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ABSTRACT

Intended as a guide to help parents of children from birth to age 5 teach their children the skills needed to make kindergarten a experience, this book consists of an introduction and seven chapters on various aspects of preparing young children for kindergarten. Checklists for parents are included in each chapter. The Introduction discusses what parents need to know about themselves and about kindergarten. Chapter 1 describes eight things parents need to know to bring out the best in their child. Chapter 2 discusses what every child should be able to communicate before entering kindergarten. Chapter 3 lists and describes the large and small motor skills children need to succeed in kindergarten, while chapter 4 describes the social and emotional skills that will make kindergarten easy for children. Chapter 5 describes early learning activities and chapter 6 suggests self-help skills that make kindergarten enjoyable for children. The last chapter deals with making decisions about kindergarten entrance age and preparing the child for the separation on the first day of school. A parent information form, a checklist of children's behaviors and habits, and a list of fun books to read with children conclude the volume. (DR)

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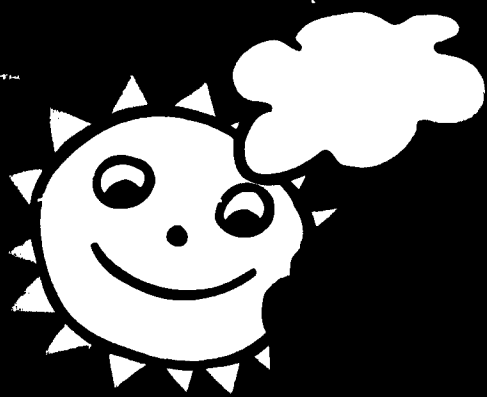
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smart kids,
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How To Prepare Your Child FOR KINDERGARTEN

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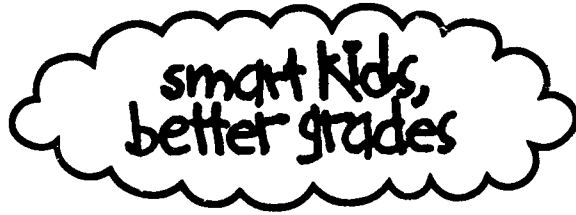
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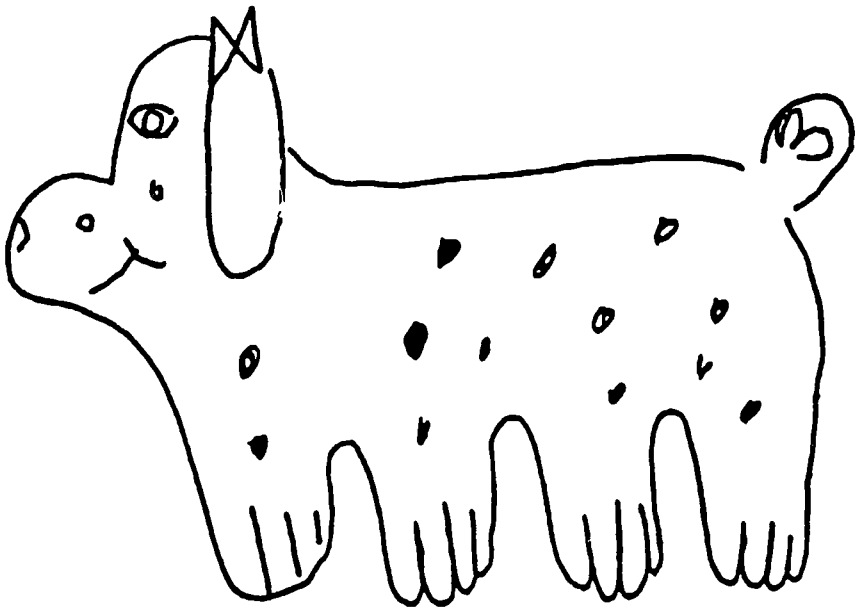
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How to Prepare Your Child
FOR KINDERGARTEN

by Florence Karnofsky and Trudy Weiss



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Editor: Virginia Massey Bell
Copyeditor: Kristin Eclov
Cover Design: Lucyna Green
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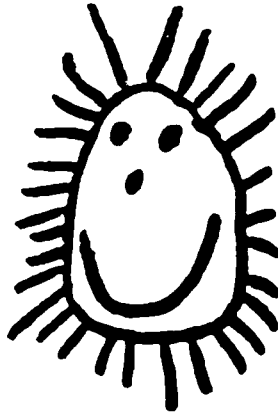
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Dedication

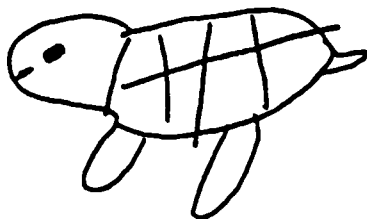
This book is dedicated to the many children who taught us so much over the years.

About the Authors

Trudy Weiss spent eighteen years teaching in grades one through eight, two years as a teacher of learning disabled children, and three years as a curriculum coordinator.









She has also coauthored several articles for several teacher magazines.

Florence Karnofsky has taught elementary children in Indiana and Pennsylvania for twenty-five years, specializing in the areas of science and social studies.





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INTRODUCTION

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT YOURSELF

From the day your child is born, you are the most important teacher your child will ever have. No professional teacher will ever have as much influence as you do. You teach through your actions, what you say, and how you play. Language, drinking from a cup, eating solid foods, using a toilet, and hand washing are learned from you. Your child learns smiling, singing, listening, politeness, and catching a ball from you, too. With every word you say, game you play, smile or hug you give, you are teaching your child.

YOUR ATTITUDES AND VALUES BECOME YOUR CHILD'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Most of your child's attitudes are learned from you. You teach not only by what you say, but by how you act as well. Your child can learn cheerfulness if you are a cheerful person. If your

conversation is lively, full of ideas, your child will accept new ideas. Frustrations handled with anger by you will be learned by your child, too. Eventually these attitudes are brought to school.

In addition, you teach your child the values you embrace. Your child learns honesty by knowing that your own words can be trusted. When you show kindness to someone in need, your child learns concern for others. Your child learns there are limits on behavior when you let him or her know there are certain rules you expect to be obeyed. A love of learning is passed on to your child, too. Eventually your child brings these values to school.

KINDERGARTEN TODAY

Parents are naturally anxious for their child to get the best possible start when entering kindergarten. Picture the first morning of school, when after years of dependency on you, your child will have to be self

reliant. You can prepare your child to make the big changes necessary to be happy and successful in school.

Kindergarten is a more formal learning place than home. Today, in kindergarten, children learn specific skills. They are taught to print, to recognize and use numbers, to tell stories, to work independently and in groups. More and more communities are giving skills tests before admitting children to kindergarten. By knowing what skills are expected, you can help your child be prepared. This book will help you do just that.

Preparing your child for kindergarten requires forethought and involvement on your part. This takes time, but not excessive amounts. Many of the skills needed can be taught casually at the dinner table, while you are driving, or while putting your child to bed at night. The reward for your effort is a child who

makes one of the biggest changes in his or her life equipped to succeed. For the small amount of time you invest, you can help protect your child from unhappiness and failure at school.

How to Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten is a guide for teaching the skills needed to make kindergarten a happy time for your child. Based on our fifty plus years of combined experience as teachers, we have determined many specific behaviors that will help children make a stress-free adjustment to kindergarten. These skills are indicators of readiness and prospects for success.



