the two rows have the same number of pennies or does one row have more than the other?"

Eric readily responds as he points to the bottom row. "This row has more because it is longer."

This reply classifies his thinking as preoperational. He can count the five pennies in each row. He can match a penny in one row with a penny in the other—a skill which we label as one-to-one correspondence. But Eric does not have the concept of numbers. When the row looks longer, Eric thinks that there are more pennies in it.

Correcting his incorrect answer will only confuse him. He is bound by what he sees. Seeing is believing. He centers his thinking on what at the time is the most outstanding variable—the length of the rows.

A teacher might force him to verbalize a right answer to this particular task, but cannot change his thinking. Thinking grows with many experiences and through trial and error, not through logic. Thinking cannot be rushed.

The child in this stage is egocentric; that is, his behavior

and his thinking are from his own point of view. This means that the child is self-centered, not selfish. He simply cannot at this level of thinking put himself in the place of another.

Rhonda knows her right hand and her left hand. Stand her in front of another child face-to-face and ask, "Show me Carla's right hand." Rhonda will reach with her right hand and touch the hand immediately in front of it (the left hand of the other person). She cannot mentally put herself in the other person's position. In her own thinking, she has given the right response. To correct her would merely cause her to distrust her thinking.

During group time when Corey stands up in front of others so that he can see better, he is totally unaware that he is preventing others from seeing. Corey will gradually learn to put himself in someone's place as he experiences what happens when someone stands in front of him and as his teacher patiently and persistently says such things as: "Corey, you can sit here and see. Chris can't see when you stand in front of him."

Such behavior on the part of the child, sometimes mistaken for moral badness, is simply a reflection of his immature thinking.

To expect a child to abide by the Golden Rule which requires thinking from another's point of view and responding accordingly would be unreasonable at this stage of cognitive development.

The child can deal with abstractions only as they are in physical terms. Consider all the abstractions which teachers unjustly impose on young children. Note the abstract words in the Pledge of Allegiance. One of the abstractions does have a physical symbol, but try explaining *flag* to a preschooler. The child puts the only meaning he knows into unknown words. Listen as children say the Pledge of Allegiance. Instead of the child saying, "liberty and justice for all," you might hear him say, "liver and juice for all."

The preschooler is literal minded. Just think of the mental pictures he has when he hears: "You are going to catch a cold." "Follow the Golden Rule." "Get on the ball."

Through many and varied encounters with people, things, and events, the child adds to his thinking power. A child can only take in information which is similar to what he already knows and understands. As he adapts what he knows to make room for the new information, he increases his cognitive ability. Respect these facts of learning. "Teach him to fish. . . ." □

¹Laure and Joseph Bragg, *Learning and Growing* (Prentice-Hall Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1976), p. 12

²Maya Pines, *Revolution in Learning* (Harper & Row, Publishers, New York, 1967), p. 32

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(naming the letter), and Holly responds, "Andrea . . . A" (also naming the letter), and writes N next to the L, to represent *lion*. This talk about language is evidence of both girls' linguistic knowledge. Although some researchers are recommending that such linguistic knowledge be explicitly taught, careful observation reveals that all children discuss their reading and writing in the context in which it occurs, especially when they have reason to explore issues, as these kindergartners were doing. Children also learn that written language can be used so that something won't be forgotten: They leave their parents a note when they go outside or write themselves a note to remember important things.

Exploring Conventions

As children learn about the functions of writing, they also begin to wonder about how written language is organized in order to communicate. They learn that written language takes certain forms, goes in a particular direction, has spelling and punctuation conventions, and has syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic rules that in some contexts may be similar to the rules of oral language but in others are different. Children's early attempts at writing resemble adult cursive forms (though their letters closely resemble capitals), and their control over the horizontal direction is almost universal. Children who grow up with other forms of writing pro-

duce letterlike forms that resemble the orthographic system in their culture, and they write in the direction most conventional for their culture.

The more that children use written language that makes use of punctuation for purposes that make sense to them, the greater their control over punctuation becomes. Provided with a supportive environment, children will explore and invent punctuation. Evidence suggests that children develop orthographic principles as much through reading as through writing.

The syntactic and semantic principles children learn also depend on their participation in functions of writing. Many syntactic features of written English do not occur in oral language. Early in their writing, children begin to show control over the principle that some morphemic endings (such as *-ed* on verbs) are kept the same regardless of the phonological composition. As children develop their principles about written language, they also develop the notion that in particular settings some principles are more significant than others. Use of phonological cues in English spelling has to move toward an awareness of spelling patterns much more complex than simple sound-letter correspondence.

It has been suggested that children move from viewing language as logographic, where printed symbols are idea units, to thinking about language as if it were syllabic, before they consider the alphabetic

principle. I believe that the influences from the visual aspects of the orthographic system may develop prior to the emergence of the relationship between oral and written language. I have studied children who look at the box of raisin bran and say, "That says 'cereal.'" When asked, "Can you show me where it says 'cereal,'" they point to each line of prominent print on the box and hold onto the word *cereal* orally until they have finished pointing.

As children explore the syllabic nature of written language, they begin to show awareness of English as an alphabetic system. This is reflected in their invented spellings.

Applications

For teachers, curriculum, and schools, this information means that:

- It is important for all concerned with literacy development to become observant of what children know about written language.

- It is necessary to respect children's capacity to learn written language and to observe developmental signposts, which often include nonconventional forms, as evidence of continuous development.

- Intuitions about the development of programs such as language experience, individualized reading, literature-based programs, integrated curriculum, shared book experiences, and whole-language programs have been based on theories that are now supported by research.

- Children develop language as they use it, in at least three ways:

1. *Language learning.* Whenever children use reading and writing, their opportunities for continuous growth and flexibility in reading and writing are expanded. Reading provides interesting and new ways to express different ideas. Writing provides opportunities to discover its impact and power—ways to use writing to influence others.

2. *Learning through language.* Language is not an end in itself. It is used to read about important issues in the world and to respond to them by writing and exploring personal opinions. Reading and writing about math, science, art, and music allow students to wonder about the mysteries of the world and explore the principles of different subject areas. Reading provides opportunities to travel to far places and to distant times. Writing provides ways to diagram problems, to record events, to suggest ways to do things, to label and categorize objects and events important to the learner.

3. *Learning about language.* As children read and write, they begin to ask questions and think about language itself. They inquire into language as an object of study.

Organizing classrooms, schools, and curriculum so that students have many opportunities to read and write for real and personal purposes, to solve personal and social problems, to ask questions and find ways to seek the answers, to enjoy and explore the world of literature allows them to use language to allow the three kinds of learning to take place. □

Judith A. Schickedanz

"Please Read That Story Again!" Exploring Relationships Between Story Reading and Learning to Read

If a child has ever asked you to reread a favorite story, then you may find yourself rereading this article—it's just for you!

In searching for explanations for why some children learn to read without apparent difficulty early in elementary school while others do not, reading researchers have looked at children's experiences at home, prior to school entrance. A common finding in this research has been that children who learn to read easily in school are the same children whose parents have read to them at home (Durkin 1966; Sakamoto 1977; Sheldon and Carrillo 1952; Sutton 1964). Because the evidence from this research is correlational, we cannot be certain whether it is the story reading itself or some other associated factor that helps these children learn to read. Nevertheless, reading to young children is often recommended as a critical experience, and parents and teachers alike are encouraged to read to children as often as they can (Department of Education and Science 1975; Durkin 1970).

Surprisingly though, parents and teachers rarely ask *why* they should read to children. Perhaps the question never arises because it makes such good sense that reading to children should be related to later reading ability. It is important, however, to know why reading to children makes a difference because unless we can answer this question, we have little to guide us in determining how best to read

to young children, or in deciding what additional experiences we might provide to help children learn to read.

In this article, some of the common explanations for the effects of story reading will be discussed, and an alternative explanation, along with implications for classroom practices, will be presented.

Common Theoretical Explanations

Several theoretical explanations for the observed relationship between extensive story reading at home and later reading achievement can be found, including:

- **Identification and social-learning modeling:** Children are thought to adopt behaviors of the parent because they wish to become like the parent. If parents read in the presence of their children, their children are likely to try to read, too (Elkind 1974; Gordon 1976).

- **Direct reinforcement:** Children are thought to receive many reinforcements in

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the reading situation (e.g., attention, physical contact, verbal praise). Because of this positive reinforcement children are thought to approach reading situations as a way to maintain reinforcement obtained there. In time, the reading situation itself would become reinforcing. Helping children learn to "love" books or to develop an "enjoyment" of books as preparation for later reading instruction seems to be based in part on this explanation (Durkin 1970; Flood 1977).

• **Emotional security and confidence:** The warmth of the story reading situation, as well as the generally positive affective climate created by parents when they read to their children, is thought to support the child's emotional well-being, and to build his or her confidence. Therefore, children approach the reading situation because they have developed good feelings about reading and are not afraid of it (Department of Education and Science 1975).

• **Language development:** The reading process is viewed here as basically a language-prediction process. The language learned from the stories themselves, as well as from discussions of the stories with parents, is assumed to make it easier for children to learn to read (Durkin 1970; Flood 1977; Smith 1977; Olson 1977).

• **Book knowledge and knowledge of reading:** Children are thought to gain basic understandings such as "books have beginnings and endings," "print is read from left to right," "when one reads, one says what is printed in the book," etc. (Durkin 1970).

Inadequacy of Common Explanations

Most of the common explanations for why reading to children should be beneficial are based on, or are at least consistent with, a learning theory model of learning. Specifically, the first three explanations stress the importance of motivation and reinforcement derived *externally* from the learning act itself. In addition, they assume

that story reading serves as *preparation* for instruction in reading that is to occur at some later time, not that it is itself a situation in which actual instruction can and does occur.

This "readiness" view of story reading is consistent with a learning theory model: Learning is viewed as linear or additive, accruing slowly, bit by bit through the establishment of "associations" or "bonds." In a learning theory model, the story reading situation would probably not even be suspected as a possible source of actual reading skills, because it would be viewed as too complex, disorganized, and unstructured for such learning to occur. It is not surprising, therefore, that benefits from the experience have been assumed by many to be ones that render the child receptive to and motivated for actual reading instruction that will take place *later* in school.