ALL CHILDREN ARE DIFFERENT

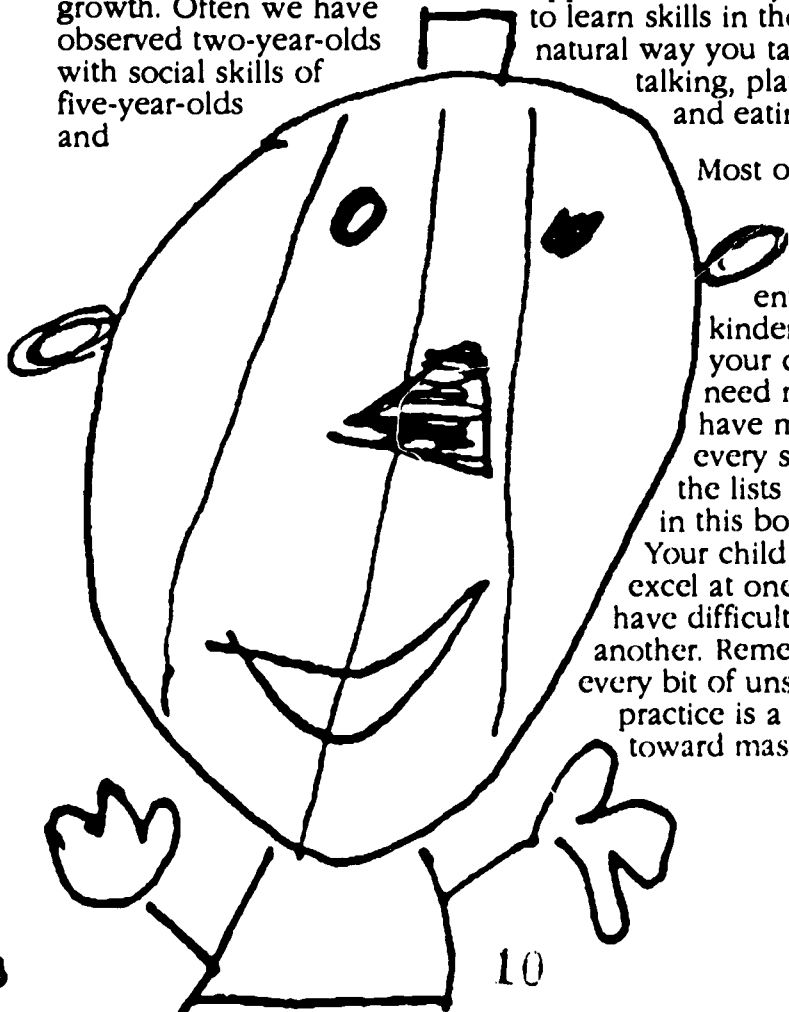
A word of caution. These skills are not intended to be taught at a specific age. A child cannot learn a skill until he or she is ready. Do not push or force your child. Children learn when there is physical and mental readiness.

Children differ in their physical, mental, and social growth. Often we have observed two-year-olds with social skills of five-year-olds and

six-year-olds with the small motor skills of younger children. This is common. If your child does not master a particular task by a predetermined age, such as hop on one foot at four years, for example, wait until he or she is five. If your child cannot assemble a nest of blocks at 18 months, wait until he or she is two. When you sense that there is readiness, provide many opportunities for your child to learn skills in the happy, natural way you taught talking, playing, and eating.

Most of all, be a patient teacher. When entering kindergarten, your child need not have mastered every skill on the lists included in this book.

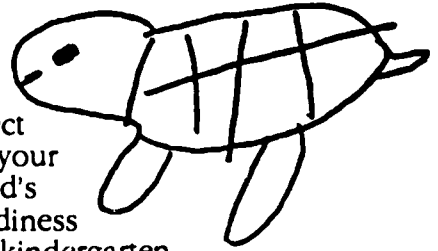
Your child may excel at one and have difficulty with another. Remember, every bit of unstressful practice is a step toward mastery.



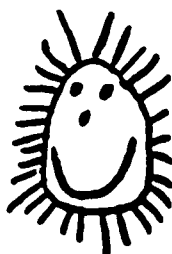
WHAT ABOUT COST?

Preparing your child for kindergarten does not need to be expensive. Millions of children are marvelously successful without parents spending more than an occasional few dollars for crayons, drawing paper, picturebooks, and a few games. Not dollars, but knowing what to do, coupled with interest and involvement is at the heart of the matter. Even if your child is in a formal preschool, what you do at home will have the greatest

effect
on your
child's
readiness
for kindergarten.



We can honestly say that after conferences with over a thousand parents, we have never met a parent who did not want to do his or her best. Knowing what to do makes the difference. *How to Prepare Your Child for Kindergarten* gives you this information.



CHAPTER 1

EIGHT THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN YOUR CHILD

On the first day of school, when children arrive in the classroom, a teacher can quickly tell something about their personalities. Some children will look you in the eye and give you a sweet smile. Others are too shy or fearful to even look at you. They stare at the floor or cling to a parent. Some children immediately investigate the toys in the room, while others sit timidly at a table, quietly waiting for something to happen. A

few start conversations with their neighbors. How children behave is a clue to how they feel about themselves. Your child's self-image has much to do with how well he or she will succeed in kindergarten.

In this chapter are eight rules for you to follow to bring out the best in your child. Copy each of them on a sticky-note and attach them to your refrigerator as reminders.

1. **Take Time for Love**
2. **Kind Words Work Wonders**
3. **Don't Try Too Hard or Too Early**
4. **Rewards Win Results**
5. **We Learn by Doing**
6. **Repetition Reaps Results**
7. **Learning Is a Joy**
8. **Sometimes Questions Are Better Than Answers**

1. TAKE TIME FOR LOVE

Recently, a granddaughter said to her grandmother, "Grandma, you always end your letters with 'Grandpa and I miss you and we love you very much.'"

"Would you like me to change that?" asked the grandmother. "I could think of a new ending."

"No," the little girl said. "I like this one."

Two-year-old Trevon is grocery shopping with his dad after being at preschool all day. Trevon is tired and hungry and he is making a fuss by the candy rack. Trevon's dad could speak harshly, but instead, he picks up Trevon and holds him. He tells Trevon softly that he understands how tired and hungry Trevon is and that they'll be home soon. Trevon feels loved and cared for and quiets down a little.

Four-year-old Amy runs to her mother for help with a shoe buckle. Her mother smiles and hugs her, then pulls the strap so the pin can go into the hole. She tells Amy that she can finish buckling the

shoe now, which Amy happily does. Amy feels both loved and successful. She knows there are many things she can do for herself, but if she needs a little help, she's able to ask for it.

You can't tell your children too often that you love them or that you think they are wonderful. Even children eight or nine years old or older like to sit on a parent's lap to be squeezed a little, and to listen to loving words. How do the love and hugs relate to kindergarten? Children who feel loved feel good about themselves. They feel that not only their parents, but the teacher and the children will like them, too. When children have a good self-image, they approach learning with more confidence.

Love, quoting the old English proverb, makes the world go round. How true that is of a child's world. In the 1990's home, time is a scarcity. Many children live in homes in which both parents (or the single parent) are working. There aren't many free minutes

available to just sit and lovingly hold your child. But remember that love is more important than a clean kitchen or a made-up bed. Take the time to give your child lots of hugs, kisses, and kind words to let your child know how much you love him or her.

2. KIND WORDS WORK WONDERS

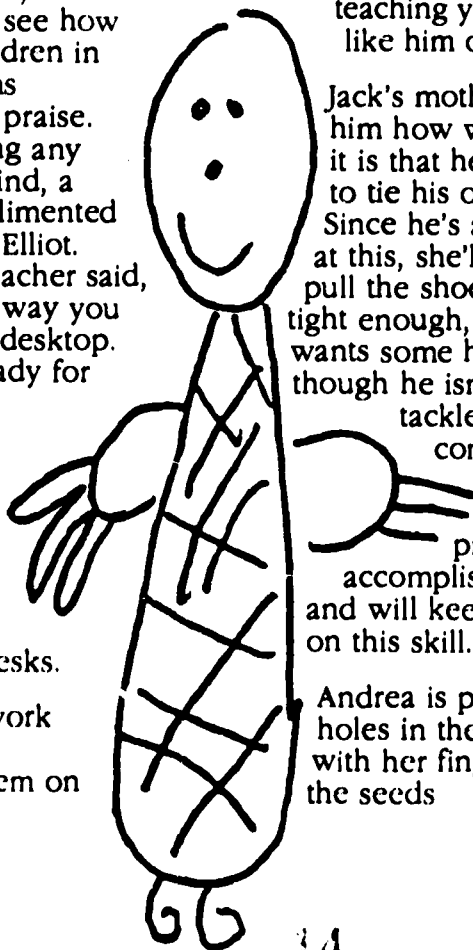
Time after time, it amazed us to see how positively children in our classrooms responded to praise. Without having any purpose in mind, a teacher complimented a boy named Elliot. "Elliot," the teacher said, "I do like the way you cleaned your desktop. It looks so ready for work."

Immediately, every child in the room was jamming crayons into boxes and books and papers into desks.

Kind words work wonders! We should use them on

every possible occasion. Sometimes we think to ourselves, "That was really nice of Helena to give her truck to Andy" or "She ate with her spoon very neatly today." Tell your child the positive things you notice about the way he or she is learning and changing every day. When you give praise, you are teaching that "sharing" is good. You are teaching that "eating neatly" is desirable.

Most importantly, you are teaching your child to like him or herself.



Jack's mother tells him how wonderful it is that he is trying to tie his own shoes. Since he's a beginner at this, she'll help Jack pull the shoe strings tight enough, if he wants some help. Even though he isn't ready to tackle this task completely on his own, he feels proud of his accomplishments and will keep working on this skill.

Andrea is poking holes in the dirt with her finger for the seeds

she and her dad are planting. "Those are perfect holes for the seeds, Andrea," her dad tells her. Andrea loves gardening time!

Miguel doesn't want to stop playing in order to set the table, but his parents insist that he help out with dinner. He has one place setting completed and he is still scowling. Miguel's mother walks by and compliments him on the fine job he is doing. Miguel's attitude changes instantly to one of pride and he happily finishes setting the whole table.

As teachers, we felt it was important to go to any length to avoid speaking negatively to a child who was having difficulty learning. Matthew's drawing may be smeary, his paper torn, but it is desperately necessary to find something good to say about his work. Children, like adults, have feelings, too. To say, "Matthew, your paper is so messy. Look! You've even torn it. Look how nice Peter's paper is," accomplishes little. Matthew's self-image has been severely bruised.

He feels ridiculed, ashamed, incompetent, discouraged, and angry. With these painful emotions churning inside him, will Matthew make a better drawing next time? Absolutely not! Being so discouraged, he most likely will crumple his paper into a ball before he is half way through the drawing.

What are some kind ways of responding to a messy, torn picture? What words would be supportive and bolster a child's ego?

"Will you tell me what your drawing is about?"

"I like this area in the corner very much. You have a good strong color there."

"I can see you are trying. Can you tell me how you would like to change your drawing next time?"

Instead of "You're wrong" or "You didn't do it right" or "Can't you do better than that?" try these statements:

"That was a good try."

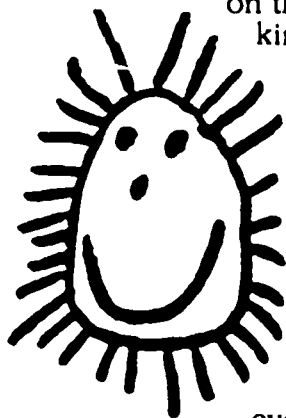
"That is difficult. Let's do it together. I want to practice, too."

"That's great. I'll bet you can do it even better the next time."

You gather more bees with honey than with vinegar. It's an old saying, but it is true when talking to children. As you teach your child the skills in this book, be positive. Be encouraging. Don't show disappointment at failure. To bring out the best in your child, remember that kind words work wonders.

3. DON'T TRY TOO HARD OR TOO EARLY

The danger of devising lists of skills, such as we have in this book, is that on the first day of kindergarten,



you might mistakenly feel that every skill must have been mastered by your child. Complete mastery of every skill by a child is a rarity. It is very important to remember that you can't teach your child anything until there is a readiness for learning.

Children are unique, with different personalities, different strengths, and different weaknesses. Introduce new skills when you observe physical and mental growth that demonstrates your child is ready.

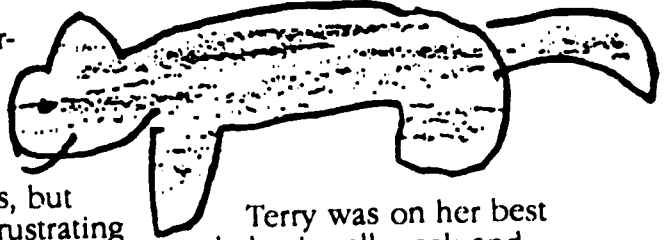
It's normal for parents to make comparisons between their own children. It helps to remember that brother is different from brother, sister from sister, and each sex is different from the other. One of our neighbors has three children. Tony, age 2-1/2, can kick a ball 50 feet (15.2m). His uncles, all soccer players, let him play on the field with them. Megan, age 5, cannot kick a ball as well as Tony, but she has the patience for drawing, for figuring out words in the newspaper, and being able to climb almost anything. Bennie, age 3-1/2, is neither athletic nor artistic. He enjoys playing with other children. Already, he demonstrates social skills, such as sharing his toys, leading his playmates in their pretend games, and caring when a playmate feels hurt or angry.

As you help your child get ready for kindergarten, remember that your goal is not to raise a superchild. Jenna has difficulty remembering her family's home address and telephone number. Her mother wisely decides to drop it for a few months and try teaching this information later. Zac has difficulty hopping on one leg. He wants to please his parents, but this skill is very frustrating for him and he may not be physically ready. Rather than continuing to push Zac, his dad decides to come back to hopping, later. Skills are learned best if they are not turned into lessons. Introduce skills naturally in small doses, reinforcing from time to time through casual conversations and play.

4. REWARDS WIN RESULTS

When we were teachers, the children in our classrooms earned coupons. A neat desk earned two coupons; a question from a child may have earned three coupons; an act of kindness to another child

earned four coupons. The children never quite knew what behavior or when their behavior would earn coupons. On Fridays they traded their coupons for rewards: ten coupons for a fancy eraser; twenty-five coupons for stickers; thirty coupons for a superball.

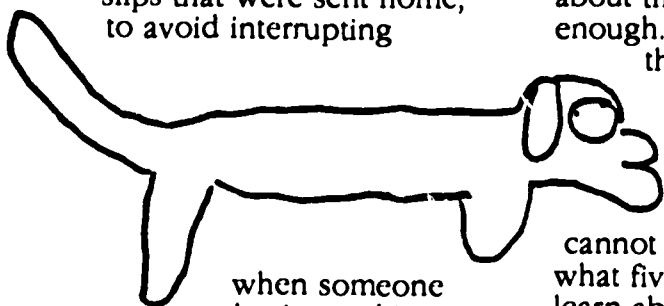


Terry was on her best behavior all week and earned thirty coupons. She proudly traded all of her coupons for a favorite superball.

Blaine had trouble keeping his hands to himself. He was constantly annoying other children. The teacher showed the class some colorful stickers which Blaine decided he really wanted. He made a great effort to change his behavior and was able to earn the stickers. He was so proud of his success that he was able to keep his hands to himself in the future.

Rewards are for behaviors we want to encourage. Psychologists call it positive reinforcement. A small

reward reinforces the desired behavior. The rewards are not bribes, since the children receive them after the act, not before. At school, rewards are astonishingly effective. They cause children to print neatly, to remember to bring back permission slips that were sent home, to avoid interrupting



when someone else is speaking, to say "thank you" without being reminded.

At home, rewards produce the same results. When teaching the skills suggested in this book, set up a reward system of your own. Remember that one of the best rewards is a smile, a hug, or some encouraging words from you. Other rewards can be as simple as a pretzel or a special privilege, such as sitting in the front seat of the car. They can be as grand as a new pair of sneakers or a trip to a favorite restaurant.

5. WE LEARN BY DOING

Aristotle long ago said, "For the things we have to learn, we learn by doing them." Think back to when you learned to drive a car or took up a new sport. No explanation or amount of reading about the subject was enough. You needed to go through the process or procedure yourself.

We learn to do by doing. You

cannot tell your child what five is. Children can learn about the concept of five by counting five beans, five crayons, or five windows. Then they will have a better understanding of the number five. You cannot give a child a talk on all the times when they should say "thank you." Instead, when you give your child a snack or help him or her find a missing toy, remind him or her to say "thank you."

Directions for playing a game, such as "Candyland," cannot be fully explained. After a few introductory directions, you play it and as questions come up, you talk about them. We learn best by doing.