The language explanation assumes that reading is primarily a language process. While there is wide support for this view, even its most ardent advocates do not say language is all there is to reading. Goodman and Goodman (1977), for example, suggest that readers use three systems: grammatical, semantic, and graphophonic. While the language explanation does assume that children learn something about the reading process itself from being read to, it stresses only the contributions to the grammatical and semantic systems. Because there is evidence that children can also learn letter-sound associations primarily from story reading experiences (Forester 1977), the language explanation is incomplete.

The book knowledge and knowledge of reading explanation, like the language explanation, is different from the others in that it suggests that children learn something about reading from the story reading situation itself. This explanation, however, is rarely extensively developed. Authors only mention it, and then stress the affective effects of story reading through comments such as, "Reading to children is primarily for enjoyment, and anything that

detracts from that goal should be bypassed" (Durkin 1970, p. 84). Yet, it is precisely this last, less well-developed explanation that may be particularly interesting and fruitful to explore, because it is consistent with cognitive theory.

A Cognitive Explanation for the Effects of Story Reading

A cognitive explanation focuses on the story reading situation itself as a source of data from which children construct knowledge about rules that govern the reading process. In a cognitive theory of learning, the learner is viewed as active, both in terms of motivation and construction of knowledge. Learning is conceived structurally as schemes or representations of experiences that become reorganized and more highly differentiated as learning progresses (Piaget 1963). Access to complex raw data, or what teachers call "real experiences," is necessary for a learner to develop schemes.

Reinforcement in the cognitive model is thought to be "inherent in the act of information-processing itself" (Hunt 1965). The child engages in activities not for the purpose of gaining external reinforcement (e.g., praise, attention, affection) but because he or she finds the activities interesting.

What data about reading are made available in the story reading situation? What schemes might children construct? How might early schemes become reorganized into more complex schemes?

With respect to the development of knowledge about letter-sound associations, for example, schemes might develop as follows:

Scheme I: Memorized Story Line

In the story reading situation, the reader makes the story line accessible to the child. When the same story is repeated many times (which usually happens), children

learn it "by heart." Learning stories "by heart" when they are read can be viewed as a cognitive scheme. The scheme is not the story line of an individual story but the general idea that story lines can be remembered, and general strategies for doing this. Children would then apply this scheme to several, or even many, books that they could learn "by heart."

Scheme II: Locating Print in Books

The story reading situation also helps children locate print in books. Sometimes parents point out words to their children as they read them stories. Even if they do not, children can probably learn which words appear on particular pages through observing when the parent says certain words. In addition, children's "by heart" versions of the story line include not only the words but the phrasing of the story, which they may be able to associate with the turning of pages. These associations would help them "line up" their "by heart" rendition of the story with the words printed in the book. Children probably also associate pictures with certain words that have been read. They know that when the parents say a certain line, a certain picture appears on the page. The picture can then be used to locate the page where a part of the story line that the child knows is printed.

In all of these ways, children probably can determine what the printed words in a book say, and they can then become familiar with how the words look. "Reading" at this point might be "by sight," while earlier it would have been "by heart."

Scheme III: Matching Letters and Sounds

Once the child knows the story "by heart," and also knows the same printed words "by sight," he or she can observe letter-sound correspondence. A third scheme, consisting of the general idea that there is a pattern or some regularity in the correspondence between letters and sounds might possibly develop as a consequence. When a certain degree of learning of this kind has taken place, "reading" using phonics rules can occur.

It should be noted that Scheme III involves a unique interaction between the child and a book, and does not involve a story reader. Scheme III, however, is a product of two earlier schemes that are dependent on the story reader.

Each of the above schemes could be expected to take considerable time and experience to develop. The reader need only consider the fact that it takes an infant about two years to develop a complete concept of the object (Piaget 1963) and about six years to develop concepts of conservation, classification, and seriation (Inhelder and Piaget 1964; Piaget 1965) to appreciate how long it might take a child to develop an understanding of letter-sound associations.

Implications of the Cognitive Model for Classroom Practice

If knowledge of letter-sound associations can be constructed by children in a fashion similar to that proposed above, then some ways of reading to children should be more effective than others. Suggestions for possible effective techniques follow.

- **Story reading, to be most effective, should take place in a situation that allows the child to see the print in the book.** Reading stories to large groups of children, or even to relatively small groups (six to eight children), may not give the access to print needed to learn words "by sight."

- **Turning the pages of the book may help children learn the phrasing of the story, which may, in turn, help them match their "by heart" story line with the printed words in the book.** This may be one strategy children use to learn words "by sight." Again, individual or very small group story reading situations would be necessary.

- **The same story should be read to children many times because repetition is required for construction of the story line.** The amount of repetition necessary for individual children to construct the story lines of a particular book would be expected to vary. The "match" between the linguistic abilities of a child and the language in the book may determine in part how much repetition is required. The experiences a child brings to the book would surely also influence the child's comprehension of

what it says, and this, too, would probably play a part in determining the amount of repetition necessary for a child to construct the story line "by heart."

It would be important, then, to pay particularly close attention to children's pleas to hear a particular story and to read it again. It is impossible to exhibit this kind of responsiveness when reading to a group of children, because children are different; the book one child wants and needs to hear may not be at all suitable for the others. Again, then, reading to individual and small groups of children would seem to be more effective.

- **Adults should point out, at least occasionally, where in the book words that "say" what they are reading appear.** Adults should probably also pose questions to the child, such as, "Where do you think it says, 'MEEOW!' on this page?" or "Where do you think it says, 'Will you please come to my birthday party, Peter?' on this page?" Obviously, children would need to be very close to the book to become involved in answering such questions.

- **Listening posts may be used most effectively when children have individual books of the stories they hear to follow along in.**

- **Children would need free access to books that are read to them at times in addition to the story reading time itself.** Such access would be critical for children to practice matching their "by heart" story lines with printed words, and for integrating their "by heart" and "by sight" versions to abstract rules about letter-sound associations. Mere access to books that have not been read may not be particularly useful, and no access to books that have been read would limit learning terribly.

- **Observation lists used to keep records of children's progress should include items such as the following:**

- Child chooses frequently to look at storybooks during a free-choice activity period.

- Child asks adult to reread stories often.
- Child pretends to read familiar stories to him- or herself, to other children, or to stuffed animals and dolls.
- Child corrects the adult when he or she alters the story line of a familiar story.
- Child turns pages for adult reader on the basis of phrasing clues only.
- Child asks what the words in a favorite storybook say.

• Teachers should encourage children to compose stories that the teacher can write down. These experience stories would be easy for children to read "by heart" because they composed them. Stories of individual children, rather than total-group experience charts, are likely to be more effective in promoting the development of schemes described above.

Summary and Conclusions

If the view presented describes with reasonable accuracy what indeed does occur, then it is clear that the *how* of story reading is critically important. Even programs in which story reading occurs on a daily basis may not be very effective if the stories are always read to the entire group or if the same books are not frequently repeated or if children do not have access to books that are read.

The effects of story reading at home may be quite strong, while the effects of even frequent story reading at school may not be. At home, the child is usually on the reader's lap where he or she can see the print and turn the pages of the book; in the classroom children often are seated far from the book in groups of twenty or more, a situation that limits both physical and visual contact with the book. At home, the child usually chooses the books to be read, thus ensuring repeated access to the same books; in the classroom children often do not select the books that are read to them. At home, a child has easy access to his or her storybooks at other times than when

the parent is reading; unfortunately, at school there is often only a short time when children have access to books. In far too many classrooms, books are kept high on shelves or on the teacher's desk, out of the children's reach.

The issue of whether or not young children should be taught "reading skills" also emerges out of this discussion. The real issue is not whether children do or do not need to learn reading skills, but rather, *how* children come to know the skills that indeed are necessary if they are to learn how to read. In a learning theory model, the teacher teaches the skills directly, in one way or another. In a cognitive approach, teachers provide experiences that make knowledge about the reading process accessible to children who are thought literally to construct the skills for themselves. While skills are not directly taught, teachers must pay close attention to the kinds of experiences that are provided.

The cognitive model also suggests possible remedial procedures for children who encounter difficulty in the elementary school. A direct skill-teaching situation may be successful with children who have had all the necessary experiential background, such as having been read to at home by their parents, before they are taught to read in the school situation. They probably already know, at least on an intuitive level, the very skills that they are being "taught," and have learned to use others as well. Thus, they master the phonics training quickly. Because these children are often the best readers, teachers believe erroneously that it is the phonics training that is responsible.

Children without this background, however, may become terribly lost, not knowing the source of these rules. For these children, the cognitive model would predict that no amount of phonics drill or training would be effective, not because it is too "hard" or "advanced," but because the information is too simple, i.e., data-starved. It is isolated from the data-rich context of real reading materials.

Children experiencing this difficulty may profit from the procedure found to be effective by Chomsky (1975). She was able to help four third graders who were having great difficulty learning to read, despite hours of phonics drill, by having them memorize storybooks! Although she attributed her success to the confidence gained by the children in their ability to read, it might also have been due to the knowledge of the reading process itself obtained in the story reading situation described above.

Some possible directions for research are also suggested. We need answers to the question: "What does reading look like before we recognize it as 'real' reading?" We know what behaviors are typical of young children on tasks of conservation and classification, for example, and we know how these behaviors change qualitatively over time. But we do not have comparable descriptions of behavior for early reading.

Instead, we have knowledge about children's ability to recognize or manipulate *isolated elements* thought to be related to the reading process (e.g., alphabet recognition, recognition of rhyming words, etc.). This is very different from knowing how they understand the process of reading as a whole. To use mathematics as an example, it is the difference between knowing that a child can recognize the numerals one through nine and knowing the child still confuses space with number (says there are more cubes in a row when they are spread out than when they are close together). These two pieces of information are likely to lead us to different conclusions if we are trying to determine if such a child is "ready" for instruction in operations on number, e.g., addition, subtraction, etc. They become critical in determining *how* we might attempt to help such a child come to understand addition.