To teach Benito new skills, instead of explaining, his mother found ways for Benito to perform the skill. When his mother wanted Benito to learn the days of the week, she hung a calendar at his bedside. Each day Benito crossed off the day as it passed, repeating the name of the day as he did so. "Good bye, Thursday. Hello, Friday," he would say. When Benito's mother wanted him to remember a story, she asked questions, such as:

Who was in the story?

Who did you like in the story?

Did the story make you feel happy or sad?

Who would you like to be in the story?

Which story did you like best?

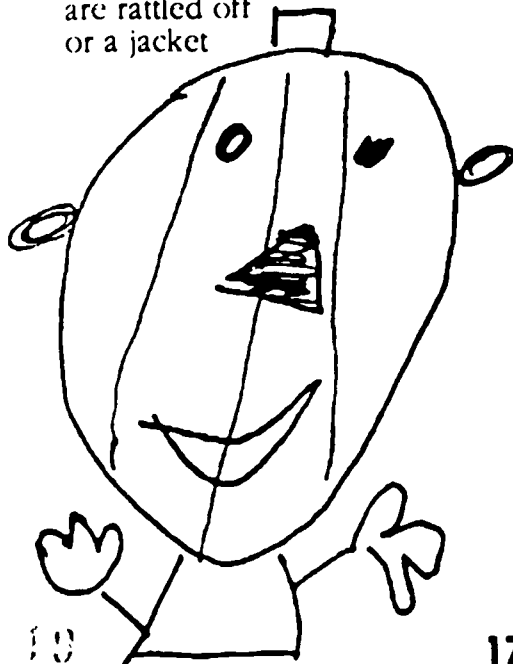
Why?

Whatever comments Benito made, his mother followed his answers with praise and encouragement.

6. REPETITION REAPS RESULTS

Skills are habits and they take time to form. Think back to when you were a child. How many times did your mother or father have to remind you to brush your teeth before going to bed? How many times did you forget, sometimes even deliberately, until the habit became ingrained?

Habits are behaviors that are automatic. We don't have to think about eating with a fork or cutting with a knife. We simply do it. Your child masters a skill when he or she doesn't have to think about it. Numbers from 1 to 100 are rattled off or a jacket



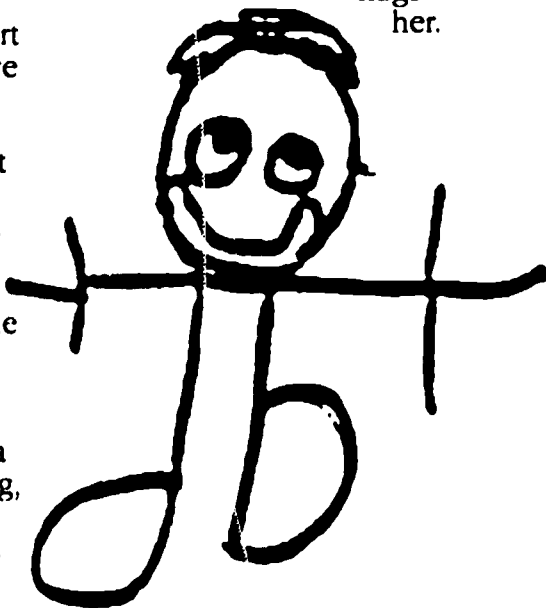
is hung up without being told. Shoes are tied without asking for help. "Thank you" is said without reminding your child. This kind of mastery comes with repetition. But that same repetition can be both harmful and beneficial. It is harmful if it is done against your child's will or if the skill is too difficult. Repetition is harmful if your child feels pressured or if you are impatient. On the other hand, repetition is beneficial if used with kind words and rewarded when merited. Remember, repetition reaps results when learning is fun and the task is within the child's capability.

Remember, too, that young children have short attention spans. If you are teaching your child to draw a circle, he or she may only want to draw it once or twice. If Van becomes impatient, stop. Later, at lunch time, circles can be drawn on the paper napkin to make it pretty or he can circle birthdays and big events on a calendar. If Van is unwilling to sit through a story that you are reading, next time try a shorter story with more pictures.

Decrease the amount of reading and increase the conversation.

7. LEARNING IS A JOY

Do you remember when your baby spoke his or her first words? What a happy occasion! Learning occurred and it was reinforced with love, kind words, and smiles. That is how learning should be—so joyous that it encourages the learner to want to learn more. Carmen has been practicing her counting. She calls her dad to show him she can count ten blocks without a mistake. Her proud dad picks her up happily, smiles, and hugs her.



Later Carmen overhears her dad boasting to a neighbor about her accomplishment. She feels great and wants to count more objects.

Another tip: Make time for the fine arts. Learning about art, music, poetry, history, dance, and theater can bring joy to your child's life. Today every museum and public library has programs specially designed to excite your child's imagination and make learning fun.

Learning should be a joy for children and adults. It opens us to the fullness of life. It is free and lasting. It's worth more than all the fancy toys you can buy. Learning is a gift that lasts a lifetime.

8. SOMETIMES QUESTIONS ARE BETTER THAN ANSWERS

Sometimes it takes more initiative to ask a question than to answer one. The great inventions in history occurred because people asked questions. Why does an apple fall down rather than up? Why did people get smallpox? How can we get from one place to another faster?

When your child asks a question, even before you answer, give praise for asking.

"That's a good question, Maria."

"That is an interesting question, Lewis."

"I'm always pleased when you ask questions. That shows you're thinking."

From these types of responses, the message your child gets is this: Thinking is good. It's okay to ask questions when you want to know something.

Alison asks why the clouds move across the sky. Lindsey asks why the leaves are brown and break easily. Kevin asks how trees get so tall.

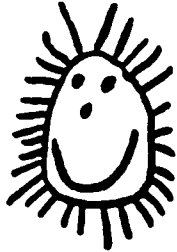
Asking a question shows a high level of thinking and reasoning. Unfortunately, some parents discourage questions with

"I haven't time now."

"Don't bother me, I'm getting dinner."

"You ask too many questions."

Negative responses discourage a child's desire to learn.



CHAPTER 2

WHAT EVERY CHILD SHOULD BE ABLE TO COMMUNICATE BEFORE ENTERING KINDERGARTEN

Talking at home prepares your child to understand similar and more difficult communications at school.

In kindergarten, much of the learning takes place through talking. On the opening day of school, the teacher may say, "Today, boys and girls, please hang your school bags on any hook that you like. Tomorrow I will give each of you your own special hook. Now, I am going to ask each of you to tell the other boys and girls your name and tell them one thing about yourself."

If your child has had lots of talking experiences at home, he or she will understand what the teacher said and he or she will know what to do.

A dozen times a day, you probably make statements and ask questions similar to the following.

"No, Annie. No!"

"Annie, what would you like to wear today?"

"Annie, please bring me the dirty towels from the upstairs bathroom."

"Annie, we need to hurry. You'll be late for school."

"Annie, did you hang up your pajamas?"

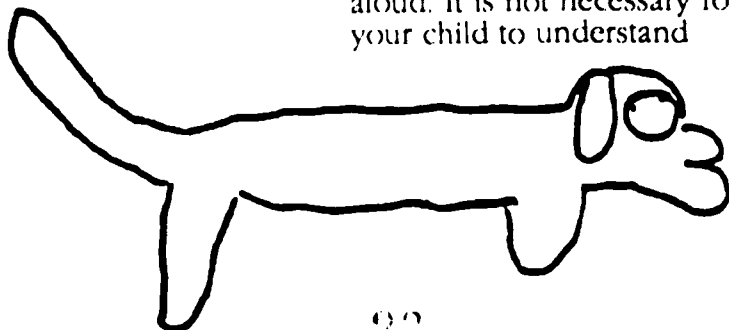
Have you ever thought about how much your words actually communicate to your child? In the first sentence, you let Annie know that in your household there are rules she must follow. You also make it known that you are the boss. In the second sentence, you reveal that there are times when Annie needs to make a decision. In the third, you ask Annie to follow directions. You also show politeness by saying

"please." In the fourth example, you convey the idea that we regulate our lives by time indicated on a clock and that Annie should adjust her behavior accordingly. In the fifth sentence, you share two of your values: orderliness and responsibility. Through these five common situations you have, in fact, communicated valuable lessons to your child.