The few researchers who have suggested that cognitive skills are involved in learning to read (Dimitrovsky and Almy 1975; Elkind 1974) have assumed that these consist of the logico-mathematical concepts of conservation and classification. What I am sug-

gesting is that structures *unique to reading* might also develop. The schemes outlined above might possibly be examples of children's early understandings of the reading process. Of course, any theoretically-based hypotheses such as those suggested above need rigorous empirical confirmation.

Finally, the discussion presented here provides an interesting basis for speculation about the relationship between affect and cognition. If the story reading experience is to result in the cognitive learnings outlined above, a closeness between the adult reader and the child is required. In other words, a story reading situation that is loaded with positive affect (e.g., individual attention, physical contact, verbal praise, etc.) is the same situation that is loaded with information for the child. Part of the "loading" no doubt results because the adult is in a situation where he or she can be *responsive* to an individual child's behavior. The adult can be directed by the child to back up or to go forward, to repeat, to answer questions, and so on.

It may be that a child's affective tie to an adult is influenced by the adult's responsiveness to the child's cognitive needs. It has been well-documented in relation to infants, for example, that they like best those adults who are most responsive, i.e., who play with them, etc. (Rheingold 1956; Schaffer and Emerson 1964). It has been suggested by others that infants may like these adults best because they know that with them around they can get interesting things to happen (Schickedanz and Goldstein 1977).

Affect and cognition, then, may truly interact with each other. If this conception is at all accurate, ideas such as "we should limit goals of the preschool to emotional development and leave cognitive development to the elementary school" need to be reconsidered.

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Reading Readiness

Aspects Overlooked in Structured Readiness Programs and Workbooks

Nancy K. Carver

During the 1960s a concern for the causes of school failure prompted an emphasis on the formal teaching of letters, phonics, numbers and other skills and knowledge thought to be important to success in reading (Rudolph and Cohen, 1984). With this turn toward academics, many kindergarten teachers began to rely on structured commercial workbooks as the mainstay of their reading readiness programs.

Lass (1985, pp. 514-15) appropriately points out that:

What is required by readiness programs may be more difficult than what is necessary to begin reading. Phoneme segmentation, rhyme identification, and shape completion are three skills found in most readiness programs which may be difficult for some preschoolers. Moreover, these skills are unnecessary for acquiring a rather large sight vocabulary and reading books. It seems important to differentiate, as Smith (1979) does, between skills necessary for reading and those required for success in formal reading programs. If such differences are significant, a reexamination of current school methods is warranted.

Endless workbook pages and drills on grapheme-phoneme correspondence, rhyming words, sequencing, tracing, copying and matching do not provide pre-readers with a foundation for understanding and enjoying the reading process. When structured programs and workbooks are used at any level, it often means that reading becomes a series of segmented skills lessons rather than a thinking activity involving meaningful language and associations. It is imperative that teachers provide specific experiences, knowledge and environmental factors that will ensure success in reading. Although the main focus here is directed toward

prereading, the following compilation is often overlooked not only at the readiness level but at all other levels of many structured commercial reading programs.

1. Surround children with many forms of print and a variety of devices for creating it. The kindergarten classroom must contain many books to be changed on a regular basis. Objects in the room can be labeled and children's dictated and illustrated stories can be hung in special places. Provide good children's magazines to ponder over and old magazines and catalogs of all sorts to cut apart. Manipulatives such as magnetic letters or rubber punch-out letters, small chalkboards, easels, and a variety of papers and writing instruments should be available to children at all times. Letter stencils and typewriters are also advantageous to the children and offer great opportunity for experimentation.

2. Use good literature. When children are read to consistently, they begin to realize that print has a communicative purpose. The class should be read to as a whole and in small groups. Children should be able to hold the book and make note of the print and illustrations as it is read. Questions should be asked that encourage thinking such as, "What would you have done?" "Why do you think . . .?" "What do you think will happen next?" Encourage children to demonstrate their under-

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Martin: The speech-to-print connection: children's names are a good beginning.

standing of stories, characters and feelings through dramatization. Provide books that have been taped so children can hear stories more frequently. Teachers can prepare taped books with background music and sounds or use some of the many sets available commercially. An excellent set of taped books is the *Instant Readers* by Bill Martin (published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston).

3. Provide real experiences to enhance children's experiences with print.

Whenever possible connect actual experiences to the books that are read. Offer children a wide range of direct experiences that may provide a link to story topics, characters, settings, feelings or activities. Background experiences and knowledge are the skills of listening comprehension in kindergarten or reading comprehension later.

4. Develop oral language ability.

Children must be competent users of oral language in order to learn to read (Gillet and Temple, 1982). "A child's language is the raw material for reading. It contains the meaning the child knows and forms the base for the necessary

parities a child makes between oral and written symbols in learning to read" (Robinson et al., 1977). Research has continued to evidence a positive relationship between language development and reading achievement (Strauffer, 1980; Llan, 1963). A teacher's role must be to expand children's language by encouraging them to discuss their experiences, describe objects and situations, and answer questions. Appropriate models of language should be available during experiences—in recordings, films and stories. Opportunities must be provided for children to experiment and play with language.

5. Establish the relationship between spoken and written language.

Children must understand that what is said can be written down. The ability to match speech and print units is a basic prereading skill that must not be overlooked (Smith, 1979; Gillet and Temple, 1982). The relationship can be learned when stories are repeated to the child and a hand or marker is moved under the print as the words are voiced. When children dictate stories, as with the language experience approach to reading, the speech-to-print match

soon becomes evident. The basic premise of this approach is that what can be thought can be spoken, what can be spoken can be written and what can be written can be read. Dictated stories may be initiated through experiences and written individually or as a group. Children follow their own language as the teacher rereads and points out the words, enabling the speech-to-print connection.

6. Foster an understanding of the conventions of print and books.

Before children can learn to read, it is necessary that they understand:

- the concept of word as a meaningful combination of letters bound by white spaces (Morris, 1980; for a specific procedure to assess a child's concept of word, see Morris and Henderson, 1981).
- one reads from left to right
- the idea of top and bottom of a page and when to turn it
- a book has a beginning and an end

□ print is meaningful and relates to things in the world.

Besides exhibiting an understanding of the conventions mentioned above, children often indicate their initial interest in print with questions like "What does this say?" or "Where does it say . . .?"

7. Stimulate thinking.

Furth (1970),² in support of Piaget, recommends that when working with children of kindergarten age, time is best spent on activities that directly promote cognitive development. Sensory experiences, many concrete manipulatives and discovery learning are all emphasized (Cannella, 1982). Froebel, the originator of kindergarten education, claimed that play is the work of children (Rudolf and Cohen, 1984). Play is the most natural way to stimulate thinking that will promote cognitive growth. "Recent expansion of research in the area of play and its effects on learning firmly supports the notion that concrete objects and experiences



Fingerplays and oral language development.

manipulated by children at play are the prerequisites to successful acquisition of more abstract skills as learning to read" (Gentile and Hoor, 1983, p. 436).

8. Provide opportunities to gain a sense of story structures.

Children use their knowledge of story structures to understand and remember narratives as listeners and later as readers. Awareness of elements such as setting, characters, theme and plot can be developed by hearing stories read many times, acting out stories, dictating personal stories and other activities. (For more specific activities that focus on these elements, see McGee et al., 1982).

9. Encourage use of prediction.

All efficient readers predict what the text is likely to say in the next few words or sentences by using grammatical and meaning cues and the structure of the text (Gillet and Temple, 1982). Smith (1979) says that comprehension depends on prediction. After predicting, the reader then reads on to confirm hypotheses. This ability can be initiated by using predictable books—those having repetitive language patterns or repeated or cumulative story events. Kindergarten children can practice predicting and confirming as they listen to these stories being read aloud. (For more specific activities with predictable books, see Tompkins and Webber, 1985. For bibliographies of predictable books, see Rhodes, 1981; Bridge, Winograd and Halev, 1985; Allen and Allen, 1976).

10. Provide essential support and feedback.

As children make and test their predictions about print and reading, adult support and feedback are essential. The teacher must be a patient and tolerant resource person, ready to answer endless questions and nurture positive

feelings about reading and books.

It is vital to remember that reading is a complex and enjoyable thinking process. Many structured readiness programs, workbook pages and drills do not provide an adequate basis for beginning reading instruction. The experiences, knowledge and environmental factors discussed above will provide prereaders with a foundation for an understanding of the process and for later success in reading.

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On the way to arithmetic

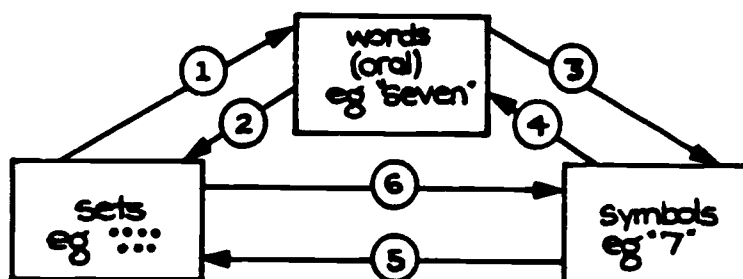
The authors' simple assessments for checking out pre-arithmetic skills and concepts in children.

By Dr. John Wick and Dr. Richard Lesh

Various pre-arithmetic concepts are logical pre-requisites to an understanding of arithmetic concepts. Pre-arithmetic concepts are an understanding of the numbers zero through 12 and some pre-addition and pre-subtraction concepts. Here's a simple assessment based on pre-arithmetic which is actually a continuation of Anne Marie Fitzmaurice's 15-

pies. The child needs to understand and translate all these components of the concept seven. But how does the teacher measure for mastery or to determine if a problem exists?

The six questions that follow the illustration below will help you assess mastery of number concepts; the illustration shows in what ways the questions or tasks are



item assessment for developmental levels (see her article elsewhere in this section). The following list of procedures can help you diagnose and remediate serious delays.

Sets, Symbols and Words

Adults are so thoroughly familiar with early number concepts that it's often difficult for them to imagine what it is like for children when these ideas are first forming. For instance, what does the concept seven mean? The child hears the teacher say the word seven, sees the numeral or symbol for 7 and sees a representation of the set of seven, i.e., a picture of seven pup-

related to sets, symbols and words.

(This is really a two-part assessment. First, ask the questions using only the numbers one to five, then, after mastery of these number concepts is shown, move on to the numbers one to 12. Many pre-schoolers can recognize a set of one to five objects without counting, however, when more than five objects are involved, immediate recognition is more difficult.)

1) Spread out a number of pennies or counters and ask, "How many are there?" If the child counts, see if he organizes the material in some way or if some objects are counted more than once or are skipped altogether.

2) Give the child 12 pennies and

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say, "Give me eight," or "Give me four," etc.

3) Write the numbers one through 12 on index cards. Put the cards in a row, out of order and ask the child to "Point to the eight."

4) Use the cards from the task above. Draw a card at random, present it to the child and say, "What numeral does this stand for?"

5) Give the child 12 pennies. Then write a number from one to 12 on an index card and say, "Give me this many pennies."

6) Lay out a set of one to 12 pennies. Make an array with the numeral index cards. Point to a row of numbers and say, "Point to the card that tells how many pennies."

Ordering

Mastering the number words, sets and numerals that go with numbers is one thing for a child; the child must also understand that 2/two/ belongs, conceptually, right before 3/three/. First the child must be able to order within each aspect (words, numerals, sets) and then among all three. This assessment can show you where most children stand on these skills.

1) *Ordering the words.* Most preschoolers begin early ordering the words for numbers, that is, counting out loud. When the child can count from one to 12, can count backwards from 10 and can count starting in the middle ("Start to count with four."), you can feel a certain mastery has been attained.

2. *Ordering sets.* Give a student dot cards (first card has one dot, second has two, etc.) and ask the child to put them in order. As before, start with the sets one to five and move on to the sets one to 12.

3) *Ordering numerals.* Use the

task in (2) substituting the cards showing numerals.

4) *Words to sets.* Have the child watch as you lay the dot cards face down, in order, from one to 12. Ask, "Which one shows three?" up to "Which one shows seven?" until you see mastery.

5) *Words to numerals.* This is the same as task (4) but substituting numeral cards.

6) *Numerals to sets.* Lay out the set cards face down and in order. Pull a numeral card at random and ask, "Which card has this many dots?" The child chooses the proper card from the face down cards.

7) *Numerals to words.* Lay out the numeral cards face down and in order. Point to one card and ask, "Which number is on this card?"

8) *Sets to numerals.* Reverse the task in (6).

9) *Sets to words.* Same as (7) using dot cards.

10) *Using order.* For ordering words, say a number from one to 12 and ask, "Which comes next?" For symbols, show a card with a numeral on it. For sets, show a randomly selected dot card.

11) *Using order.* Use the process in (10) and say instead, "Which card comes right before?"

12) *Using order.* Choose two words (five, seven), symbols (5,7), or sets (.....) (.....) and ask the child, "Which card(s) comes between?"

Matching Sets With Other Sets

Initial understanding of addition and subtraction concepts will depend a lot on the child's performance in matching sets. For most

children, these set relationships come naturally. Try these three brief tasks/assessments to determine the level of matching skills.

1) Draw any number of penny-size circles (nine, for instance) on one side of a piece of paper. Ask the child to choose that many pennies (out of the twelve or so you've given him) and arrange them on the other side of the piece of paper. A child who gets this wrong is probably having some difficulty concentrating on small details.

2) Draw eight circles (or some other number) on one side of a piece of paper and an equal number on the other. Do not use the same design on both sides. Ask the child if the same number is shown on each side of the paper. Here, you're trying to find out if the child is focusing on number at all, or just overall pattern.

3) Repeat task (2) this time using different colored pencils or crayons on the two sides to make the two sides even less alike.

A child who experiences difficulty with these three tasks may just need some drill on concentrating on details. If this doesn't help, a more intense diagnosis may be called for.

Addition By Combining Sets

A Non-mathematical Error

The simplest task in addition is when the child is given two sets and asked, "How many altogether?" But if the child has difficulty with this task it may not be a lack of addition skills at all. Here's a list of tasks and what they represent-

Task A: Two cocker spaniels are shown on the left, three more cocker spaniels are shown on the right. The question is, "How many dogs altogether?"

Task B: Now one cocker spaniel

and one Dalmation are on the left and on the right are three dogs, all of different sizes and breeds. The question is the same as in Task A.

Task C: Now one cocker spaniel and a rabbit are shown on the left; a lion, bear and tiger are shown on the right. The question is, "How many animals altogether?"

Task D: Three dolls are shown on the left and four baseball bats are shown on the right. The question is, "How many toys?"

If you assume that the child links the picture of a cocker spaniel to the spoken word "dog," then Task A is an arithmetic task. Task B requires the understanding that there are many shapes associated with the concept "dogs;" this is a concept most small children have. Task C is far more difficult for two reasons: the child must know that all five pictures stand for "animals;" the child must overcome the realization that, if the animals were really placed "altogether," the ones on the right would eat the ones on the left. The problem with the last task is obvious—some children simply may not consider baseball bats to be "toys."

The child simply may not have had any experience with these kinds of "combining sets" questions. What you're trying to identify in the child when you apply these tasks is the concept of "two and three together make five." Remember that mastering this arithmetic concept depends on those non-arithmetic understandings mentioned earlier. Children ready for addition and subtraction have little trouble treating unlike objects as equivalent units which can be added together. They have no problem with the ambiguities in our language as in the case of "how much;" and "how many." Young children are not often misled by size differences or dissimilarities among the objects. But these factors can be troublesome to preschoolers and kindergartners and may be the source of the problem

when older children try, and cannot master beginning arithmetic.

Some Pre-Addition Skills

There are three common types of situations or questions that can be used to develop pre-addition skills.

1) Counting all (both sets given).

Place five round crackers or counters on one plate on a table. Then put four square crackers or counters on a second plate. Place this second plate at least three feet away from the first one so all the crackers or counters cannot be counted in one uninterrupted counting sequence. Ask the child, "How many crackers altogether?"

2) Counting on (with only the second set given).

Put six objects in a bag as the child watches. Put three more of the same object next to the bag. Say, "There are six in here; how many altogether?"

3) Counting on with keeping track (only the first set is given).

Place five marshmallows on the table. Write the number four on a slip of paper and ask the child (as you show the paper), "How many will there be if I put out this many more?" (This last problem is much harder for many children to solve. The child may correctly start counting after five but must use some second system such as "turning down" four fingers to keep track of the four additional numbers used.)

Some Pre-Subtraction Skills

"Five children walk into a house and two walk out, how many are still in the house?" These "take away" problems are common in arithmetic. Time is involved here, that is, one set is given and then a subset is taken away.

Acting out such "take away" situations is easy, but they are difficult to portray in a text. Representing different times or time passing in a picture is cumbersome as is

representing actions. Similarly, it's difficult to picture a set and its subset in one picture. Confused children might have little trouble with your questions when they involve real objects, but may have trouble understanding the illustrations in a math text.

These three questions parallel the addition questions given earlier.

1) Say, "I'm going to put some of these (any small object) in this bag. Then I'm going to take some of them out. You tell me how many are left." Put the objects in one at a time so the child can count. Remove a subset in the same manner.

2) Put nine objects in a bag without the child watching and write a big numeral nine on the side of the bag. After showing the bag and the numeral nine on the side, ask the child "How many marshmallows are inside?" Assuming this is answered correctly, remove three from the bag, one at a time, as the child watches. Now ask, "How many are still in the bag?"

3) Place seven pennies on a table. Write the number three on a piece of paper and ask the child, "How many pennies will be here if I take away this many (show the slip of paper)?"

This article has presented a whole series of assessment procedures that could help you monitor the performance of children moving along in a "regular" manner. These measures can aid you in diagnosing points of confusion with small children who are having a harder time of it than their cohorts, or establishing just how far an older child with serious problems has progressed.

You can administer these small tests yourself, they'll be under your control, they'll tell you a lot about your students and your own math program. ↓

WALL TO WALL LEARNING FUN



Janet Scabini

As your child's first and foremost teacher, you can make every room in your house a learning lab with this collection of parent-child at-home activities

By Dr. Floyd Sucher and Steven Smith

There are really few things more satisfying than helping a child learn and expand his horizons. As parents, you can more than share this thrill with your child's teacher, the thrill of seeing a child progress in knowledge and competency. And, as in a classroom, the teaching aids are right there at your fingertips. If you're reading this at home, just look about you—learning opportunities are springing up everywhere—upstairs, downstairs, all around the house. What's more, with these activities you'll be helping your child practice skills and learn concepts while you both have fun together. Try out a few of these activities, they're simple to do and you're sure to enjoy you, new and widening role as your child's primary teacher.

The kitchen, for instance, is full of educational activities.

PRE-READING AND READING

Among the most important pre-reading skills to be developed are concept formation and language skills.

1. Have your child help you with your routine cooking and cleaning tasks. As you work together, name and discuss each

item you use. Your child should experience each item with as many senses as possible. For example, have your child see, smell, feel, and taste cinnamon and hear its name as it is taken fresh from the container in preparing rolls or a pie. Show your child how it is used in cooking. Let your child smell, taste, and see the product again when the cooking's done. Talk about the cinnamon. Did cooking change it?

2. From time to time, go through a kitchen cupboard naming each product, discussing its use and where it comes from.

3. Your child can practice sorting and classifying in the kitchen. With a quantity of cans, have him name each item and then sort the cans into groups. He can sort by food type (vegetable or fruit), by can size or color, or for beginning readers, by company name.

4. Help your child discover all of the different forms of a common product. Show your child all the different forms corn takes: fresh, on the cob, frozen, canned whole corn, creamed-style, as hominy and cornmeal, in dried and popped forms, as corn flakes, in corn syrup, cornstarch, corn oil and corn oil margarine, in cornmeal muffins, tacsos and corn chips. Talk about each form of

corn and let your child experiment by tasting, touching and smelling. Can he describe for you the differences among the forms by saying for example, "This one is crunchy and this one is sweet"?