When talking at home, give your child practice in receiving and sending information. The more conversations your child has, the better he or she will be able to follow directions, understand explanations, ask questions when he or she doesn't understand something, express needs, and take part in class discussions. These abilities build self-confidence and better equip your child to achieve in school.

WHAT SHOULD YOU TALK ABOUT?

The answer to this question is simple. Every topic you feel your child will understand is suitable. Talk about the pictures on cereal boxes, the salad you are preparing, kinds of breads, ice-cream flavors, relatives, holidays, washing clothes, your work, the telephone, shoes, a can of tomatoes, a bag of carrots, an insect on the sidewalk, flowers, birds. Talk about the mail carrier, the meter reader, the painter, the police officer, the doctor, grandpa, every person with whom your child has contact. Talk about how to change a light bulb, how to plant seeds, how to make soup, how to dress his or her baby sister or brother, how to set the table, how to fertilize a plant, how to tell time, how to brush teeth, how to drive a car, how to paint a wall, how to dial a telephone number, how to hold a book and turn pages. Whatever you are thinking, if it is appropriate, say it aloud. It is not necessary for your child to understand



everything you say or every idea you express. With repetition, your child will eventually learn.

Tyler was with his dad in the driveway when they had a flat tire. This was not a happy occasion for Tyler's dad, but it turned into a wonderful learning experience for three-year-old Tyler. He was able to watch his dad change the tire from the front yard. First Tyler's dad had to get out the jack and spare tire. He had to jack up the car and take off the lug nuts. The flat tire was removed and the spare tire put on. The nuts were replaced and tightened. The jack was removed and put back in the trunk. Tyler was fascinated the whole time because his dad told him everything that was going on. That evening, Tyler carefully repeated all he had learned to his grandmother.

THE BEST TIMES FOR TALKING

Some times are better than others for talking. Mealtime is often one of the best times for sharing. There are smells, textures, tastes, cereals, transportation, and nutrition to talk about. Naptime and bedtime are good for talking about problems, plans for

tomorrow, for reading stories and poems. Driving in the car is a good time for discussing what one sees out the window, about traffic, about holidays, and memories. Supermarkets claim to have 100,000 items for sale. That's 100,000 subjects to talk about.

Then there is television. It is helpful to watch television with your child. No matter what the program, you can make it a pleasant learning time simply by talking with your child about what you are viewing.

Television helps children visualize the world in which we live and the people who inhabit it. It helps them understand how other people live and feel. But without the stimulus of conversation, much of this viewing becomes detrimental. With conversation, even commercials can be sources for learning. Communication is everything!

REPETITION, REPETITION, REPETITION

Don't be disappointed if your child doesn't remember a story you read or a word you explained earlier. Think how many times parents repeat "Say 'Mama'" or "Say 'Daddy'" before a baby

finally says these important words. Studies show that adults must hear a word used about 15 times before it becomes part of their working vocabulary. Your child needs to hear rhymes and stories many times before knowing them. Once they are learned, your child may want to hear the same story or rhyme hundreds of times. Long before your child tires of it, you'll have the story or rhyme memorized yourself.

FOUR KINDS OF COMMUNICATION SKILLS YOUR CHILD NEEDS

So far, we have urged that you use everyday events and subjects to teach your child to communicate. As we wrote in the introduction, however, school is a place where learning is more formal than it is in the home. Your child will benefit from specific kinds of communication skills before entering kindergarten.

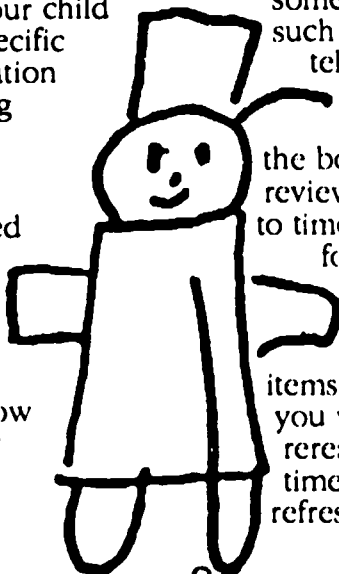
On the following pages, we have listed four categories of specific skills. They are:

1. Information Your Child Should Know About Himself or Herself

2. Listening and Following Directions
3. Relating Experiences, Expressing Ideas, and Asking Questions
4. Speaking with Reasonable Grammatical Correctness and Politeness

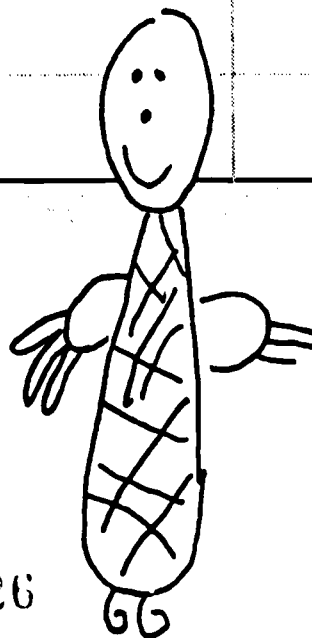
In each of the lists, there may be skills your child has already mastered. If so, check them off in the mastered column. Introduce other skills when you feel your child is physically and mentally ready. Do not push or force. Make your child's mastery of these skills as natural and agreeable as play. It is not necessary for your child to have mastered all the skills in all areas, but the more skills mastered, the more prepared your child will be for kindergarten. Also,

some of the skills, such as knowing a telephone number, an address, or some parts of the body, need to be reviewed from time to time so they aren't forgotten. You may not want to actually check off the items on the lists, but you will want to reread them from time to time to refresh your memory.



INFORMATION YOUR CHILD SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIMSELF OR HERSELF

Skill	Mastered
Knows first, middle, and last name	
Knows age and birthdate	
Knows telephone number	
Knows address, including street, city, and state	
Knows names of parts of body (eyes, nose, mouth, lips, thumb, finger, knuckle, hips, shoulders, shin, ankle, elbow, thigh, throat, chest)	
Knows mother's and father's first and last names	
Knows what kind of work father does	
Knows what kind of work mother does	
Knows names and ages of brothers and sisters	



LISTENING AND FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS

Skill	Mastered
Can listen attentively when spoken to for three or more minutes	
Will listen attentively when read to for five or more minutes	
Will listen to and sing songs for five or more minutes	
Can follow a two- or three-step direction (close the door and hang up your coat, for example)	
Understands positions	
Top, middle, and bottom	
Top and bottom of page	
Front and back of book	
Front and back of room	
Left and right side of body	
Left and right side of room	
Understands locations	
Down and up	
Under and on top	
Across and over	
High and low	
Above and below	
Understands quantity	
Small, medium, large	
Less, more	
Few, many	
Heavy, light	
Recognizes common sounds	
Ambulance	
Fire engine	
Doorbell	
Alarm clock or digital alarm	
Common animal sounds	
Knows days of week	
Follows directions promptly	
Asks questions if confused	

RELATING EXPERIENCES, EXPRESSING IDEAS, AND ASKING QUESTIONS

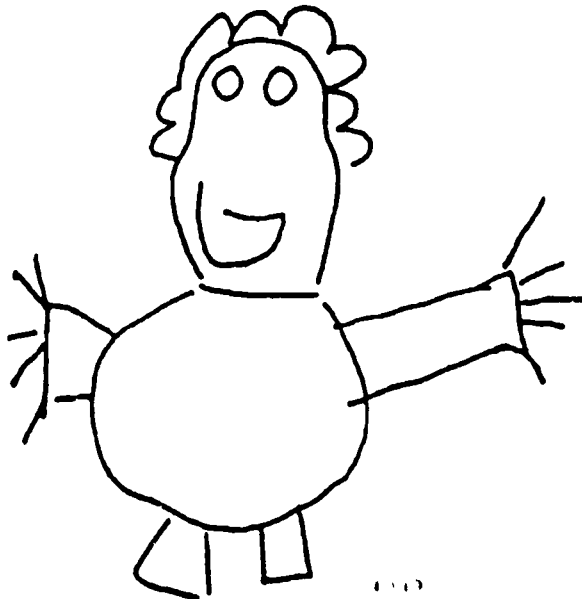
Skill	Mastered
Can speak in short sentences of three or more words	
Can give a message from one person to another	
Uses words with correct meaning	
Is interested in learning new words	
Uses new words recently explained to him or her appropriately	
Uses appropriate words to express self	
Can hold a short telephone conversation	
Can describe what he or she is playing	
Can describe his or her drawing	
Can tell briefly what happened on a TV program he or she watched	
Can tell briefly a story he or she just heard	
Can tell a story to another child	
Can describe parties or other events	
Knows some Mother Goose rhymes	
Makes comments about his or her environment (sun, birds, weather, animals)	
Asks questions about his or her environment	
States choices about clothing	
When asked, can explain why he or she didn't follow a direction	
Can follow directions for simple games (board games, card games, talking games)	
Asks questions beginning with "why" or "how"	
Recognizes feelings	
Happiness, sadness	
Fear, bravery	
Anger	
Try, give up	
Win, lose	

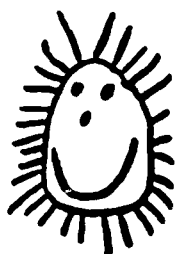
SPEAKING WITH REASONABLE GRAMMATICAL CORRECTNESS AND POLITENESS

Skill	Mastered
Many times says "thank you" without being reminded	
Many times says "please" without being reminded	
Remembers not to interrupt when others are talking	
Sometimes remembers to say "excuse me"	
Knows appropriate words to use to ask to go to the bathroom	

Remember, your child doesn't need to have mastered every skill on these lists. However, the more skills listed in this

chapter that your child masters, the more prepared he or she will be for a successful kindergarten experience.





CHAPTER 3

THE LARGE AND SMALL MOTOR SKILLS YOUR CHILD NEEDS TO SUCCEED IN KINDERGARTEN

WHY MOTOR SKILLS HELP YOUR CHILD

You might ask: What difference does it make if my daughter can catch a ball or stand on one foot before she starts kindergarten? Before answering, let us describe what we mean by motor skills.

At birth, a child has little control over body muscles. Feet and arms flutter at random. A baby cannot lift its head or focus its eyes. However, before much time passes, with the brain and muscles working together, a child progresses from crawling to standing, walking, running, and possibly skipping. A baby progresses from being able to recognize its mother, to

guiding a spoon to its mouth, to drawing a picture, to moving its eyes from left to right across a line of words. Everyday a baby's motor skills are improving, which indicates the brain, muscles, and eyes are working smoothly together.

In kindergarten, a child progresses further. Brain, muscles, and eyes, accustomed to working together, enable a child to print letters within lines and to recognize letters of the alphabet when arranged together to form words. Much of the progress occurs as a result of random practice through play. When a baby crawls, touches, bites, pulls, looks and throws, he or she is developing motor skills. These skills can

develop even further through appropriate activities that parents provide.

Much of the work in kindergarten involves drawing, painting, cutting, pasting or gluing, tracing, using a pencil, constructing with paper or blocks. Your child will need motor skills to perform these tasks. A child who has these skills is successful and self-confident.

Motor skills also help in playing with other children. In kindergarten, a child improves his or her ability to socialize. Most of group play requires large motor skills. Having these skills will help your child feel more confident and fit in better with the other children.

How do you improve your child's motor skills? Chances are you are already doing a good deal. When you show your child how to build with blocks or string beads, you are teaching motor skills.

You are providing opportunities to improve coordination in natural, fun ways.



In the skill lists at the end of this chapter, we have presented specific motor skills which we know will help your child. Some skills may already be mastered. Others can be developed as your child matures.

THE TWO KINDS OF MOTOR SKILLS

Children need both large and small motor skills. Your child uses large motor skills when running, hopping, skipping, throwing, catching, and batting a ball, among other activities. Small motor skills include assembling a nest of boxes, drinking from a glass, building a tower of blocks, using crayons or pencils, cutting, pasting, stringing beads, and tracing shapes, for example. In kindergarten, most of the tasks children perform at their desks require small motor skills. Jamal loves finger painting but he has trouble with pencil and paper activities. He doesn't enjoy using crayons either. His mother continues to let him finger paint, but also offers some other activities to develop his small motor skills. She finds that Jamal enjoys stringing macaroni and playing with clay—two of

many activities good for developing small motor skills. After these activities become easy, Jamal's mother offers to let him use bright markers on big pieces of paper. She has pencils and crayons nearby, too. It isn't long before Jamal is using crayons and then pencils. Pencil and paper activities become one of the many small motor skills he enjoys with more confidence.

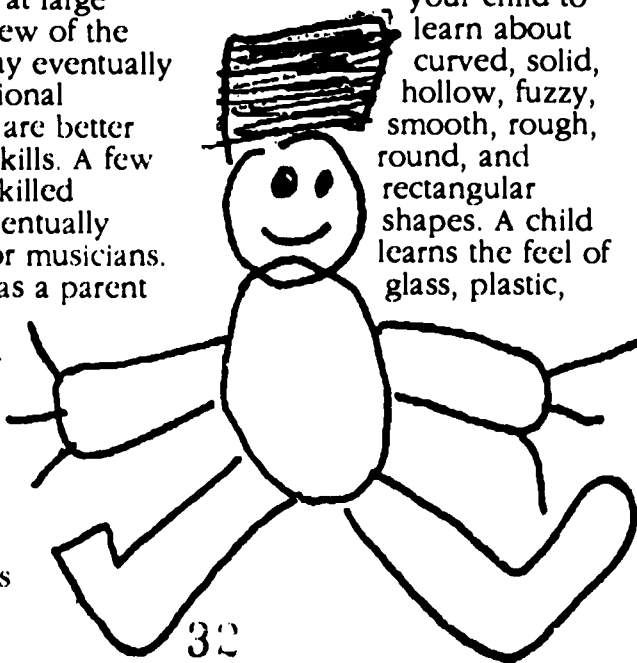
Having a reasonable degree of large and small motor skills contributes to your child's success in kindergarten. But, again, a word of caution. Remember the third rule from chapter 2—"don't try too hard or too early. Children develop motor skills at different rates. Some are better at large motor skills. A few of the super-skilled may eventually become professional athletes. Others are better at small motor skills. A few of these super-skilled children may eventually become artists or musicians. Your challenge as a parent is to recognize when your child is physically ready and then provide opportunities to develop both the small and large motor skills needed.

TACTILE SKILLS

In addition to motor skills, a child develops tactile skills. These are skills that enable a child to learn information through touching or being touched. Touching enables the tiniest of infants to feel the warmth of a parent's body and to be comforted. By touching himself or herself as well as others, a child learns about human beings. A child learns about love by hugging and being hugged.

That is only the beginning. By touching a cup of hot chocolate or a glass of cold water, your child learns about hot and cold, as well as solids and liquids. Touching objects in your house allows

your child to learn about curved, solid, hollow, fuzzy, smooth, rough, round, and rectangular shapes. A child learns the feel of glass, plastic,



silver, wood, fur, nylon, stainless steel. In addition, children learn by smelling and chewing.

Unfortunately, in many homes there are repeated warnings to little ones, "Don't touch!" That is sad because children acquire huge amounts of useful information by touching. Naturally, one has to be concerned about breakage and safety, but after storing your breakables, let your child touch everything in sight. Allow him or her to go barefooted in order to learn the feel of everything in your house. Use words which describe the textures. Rough, sticky, bumpy, squishy or silky are fun words to know and they expand your child's vocabulary.

Many children learn letter and number shapes more easily through tactile experiences. Carmen remembers the letter R after she glues beans on cardboard in the shape of an R. Jason remembers the letter M after he makes it out of clay. Combining tactile experiences with other types of learning is very effective. A child can listen to learn about something, look at something to learn about it, and feel the texture of something to learn as well.

SPATIAL SKILLS

Spatial skills refer to those skills which your child learns from moving about his or her environment, such as the house or backyard. Babies practice spatial skills as they learn to crawl. Through crawling, babies develop skills in understanding up, down, over, under, inside, and outside. Young children continue to develop spatial skills as they learn to play catch with a ball, to skip, to put puzzles together, and so on. Standing with you at an observation point on a scenic highway, your child develops a sense of distance and depth. The mountain in the distance is far away. The flag on a pole is high up. The river is far down. These experiences with space develop the ability to use both large and small motor skills in play and learning at school.