5. Many nursery rhymes relate to food items and eating (hot cross buns, curds 'n whey, plum pie). Your child will memorize some rhymes if you read them frequently. Try acting out nursery rhymes without talking—can your child guess the rhymes? Have him act out one for you. Why not involve the whole family in nursery rhyme charades after dinner? Mom or Dad can start it off with Humpty Dumpty for example; whoever guesses correctly goes next. Ask the children who they think should produce and direct the show.

A second essential pre-reading skill area is listening and auditory perception. You can even teach these skills through example by making eye contact with your child when he speaks to you and always responding to his inquiries and requests. The kitchen is a good place to develop listening skills.

1. Have your child listen to how sounds are sometimes alike, sometimes different. Put small amounts of different dry foods

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such as rice, salt, beans, etc., in opaque plastic containers. Have your child shake each container, listen for differences or similarities, talk about the sounds, and guess what's inside the containers.

2 Have your child listen to simple one-step, two-step and three-step directions and follow them. Can he clean up after eating? Tell him to "Put the dish in the sink." (Pause) "Throw away your napkin." (Pause) "Slide in your chair." (Pause) By the way, you should always praise your child when he's successful at any task.

With your child, make cupcakes or Jell-O or other foods in which steps must be followed. Read the directions step by step and have him carry them out. This is good practice in listening and following oral directions.

3 There are all kinds of sound-producers in the kitchen (spoons, pots, whistling tea kettles). Fill a series of soda bottles with water—with a little practice, and by varying water levels you can produce a series of notes by blowing gently onto the lips of the bottles or by striking them.

4 Learning to identify the beginning sounds in words is essential to initial success in reading.

- Spend a week on just one sound. Find all the items in the kitchen that begin with that sound.

- Make a series of "sound boxes" (empty ice cream containers or plastic bowls work well). Attach two or three different pictures representing the same sound, to the containers. Have your child collect small objects from all parts of the house, or even magazine pictures, that begin with the same sound as the pictures on the containers. You can add a few "fooler" objects that don't begin with the same sound. Place all the objects and

the foolers on the table and have the child return to the container the items that begin with the appropriate sound. After several sounds have been learned, mix a series of objects on the table and have the child sort them by sound into the correct sound boxes.

- Make letter-sound playing cards. Collect four pictures of food and other items whose names represent beginning consonant sounds. Give these to separate index cards to make a deck of playing cards (four cards for each of 10 sounds makes a good deck). Do not put letters or words on the cards since we're still working on pre-reading skills. Play the games Concentration, Old Maid, Fish or Rummy with your cards—all games involve your child in making matches with sounds. Make cards for long and short vowel sounds, too.

Help your child identify letters—these kitchen activities ask your child to identify the letters in capital and lowercase forms.

1 Letters on food packages. Select one letter, identify it, and show your child the ways in which it appears on various food packages. If possible, have your child name the letter and circle it with a crayon each time it appears on a package.

2 Large supermarket ads are good for use in letter identification. From time to time, go through newspaper supermarket ads with your child inviting him to circle, for example, all the A's or B's he sees there. After your child is familiar with a few letters, record these at top of a new supermarket ad, each in a different color crayon or felt-tip marker. Now have your child circle these letters with a matching color crayon each time they appear.

3 Prepare a deck of index cards showing the capital and lowercase letters and play match-

ing games. Prepare two cards for each capital letter and two for each lowercase letter. Draw a line under each letter. This will prevent your child's confusing the letters b, d, p, q, and w if turned upside-down. Mix together these cards with the letter-sound cards you already have for phonics practice. Now ask your child to match letters and beginning sounds of pictures. A deck with 10 matching letters and sounds can also be used in games of Concentration, Rummy, etc.

4 Invite your child to help you form refrigerated cookie dough into letters, or cut letters from Jell-O or toast.

BEGINNING READING AND FUNCTIONAL READING

Labeling

1 If your child has started to read, help him along by labeling objects around the house. You can use single words or sentences. This is a *refrigerator*. This is a *stove*. This is a *little door*. This *door* is *big*.

2 Have your child read the brand names and contents from different packages. He can bring specific products you ask for to the work area while you prepare foods together—this is practical and good reading practice. If you ask your child to "Please get the vanilla extract from the corner cupboard" you're asking him to follow directions and read the label to get the right product.

3 Make dinner place cards for family members and give them to your child—at mealtimes he can place them on the table where he'd like each person to sit. These place cards can then become special gifts your child presents to a family member when he succeeds in consistently recognizing that family member's name.

4 Make cards containing the names of familiar household objects and use them to label these

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objects. Remove them and have your child reattach them to the proper objects.

5. Feading and following recipes shows your child that reading can help him do things (functional reading), and these activities usually have a nice result. The statement "... pour the batter into a 9"x9" pan" takes on real meaning when baking brownies.

For ways to keep learning going in the kitchen (and in other places) see *A Parents' Guide to Early Childhood Education in the Supermarket* by Sucher, Manning & Manning (Learning Development Systems, Provo, Utah 84601)

MATH

Rational counting and one-to-one correspondence

1. Invite your child to set the table. Can he make sure there is a glass, plate and the right amount of cutlery at each place?

2. Your child can count the cans on a shelf, apples in a bag, potatoes in a pan. While in the kitchen, have him fetch a specific amount of a certain food. Help him check his counting.

Comparative terminology

1. Ask your child to bring you the largest apple, the smallest onion, the longest carrot, the shortest cucumber. With groups of food items, have the child point out the largest, smallest, nearest, farthest. Ask him to put the items in a row from largest to smallest.

2. Can your child locate an item in a cupboard if you tell him it's next to, in front of, over or behind another item?

3. Ask your child to show you how to put an item under, over, in, on and beside a small pot.

Geometry

1. Look for circles, squares, triangles and ovals in the kitchen (cake pans, cookie sheets, etc.).

2. Compare shapes of different sizes. Which pan is largest? smallest? Your child can use a ruler to determine that the sides of a square are equal in length and that two sides of a rectangle are longer.

3. Lay different shaped crackers in a row to create a pattern and have your child try to reproduce the pattern. Do the same with boxes or fruits.

4. Your child can help you with the dishes, stacking them from largest to smallest as he dries them.

Measurement

1. Using a scale, your child can compare the weights of several foods or objects. Have him estimate weights first and then check his estimate with the scale. Children can also learn to read the weights on various packages and verify them. Have your child help you weigh out ingredients for a recipe.

2. Let your child measure out a teaspoon, tablespoon, cup, quart and gallon of water; he can compare quantities by pouring from one measuring device into another. How many teaspoons make a tablespoon? How many cups in a quart? (Place two pans on a counter with lots of newspapers under them and around the chair on which the child is standing or sitting to prevent a clean-up mess.) Have older children estimate the amount of a product in a container then measure to verify. For example, can they estimate how much water is in a partially-filled quart jar?

3. Introduce your child to inches, feet, yards, meters and centimeters by measuring pans, floor tiles, room sizes, etc. Older children can estimate lengths and then measure to verify their estimates. Record your child's height on a long piece of paper taped to the inside of a closet door. Every three months, have

the child stand next to the paper, mark his height and record the inches and date.

4. Have your child help keep track of the number of minutes it takes to hard-boil an egg, bake cupcakes or set some pudding.

• Make a clock face using a paper plate and two hands cut from cardboard. Have your child show the times you name or, position the hands yourself and have the child tell the time.

• Together, make or use a calendar on which you list things to be done or important events that have occurred or will occur. The refrigerator door is a handy place to display it. The calendar will be fun to review at the end of the year and helps familiarize your child with the days of the week and the months of the year. You may also want to record the weather for each day.

Computation

1. Using fruit, nuts, cookies, etc., make up word problems for which the child needs to subtract, add, multiply, and divide. For example, "I have eight eggs and we use two eggs to make a cake. How many will be left?" "How much of the pie will you get if we divide it equally among the whole family?"

WRITING

There are many ways children—even beginning readers and writers—can practice writing and reading in the kitchen.

1. Prepare a shopping list and post it in a visible place.

2. Obtain a small bulletin board and designate a section of it for each family member. Leave special messages for your child often (write some messages that require written answers). Some families even mark off the refrigerator door in sections and use a grease pencil to write messages—this makes a built-in message center.

3. Your child can start a per-



sonal recipe box by copying recipes he enjoys.

4. After an enjoyable cooking experience, have your child write about the experience and illustrate it. Post this story and picture where others can read and see them.

5. Have your child make labels for kitchen objects.

6. The book *Any Child Can Write* by Harvey S. Wiener (McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1221 Avenue of the Americas, New York, N.Y. 10020) contains hundreds of ideas for home writing experiences with children.

ACTIVITIES IN OTHER ROOMS

Many of the kitchen activities we've already given you can be easily altered for use in the living room, bedroom, garage, laundry room or sewing area.

1. In the garage, shop or sewing area, have your child sort buttons, nails, screws or washers in an empty egg carton. This develops classifying and organization skills. Your child can sort by size, shape, color, etc. In this way the thinning and sorting process can be repeated several times. The egg carton can be used in adding, subtraction and division activities as well. Organizing bureau drawers is another exercise in classification.

2. Can your child measure the length and width of a piece of cloth or lace? The length of a screw, bolt or board?

3. Older children enjoy reading about how to construct things using "how to" and pattern books—encourage this.

4. The atmosphere of a living room or bedroom contributes to an enjoyable reading experience.

• Provide for book storage in the living room and each bedroom (near the beds). Show your child how to care for books and magazines and help him organize books on the shelves by color, height, etc.

• Books and magazine subscriptions make excellent, lasting birthday and holiday gifts.

• Be a good model, let your child see you enjoying reading often. Read to your child regularly at all ages and have him sit near you—this warm, physical contact is important.