LARGE MOTOR SKILLS

The following skills are not necessarily in order of difficulty. The level of difficulty will vary from child to child. As a parent, you'll want to provide many opportunities for all of these skills to develop. Remember, all skills do not have to be mastered by the time your child enters kindergarten.

Skills	Mastered
Walks down steps, placing one foot on each step	
Can bounce a ball 5 consecutive times	
Can bounce a ball to another person 4 or 5 feet (1.2 m or 1.5 m) away	
Can catch a ball when bounced to him or her	
Can throw a ball accurately to another person 4 or 5 feet (1.2 m or 1.5 m) away	
Can catch a ball thrown from a distance of 4 or 5 feet (1.2 m or 1.5 m)	
Can kick a ball	
Can pump self on swing	
Can hop on either foot	
Can hop with two feet together	
Can crouch and hop like a bunny	
Can jump forward and land on both feet	
Can walk forward on a line, putting one foot after the other	
Can stand on right leg for 10 seconds	
Can stand on left leg for 10 seconds	
Can lie on floor and spread both legs and arms apart at the same time	
Can stand on two feet, hands on hips, and bend body forward, backward, and sideways	
Can touch parts of body with both hands, such as	
shoulders	
neck	
knees	
toes	
hips	
thighs	
chest	
Can dance with an adult partner and	
move forward	
move backward	
move sideways: left	
move sideways right	
Can skip	
Can clap hands to music	

SMALL MOTOR SKILLS

Here is a list of small motor skills that will help your child prepare for kindergarten. Once again, your child does not have to master all skills before entering school.

Skill	Mastered
Can hold pencil comfortably	
Can use crayons without breaking them	
Can use round-tipped scissors effectively	
Can color and stay within lines reasonably well	
Can copy a square	
Can draw a reasonably good circle	
Can put together a 9-piece puzzle	
Can print first name, using capital and small letters	
Can use paste or glue without too much mess	
Can string wooden beads together	
Can hammer pegs on a board	
Can use a spoon without spilling	
Can get a drink of water without a mess	
Can turn pages of book without tearing pages	



TACTILE AWARENESS

As your child becomes more familiar with how things feel, try to use these words in helping him or her describe an object. Again, it is not necessary to have mastered all of these words, but the more words your child knows, the better prepared he or she will be for school.

Skill	Mastered
Is able to describe objects as	
hard	
soft	
rubbery	
liquid	
solid	
sticky	
fuzzy	
furry	
smooth	
curved	
round	
prickly	
pointed	
stretchy	
plastic	
wood	
metal	
Is able to describe foods as	
crisp	
sweet	
sour	
tough	
chewy	
Is able to recognize weather conditions, such as	
cold	
warm	
hot	
slippery	
freezing	
icy	
snowy	
windy	
sunny	
rainy	
stormy	

SPATIAL AWARENESS

Spatial awareness is important for large and small motor skills. These skills help your child follow directions correctly, from using his or her whole body to using pencil and paper.

Skill	Mastered
Can place body in these positions in relationship to an object or person	
above	
below	
behind	
on top	
underneath	
next to	
beside	
between	
in front of	
in back of	
outside of	
go around	
Can point to	
high up	
low down	
far away	
near	
close	
far down	
far up	
Recognizes sizes in space as	
very big	
tiny	
small	
thick	
thin	
huge	

EASY ACTIVITIES AND GAMES TO PLAY TO DEVELOP MOTOR, TACTILE, AND SPATIAL SKILLS

In keeping with the theme that most of what your child should know before entering kindergarten can and should be taught in a natural way, we want to remind you of seven activities that you may already be using and which are among the best for developing your child's motor skills. They are:

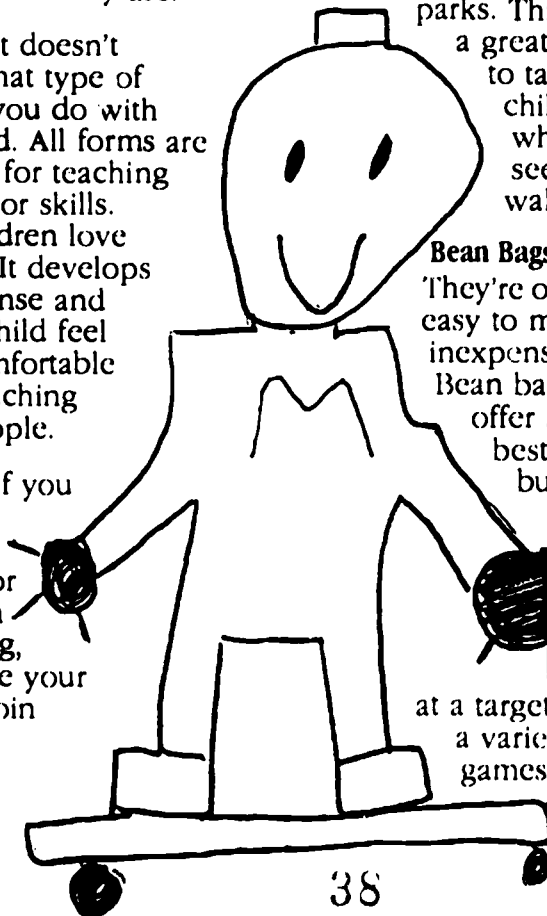
Dancing: It doesn't matter what type of dancing you do with your child. All forms are excellent for teaching large motor skills. Most children love dancing. It develops spatial sense and helps a child feel more comfortable when touching other people.

Exercise: If you follow an exercise routine for your own well-being, encourage your child to join you in

performing simple exercises. Be careful to avoid any exercises that could be considered inappropriate or dangerous for your child. However immature the performance is at first, he or she will improve.

Walking or hiking: Give your child opportunities to walk long distances (a mile or two). You can walk around your neighborhood, the inside of shopping malls, or walking trails in public parks. This gives you a great opportunity to talk with your child about what he or she sees on the walk.

Bean Bags and Balls: They're old-fashioned, easy to make or inexpensive to buy. Bean bags and balls offer some of the best motor-skill building activities, such as playing catch, tossing bean bags at a target, as well as a variety of other games.



Playing Cards: Here's a good use for old card decks. Show your child how to build a house of cards with many rooms spread out over the floor or a tower rising 2 or 3 stories high. This is excellent for developing small motor control.

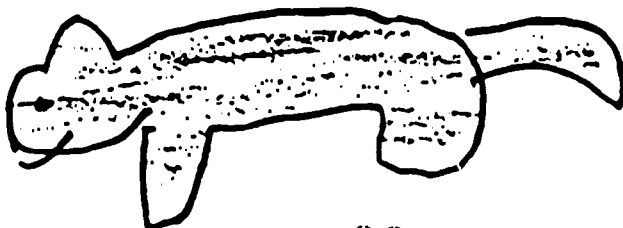
Lines and Squares: When walking on a sidewalk, challenge your child to try walking without stepping on the lines. Remind him or her to stay inside the squares. Make a game of it!

Going to the Park: Children love to play in the park! Parents find most parks a relaxed atmosphere where children can run and play. But all that playground equipment provides more than fun. The climbing apparatus, teeter totters, swings, tunnels, and merry-go-rounds give your child the best type of large motor skill exercise possible! If your child is fearful about using the equipment, don't force or ridicule, but don't give up either. Go to the park often and encourage your child to touch the

equipment. When your child acquires a tactile and spatial sense of these awesome objects, he or she will be encouraged to take the first steps toward using them. Be encouraging. Watching other children at play on numerous occasions encourages children to overcome fears as well.

TOYS THAT DEVELOP MOTOR, SPATIAL, AND TACTILE SKILLS

Long before educators became aware of the need to develop the motor skills of young children, parents were buying the toys that did that very thing. Bicycles, blocks, crayons, wagons, skates, pegboards, miniature cars, nests of boxes, and clothespins were enjoyed by our grandparents—and they're still the best toys you can buy to strengthen and coordinate the mind, the muscles, and the eyes. Coloring is especially good for fine motor skills, too. Children need plenty of opportunities to draw, color, and paste. When your child



is ready, help him or her cut paper with round-tipped scissors. A word of warning—try out the scissors before buying them. Many scissors are very stiff and difficult to use. Everyone dislikes scissors that hurt when you use them.