• When reading storybooks to your child, he will memorize certain ones. Read a familiar story and have your child fill in the words you leave out. Point to the printed word as he says it. He'll soon recognize the word out of context.

• Set aside a quiet time each day to enjoy colorful picture books with your child, but don't just turn the pages in silence—talk about the pictures and the story. Lots of verbal interaction should take place between parent and child. Older children should be encouraged to read to themselves.

• Check books out of the library. Most libraries have scheduled story hours so take advantage of your library's facilities. The library opens up a world of pleasure and adventure for children of all ages.

LISTENING AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Oral scavenger hunts are fun and require that your child listen carefully. Ask him, for instance, to find the objects in the kitchen that begin with a specific sound—F-fork, fish, fan, food. Or, ask your child to find things from all over the house that are made of wood. These games help develop your child's skills at organizing and classifying. If your child names an item that does not relate to the classification you've given, discuss why the item doesn't qualify. Help your child make distinctions.

2. Have your child listen to a commercial on TV, then have him give his own interpretation of

what the commercial said. Tap record his interpretation.

3. Tell your child short stories and have him describe for you the main characters and the theme of the story. If he's listened carefully he should be able to tell the story in his own words.

4. Read simple comic strips to your child and repeat the story several times. Cut comic strips into sections and have the child put them in the proper sequence. Have him repeat the story as he does this.

5. Play memory games. Show your child a tray containing several toys. Tell him you are going to take one away without his looking. At first, remove something that would be easy for your child to remember. Then have him guess what is missing. Try it again, but this time have your child remove the item so you can guess what's missing.

6. Once the child is acquainted with the letter names and some of their sounds, play games of association. Place cut-outs of two letters next to an object in the house. For instance, place the letters "T" and "B" on a bed and see if your child can decide which letter represents the beginning sound for the word "bed." Do the same with other objects in the house.

Your child is a beginning learner and has far to go. Make this journey with him, hand in hand; it will make it an easier and happier trip and the rewards for both will be beyond measure. ↓



A Parents' Alphabet

By Carol Hurst

A is for Arms, arms that hold and arms that support and arms that push when they have to.

B is for Books, which should abound in every home; and for Boredom, which can't stay long if books are there.

C is for the Children, and the Caring and the Crying which sometimes come together all at once.

D is for Doors, which you sometimes have to help them open and through which they have to go someday never to return unchanged; and for Discipline and Dignity, which you owe every child.

E is for Everything you hope for them; for the Easier you hope it will be for them; and for Education, which takes place at least as much at home as in school.

F is for Foolish mistakes you make with your kids; and for the Freedom they must have to make their own.

G is for Grandparents, who can add tradition and wisdom to children's lives; and for Growth, which parents and kids can experience together.

H is for Home, which is only sometimes a house where a child feels wanted and loved.

Carol Hurst is Librarian at the Juniper Park Laboratory School, Westfield State College, Westfield, Ma. Ms. Hurst is also one of EY's contributing editors.

I is for Ignorance, which darkens the world and is sometimes mistaken for Innocence.

J is for Jealousy, which creeps into so many relationships; and for Joy, which can push it out.

K is for Kickball, and tag and hide-and-seek and all those other adult-less games kids need to play; and for Kissing, and hugging, which nobody does enough of.

L is for Love, of course.

M is for the Memory all parents have of what childhood was like for them; and for Money, which can never substitute for love no matter how lavishly given; and for Manners, which make living easier.

N is for Nurturing, the giving of love and care which only sometimes comes naturally.

O is for Occupation, which takes so much of your time; and for the Openness which exists when kids and parents really work at it.

P is for Presents, which are easy to give; and for Presence, which is harder; and for Parenthood, which is only partly a biological function; and for the Patience it takes to see you through it.

Q is for questions, which are so easy to turn off and so hard to turn back on.

R is for Rest, which it seems never comes while the kids are young; and for Reward, which you get when you look in their faces or hold their hands.

S is for Summer, which seems endless; and for School, where you ought to feel welcome; for the Stories you know but seldom tell; and for Shoulders, which sometimes are drenched with tears.

T is for Time, which there never seems to be enough of; and for Teachers who try to understand.

U is for the Upper hand, which you try so hard to keep; and for the Understanding that you try so hard to have.

V is for the Virtue of overcoming all those roadblocks life seems to throw just when everything's going well.

W is for the Whys, which can drive you up the wall; and the Wisdom it takes to answer them.

X is for the X ray of the broken bone you both cried over; and for the Xtra love it takes to be a parent.

Y is for Yelling, which helps only temporarily; and for being Young which is only partly a matter of years.

Z is for the end, the end of Alphabets, the end of childhood, but never the end of love.



parent talk

Let Parents Know They're VIP's

By Dr. Anthony D. Fredericks

We all know how important recognition is to a child's development—both as a student and as an individual. The affective enhancement of youngsters can and should be a natural part of our daily interactions with pupils. This regard for the emotions can reap untold benefits academically by helping children feel good about themselves and what they are doing.

But what about parents? How much time (or effort) do we devote to the affective concerns of parents? Being a parent requires much more than simple biological functions—it involves a wide range of talents, skills, ideals and perceptions all learned through apprenticeship. Unfortunately, the day-in, day-out demands of parenting receive little recognition. Mom and Dad don't get an "A" if son Johnny learns how to hold his fork the correct way, nor do they get a "Satisfactory" when daughter Susie masters the art of tying her shoe laces.

Chances are that the accomplishments of parenthood seldom, if ever, get noticed—particularly by those outside of the immediate family. As teachers we continuously interact with parents and other members of the family on a regular basis. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that we can enhance the dynamics of our classroom by making parents full-fledged members of the instructional team, and just as importantly, by giving them recognition and praise throughout the school year. By letting parents know their efforts are an important part of the growth and development of their children, you can help assure a very positive direction for your class throughout the year.

It's All In The Family Make every effort

to promote individual families and parents in general. Demonstrate that the entire family, though not always present in your classroom, is a significant part of the classroom—

- Set up a "Family of the Week" bulletin board for the children to "advertise" their individual families. Tell your class that families are organized differently these days and some families will have both a mother and a father at home; others, a mother or a father; perhaps a grandparent or uncle is the surrogate parent.
- Establish a series of parent/family workshops where the entire family can participate in creating and designing learning games and activities.
- Invite parents in to share their hobbies, occupations, or favorite children's story.
- Establish a "telephone tree" so that every parent in your classroom can keep in touch with every other parent.
- Encourage parents to visit your class, volunteer a certain number of hours a week, or just observe their child "in action."
- Get parents involved in establishing long range projects—plays, musical productions, learning centers utilizing instructional materials correlated to your reading or math series, or even as tutors for various students in the class.

Promoting the family as an essential ingredient in your class alerts parents to the fact that their involvement and participation can be rewarding as well as important.

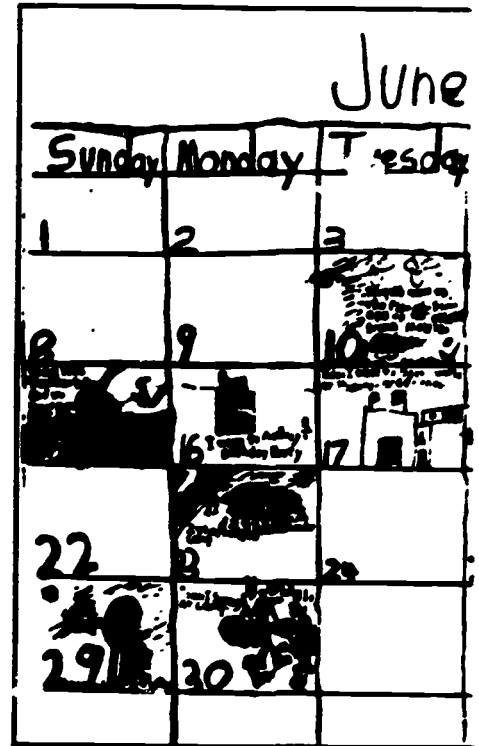
Follow-up As a teacher, it is important that you let parents know that they are valuable members of the instructional effort. Help them realize that by reading stories, reviewing flash cards, checking homework, and reinforcing math skills, they are contributing to the potential success their children experience in school.

Recognizing parents as an essential ingredient of your day-to-day instruction means acknowledging them as VIP's. Parents do influence both the cognitive and affective growth of your pupils—and should be recognized for their past efforts, as well as future contributions. To paraphrase the popular telephone company commercial—"Reach out, reach out and touch some parents." They will appreciate your efforts to recognize their efforts. They will see, in action, the results of true cooperation between home and school.

Dr. Anthony D. Fredericks is a Reading Specialist for the Catalequus Area School District, Catalequus, PA.

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Two types of projects Mrs vonStein's students made over the summer as a result of her send-home booklet "Recipes for a Happy Summer." Near right: Kim Dachelet's calendar/diary with illustrations—just the way she created it for the month of June—a lovely diary of special days. Far right: Andy Gertz proudly presents his illustrated story of a family trip.



...And a big round of applause for the parents

They're the ones who've made it all possible! Here's how to organize a very special thank you for them and a nice send off for the kids

By Jan vonStein

Well, another wonderful year's gone by. During that time many of your children's parents have given freely and so kindly of their time: assisting during cooking activities and on field trips; typing language experience stories; volunteering every thing from empty milk cartons and thread spools to their expertise and support.

How can you thank them for all they've given? How can you give their children a memorable send off? How can you make this summer a really fruitful one for all of them?

One way is to plan a simple lunch, or coffee and dessert gathering at which you share with parents some simple, written suggestions for over-the-summer-learning (I usually send home the invitations along with the children's Mother's Day presents).

The following ideas are drawn

The author teaches kindergarten and first grade at the Pine Crest School in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where she is also Acting Director Admissions

from my booklet *Some Recipes for a Happy Summer*.

Number Fun

- Keep a chart of your child's growth over the summer.
- Make a large calendar page for each summer month. Your child can fill in the numbers as you go along and note important days, holidays, trips, weather, etc. (Also see the day by day summer activities elsewhere in this article.)
- Make or buy simple connect-the-dot books.
- Let your child practice his numbers in shaving cream or finger paints.
- Purchase a flannel board set including numbers. Encourage your child to tell you stories with it.
- Obtain a magnetic board set that includes numbers. Your child can practice simple addition and subtraction to 10.

Language

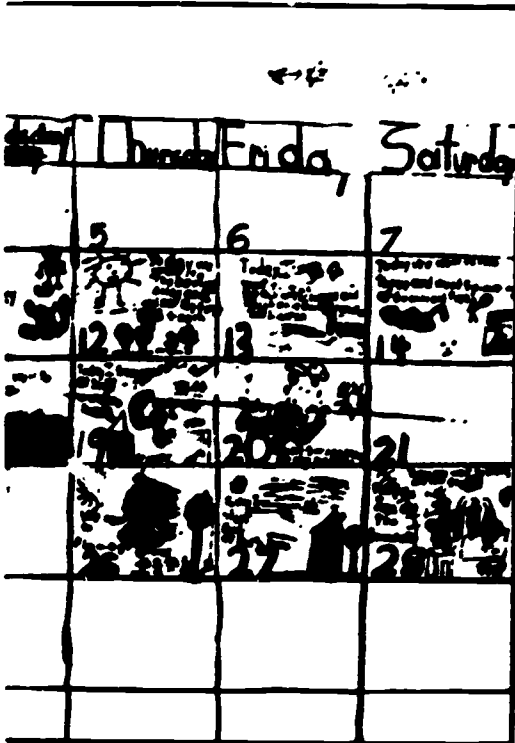
- Your child has been dictating and reading language experience stories all year. Please continue with this over the summer; just print the stories in manuscript letters.

Form the stories into a book for your child to illustrate with drawings, post cards, magazine cutouts or actual photographs

• Your child could tell you about a trip, an unusual incident, an imaginary character, anything of interest to *him*. Have your child read his book of experience stories to other family members or friends. Include the book or books in your home library.

• You can make a flannel board for your child to tell his favorite stories on. Cover a large piece of stiff cardboard with flannel. From felt of various colors, cut out characters for your child's favorite story or poem. Make the necessary scenery, too. Tell the story together by moving the characters.

Save each story or poem and the accompanying felt characters in separate file folders. Make a whole series of stories so your child will have a library of stories to tell visitors or entertain himself with. If drawing is difficult for you, simply trace figures, cut from a coloring book, onto felt or pelfon.



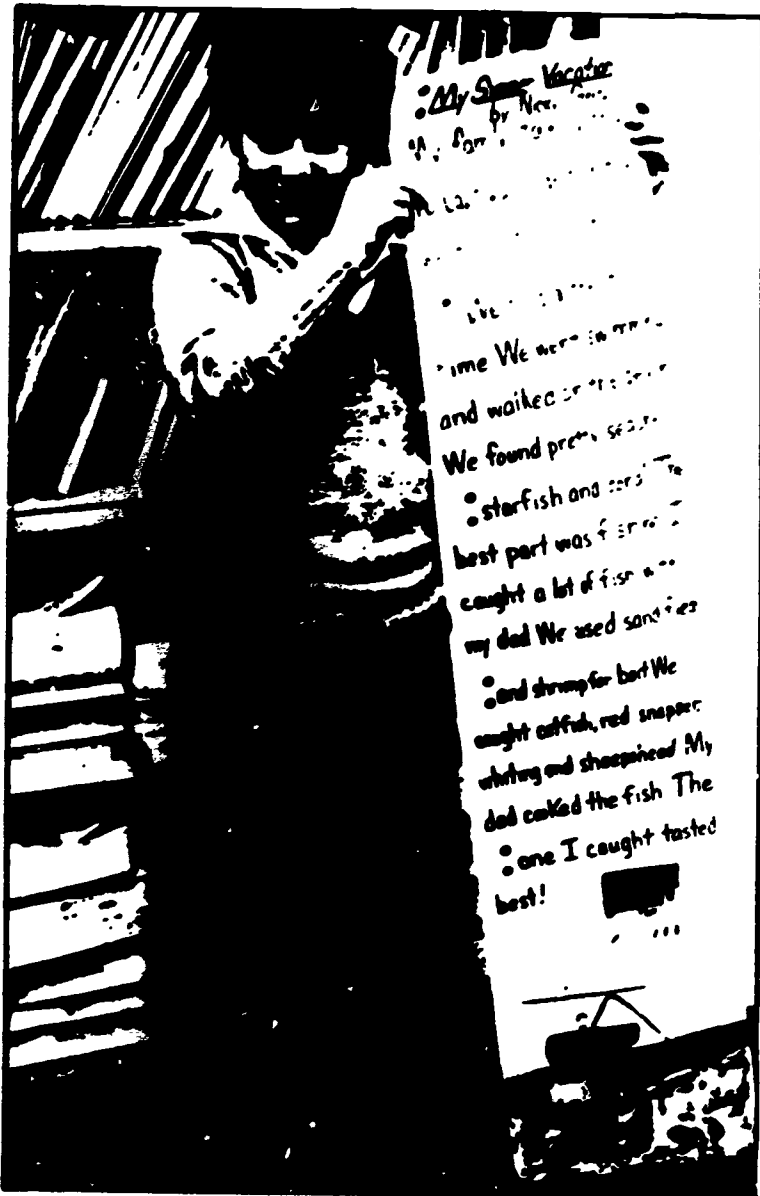
Keep Cooking

• Cooking together over the summer is not only fun, it has so many educational benefits. The math, measurement and sequencing experiences that go hand in hand with cooking are very worthwhile. And knowing simple cooking skills is an excellent asset for any boy or girl. Why not let your child help you plan a dinner menu? Shop together, talk about the different areas of the store and about food groups.

Poetry

• From time to time, learn a simple poem together with your child. Books of poetry and finger plays are available at your book store or library. Be sure that your choices are geared to the interests and maturity of your child. You and your child can always make up your own hand actions to a favorite poem.

• When your child learns a new poem, you might record it and keep it in your tape library or give it to a special relative or friend as a gift. This is an excellent reading readiness activity.



PHOTOS BY JYCE ROBINSON

Games

Games that require counting or include easy reading are good choices for your child. Different versions of the "memory" game (child is shown a tray of objects; turns his back while you remove one or more objects; child tries to guess which object(s) are now missing) are especially good for this age group.

• Visit a toy or department store and check for commercial games that have special benefits for your child. In many areas, there are

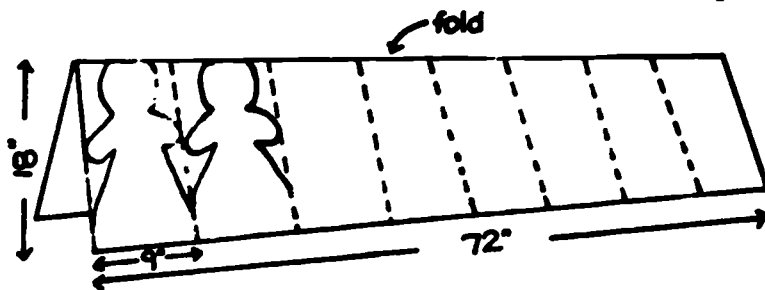
school supply stores that carry interesting games. Games can be quiet and productive activities for you, or a grandparent, or other relative to share with your child.

Puppets

One of the easiest and most durable types of puppets to construct is the hand-arm puppet. One yard of 72-inch wide felt fabric can be made into eight 9"x36" puppets. Cut a puppet pattern from newspaper making sure it fits the span of your child's hand.

Continued 77

Add a face and other clothing details with buttons or material scraps. Old socks and empty cereal boxes can also form interesting and creative puppets. An old box from the grocery store . . . lovingly covered . . . maybe with little



curtains and simple scenery will certainly add a lot to your puppet shows.

Special Days

- Try, at least once each week to plan a "special" day with your child. All the anticipation and planning only add to the fun and there are so many interesting and educational places to visit: the fire department, museum, zoo, the beach, movies, shopping, a farm. Make a list with your child of favorite places and set up a timetable so the precious days of summer don't slip away!

- Be sure to include a weekly trip to the public library in your plans. Let your child select books for your daily story time. There are excellent children's programs at most all libraries so check in your locality to see what they have planned for your child's age group. Let your child see and know that you enjoy books, too; this type of parent interest is of utmost importance to your child's future reading ability.

Some Things to Think About

A pair of noted researchers found, in their studies of the home lives of eminent people, that there was present an almost universal love of learning as a lifetime pursuit, a lifetime pursuit that was not necessarily related to a desire for acquisition of worldly goods.

These same researchers also found that most prominent people

had needed, in their formative years, frequent and direct communication with intelligent adults. Parents who served as tutors were appreciated. Not a single one of the eminent who was tutored by one of his parents failed to indicate grati-

tude for the experience. These research findings are published in the book *A Values Approach to Educational Administration* by Raymond Ostrander and Ray C. Dethy

The Most Precious Gift Is Your Time

I'd like to share this poem with you that I think is important from the standpoint of parenting.

My hands were busy through the day,
I didn't have much time to play
The little games you asked me to
I didn't have much time for you.
I'd wash your clothes, I'd sew and
cook.

But when you'd bring your picture
book
And ask me please to share your fun
I'd say, "A little later, son."
I'd tuck you in all safe at night
And hear your prayers, turn out the
light.

Then twice softly to the door . . .
I wish I'd stayed a minute more.
For life is short, the years rush past . . .
A little boy grows up so fast
His precious secrets to confide
There are no longer games to play
No goodnight kisses, no prayers to
hear . . .

That all belongs to yesteryear
My hands, once busy, now are still.
The days are long and hard to fill.
I wish I could go back and do
The little things you asked me to.

I hope you'll make each and every summer day count for you and your child—not only educationally, but in fun ways, too. Thanks for all your help. I enjoyed spending this year with your child. Have a wonderful summer.

June

13/The last day of school (fill in the proper date for your school).

14/Count all the legs on the furniture in your living room and dining room.

15/Listen to some music and then draw a picture of what it makes you think of.

16/Make three puppets out of old socks and then plan a puppet show for your family.

17/Collect some leaves from your yard; cover them with tracing paper and rub over the paper with a pencil or crayon to make a design.

18/Write the letters of the alphabet, upper- and lowercase.

19/Do each of these motions 10 times: hop, skip, jump, gallop.

20/Write an experience story about your favorite day so far this summer.

21/Take a nature walk with your parents. How many colors did you see? Draw your favorite thing you saw or found.

22/Make your own flannel board and then have someone help you make characters for a story

23/Make a construction paper collage.

24/Draw pictures of as many creatures you know of that lay eggs

25/Write all the vowels on paper. Draw pictures for words that have the short vowel sounds.

26/Make a terrarium. Ask your parents to help you learn about how to care for this mini-environment.

27/Write five interesting words from your social studies books and then illustrate them.

28/Name everything shaped like this in your backyard:

29/Write and illustrate a story about what you and a good friend like to do for fun.

30/Find five words in a newspaper or magazine that you can read. Illustrate them.

July

1/Begin a daily diary for July. At the end of the month, tell which day was the most fun.

2/See how many sets of two you can find in your house.

3/Make a July calendar and record the weather for each day.

4/See how many fours you can

find today (set of four, the numeral four). Use red, white and blue crayons to make fours.

5/Make an animal collage from cut out pictures.

6/Look in the newspaper for action words or verbs. Cut out some of the words and illustrate them.

7/Plan a trip to the beach to look for shells. Group your collection of shells by size, color and shape.

8/Make a tambourine from two paper plates (slip pebbles, beans or rice between the plates and sew together around edges). Tie bells on your tambourine with ribbons or streamers and practice some rhythms.

9/Soap up a cookie sheet or tray and practice writing the alphabet in the suds.

10/Make up a story about a talking animal and illustrate it.

11/Add some food coloring to a squeeze bottle of white glue. Make a design on paper with the glue.

12/Act out five feelings, and let your friends guess what they are. Take turns acting out feelings.

13/Name five animals whose names begin with the letter "B". Draw them.

14/Plan a trip to your local Nature Center and write a story about it.

15/Make paper bag masks with two friends. Act out a play.

16/List the seven food groups. Cut out pictures that illustrate each.

17/Draw a hopscotch grid on the ground or sidewalk. Instead of numbers, use letters of the alphabet and say the letters as you hop.

18/Draw a picture you know will make someone laugh.

19/Make flash cards from old playing cards. Using your flash cards, play "teacher" with a friend.

20/Cut out geometric or irregular shapes from colored construction paper. Make a picture with your shapes.

21/Make a beanbag toy, filling an old pot holder with rice and stitching it closed. Practice tossing your beanbag.

22/Bury or hide a treasure; make a map so a friend can find it.

23/Make a doll from a clothespin. Dress the doll in the native clothing of one of the countries you studied in school.

24/Draw a big suitcase on paper.

Cut out pictures of clothing you'd need for a trip. Paste the pictures inside the suitcase.

25/Make a "Me Mobile" using several pictures of you and your family.

26/Tell about a dream you've had. Illustrate the dream "cartoon style."

27/Make a Word Tree from an old branch. Write words you know on construction paper rectangles with crayon. Using the tad, hang the words all over the branch.

28/Draw a design using the letter "S". Find pictures of objects whose names end with the letter "S".

29/Count all the sounds you can hear in five minutes. Listen for some different sounds today.

30/List how many things one of your hands can hold: beans, shells, straws, marbles, etc.

31/Make a crossword puzzle with the names of animals. Ask your parents to help.

August

1/Find three apples that are different colors. Compare the color, shape, size and texture of all three apples.

2/Take a walk and find several different objects along the way. Compare and discuss the found objects.

3/Act out some of the chores you do every day.

4/Start the day off by telling a poem or singing a song. Act out your poem or song.

5/See how many things you can draw using these shapes



6/Talk about one news item you hear on TV or read in the newspaper.

7/Try to read some words or a sentence in the newspaper.

8/Cut out pictures of things you've dreamed about. Paste the pictures on colored paper.

9/Cut up a picture post card in puzzle pieces. Now put it back together again.

10/Make a list of the sounds you hear today. Illustrate some of these sounds.

11/Label objects in your room, the kitchen, living room, etc.

12/Make a second set of yesterday's labels. Match these words with the labels.

13/Act out these action words: jump, roll, skip, hop, slide, tiptoe. Act out other action words.

14/Place several objects in a grocery bag or old pillow case. Make up a riddle about one of the objects in the bag. Have a friend feel in the bag for the object you describe. Take turns.

15/Bounce a ball four times, six times, 10 times, etc.

16/Have someone read a story to you. Now act it out.

17/Ask one of your parents to help you write a letter to a friend or relative.

18/Cook something together with your parents. Taste test your product.

19/Listen to some music. As you listen to the music, draw a picture with paint or crayons.

20/Try a little exercise: Stand on your left foot and raise your right knee; lean forward, lean backward, etc.

21/Be a clock-watcher today. Record the time you get up, eat lunch, start to play, begin to work, etc.

22/Make a toy from discarded items around the house.

23/Make up your own poem, song, or both.

24/Make finger puppets from scrap material or other "junk."

25/Talk about jobs people do—plumber, mail carrier, garbage collector, doctor, are some examples.

26/Collect interesting "litter" from your yard, park, beach, etc. Make a display with it.

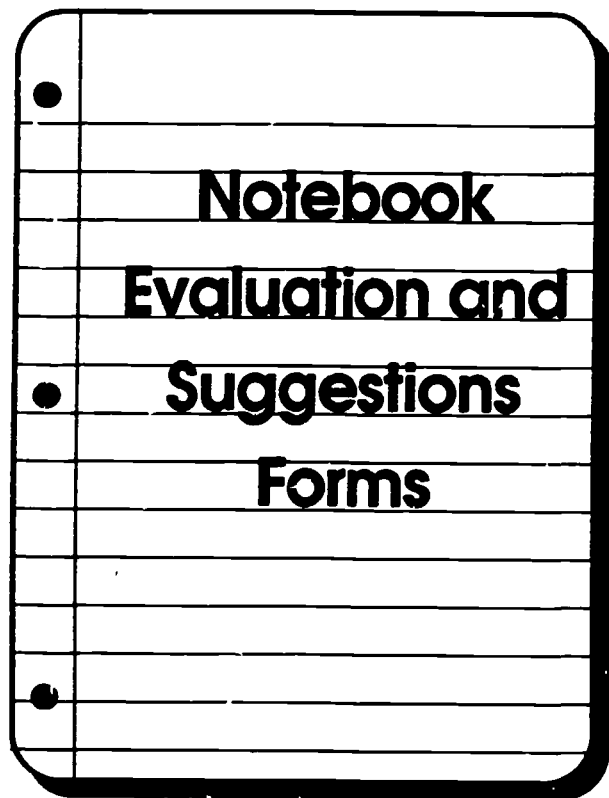
27/Prepare a simple meal or snack together with your Mother or Father.

28/Discuss one of your favorite people and tell why he/she is a favorite.

29/List all the toys in your room then put the words in alphabetical order.

30/Do one thing you've been putting off.

31/Are you all ready for school? Find out your new teacher's name. What new things would you like to learn in school this year?



Teacher Awareness Session Evaluation Form

Name (optional)

(Please include your name if you would like to give or receive further assistance or materials.)

Date _____
 District _____
 School _____

A. Professional Role (check one)

- Teacher (specify grade/subject) _____
 Administrator (specify) _____
 Other (specify) _____

B. Session Objectives: Upon completion of the Awareness Session, participants should be able to:

1. Explain purposes of the Parent Education Notebook.
2. Select appropriate activities for parent use in skill areas.
3. Use the parent letter or develop a memo to accompany activities.
4. Conduct the Parent Orientation Session.

Rate the degree to which each objective above was met:
 3 = fully; 2 = somewhat; 1 = not met

Obj. 1	Obj. 2	Obj. 3	Obj. 4

Comments:

C. Session Implementation

1. How was the session helpful to you?

2. What should be changed to improve the session?

Additional Comments:

D. Workshop Outcomes

Circle one of the ratings (4 = absolutely, yes; 3 = mostly, yes; 2 = mostly, no; and 1 = absolutely, no) which best reflects your assessment of the outcomes/benefits of the workshop.

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I would use notebook activities with students at all levels in my class. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 2. I would use notebook activities with students with below grade-appropriate skills. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 3. I would distribute materials and share what I have learned with colleagues. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 4. I would conduct the Parent Orientation Session. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 5. I would like follow-up assistance from the session presenter. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 6. I have additional activities or articles that might be used in future notebook editions. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 7. I would contact AEL for more information or assistance on the topic. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| 8. I would like information on additional AEL services. | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Comments:

TEA-AEL Parent Education Notebook Evaluation

Name (optional)

_____ (Please include your name if you are requesting or offering assistance or materials.)

Date _____
District _____
School _____

1. How many different Notebook activities have you sent home for parents/guardians to use?

2. Have you used Notebook activities during the school day? How many?

3. Have you used activities from one section more than from others? If so, which?

4. Have the activities been useful? How could they be improved?

5. Are there additional skill areas for which activities should be developed? If so, what are they?

6. What have parents told you about the utility of the activities?

7. Describe any gains you have observed in student development which may be related to use of Notebook activities.

8. Have the reference list, research articles, and skill descriptions been useful to you? Please explain.

9. Was the Parent Orientation Session agenda useful? How might it be improved?

10. Describe any additional sections which should be included in the Notebook.

11. Do you know of the use of the Notebook by other than kindergarten teachers (specify grade)? Were the activities helpful? Please explain.

12. How could the Parent Education Notebook be improved?

Thank you for using the Parent Education Notebook and for suggesting improvements. If you have additional activities or articles (with sources cited) which might be included in the Notebook, please mail these to AEL, P. O. Box 1348, Charleston, WV 25325. If you know of others who would use the revised Parent Education Notebook, please suggest that they contact the Tennessee Education Association or AEL.