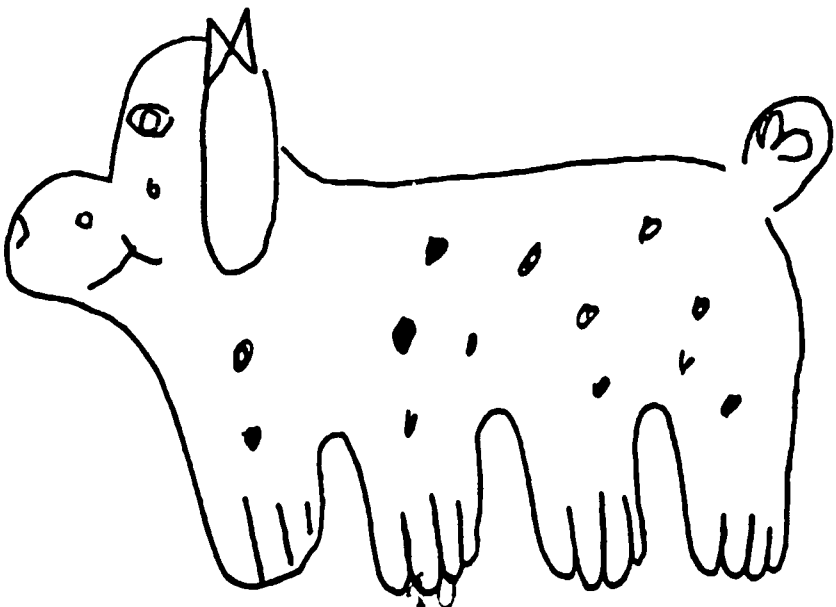
Dolls for both boys and girls with wardrobes of clothes and doll houses with miniature furniture to arrange and rearrange also develop small-motor, spatial, and tactile skills. Large and small balls, jump ropes, child-size sweepers, brooms, snow shovels, sets of dishes, building blocks and other small building materials, and miniature cars are old-fashioned and inexpensive,

but they are still invaluable for developing motor, tactile, and spatial skills.

The best toys are those that permit a child to explore them with his or her hands and body. Some toys are too mechanical. There's nothing much for a child to do with them. Often, models of monsters and TV characters attract a child for a few minutes, but they are soon discarded. When choosing a toy for your child, ask yourself:

Does it require motor skills to play with and will it stimulate imagination?

If it doesn't, your child will most likely lose interest in the toy very quickly.





CHAPTER 4

THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS THAT MAKE KINDERGARTEN EASY

EMOTIONAL SKILLS THAT WILL HELP YOUR CHILD

In September, when five- and six-year-olds enter a classroom for the first time, these are some of the types of behaviors a teacher will observe:

Child A begins talking to another child.

Child B sits quietly in his seat, his eyes wandering about the room.

Child C clings to mother or whimpers.

Child D begins building with blocks and then knocks down what she built.

Child E zooms around the room trying to bump into someone or something.

Child F picks up a book and turns the pages.

Child G picks up a doll and smooths its hair.

Each of these children exhibits behavior which reveals something about his or her emotional state. From long years of experience, we know that the degree of a child's emotional development is more important to his or her future success in school when he or she enters kindergarten than knowing how to read, count to 100, or catch a football from 25 feet (7.6 m) away.

All of his life, Ben has been told by his parents what a great kid he is. When he needed to change a behavior, the behavior was criticized, not Ben. Kenny, on the other hand, was constantly ridiculed and

personally criticized for every little wrongdoing in an attempt to change his behavior.

Picture Kenny's and Ben's emotional states when they enter a classroom of twenty new faces and a strange adult. While the teacher is explaining where the children should hang their seaters and put their lunch boxes or bags, chances are Ben is coping very well while Kenny's mind is filled with fears. Kenny does not hear the teacher. He doesn't know how to function in this threatening new world.

CHILDREN ARE DIFFERENT PARENTS ARE DIFFERENT

Children are born emotionally different. One baby will scream while having his bath. Another will gurgle or fall asleep. One newborn will lie awake for three to five hours each day. Another will sleep for 23. Another infant will accept new foods readily, while her identical twin brother will spit them out.

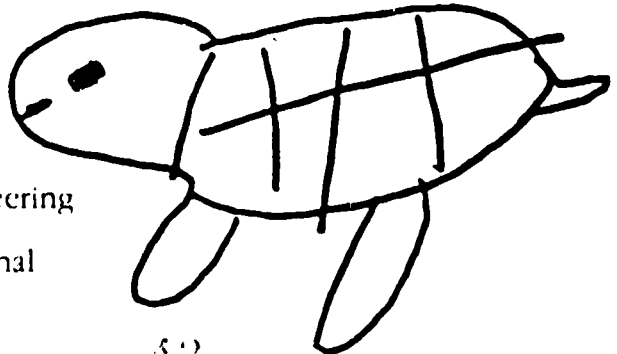
Parents, too, confront their children with various temperaments. Parents may be domineering or passive, insecure or overly positive, emotional

rather than reasonable, serious rather than light-hearted, pessimistic rather than optimistic. Children often reflect their parents' temperaments.

THE MOST IMPORTANT EMOTIONAL QUALITY THAT LEADS TO SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

The library shelves are filled with books written by psychologists, doctors, and educators about the emotional and social nature of children. Because of our years of observation as teachers, we have come to believe that self-confidence is the most important emotional factor involved in children's learning. Throughout this book we emphasize its importance.

Regardless of your child's natural temperament, you can help him or her adjust to the world and develop self-confidence by the way you respond to his or her



needs. The following are examples of scenes that occur daily in many homes. After each example, negative

ways of handling them are described and then followed by constructive ways which help to build self-confidence.

Example: Daniel spills his milk

Destructive: Daniel, you are a bad boy! Look at the mess you made.

Constructive: What a mess! That cup was too full, wasn't it? Let's clean it up together.

Example: Sarah, age 3, has been crying and is now whining in the restaurant.

Destructive: If you don't stop that whining this minute, you're going to get it! Stop that! No one likes you!

Constructive: I know you are tired, Sarah. Come sit close to me so you can rest. I'll be done in a few minutes.

Example: Alison, age 4, was told to pick up her clothes.

Destructive: Alison! You put things in the wrong place. Don't you have any sense? What's the matter with you?

Constructive: Good start, Alison! Let's finish together.

Example: Dad and Aaron, age 2 1/2, are looking at a book.

Destructive: Aaron, you're tearing the page. If you don't let me turn it for you, we're going to put the book away.

Constructive: Let me help you turn the page, Aaron. I'll hold it here so it will be easier for you. I know you don't want to tear the page.

Example: Nathan and Elliot are fighting.

Destructive: Stop it, you two. If you can't behave, then you're never going to be allowed to play together.

Constructive: (Taking each child by the arm or hand and speaking quietly) That's enough now. We're going to sit here and I am going to let each of you tell me why you are so angry. I know you are not happy when you are fighting.

Example: Mother has asked Laura to tell a friend how old she is. Laura refuses to talk.

Destructive: Laura! Has the cat got your tongue? For heaven's sake, you know how old you are.

Constructive: I guess Laura is feeling quiet today. Maybe she will tell you later.

INDICATORS OF SELF-CONFIDENCE

The following is a list of behaviors that indicate that a child has self-confidence.

Asks for help when needed

Can be away from parents for a few hours with a babysitter

Starts own play activity

Is eager to learn new things; enters a new activity without fear

Follows directions without hesitation

Initiates a conversation

Works independently from the group, if desires

Deals well with embarrassment

Accepts minor disappointments without tears

Looks directly at the person speaking

Takes part in discussions

Takes teasing lightly

Accepts "no" without a fuss

When children are self-confident, they are ready to learn.

They feel good about themselves. They are unafraid of what is new. If they make a mistake, they shrug it off or even laugh and learn from their mistakes. They try and try again. When children are self-confident, they can participate fully in every type of learning that occurs in kindergarten.

SOCIAL SKILLS THAT MAKE KINDERGARTEN EASY

Children are pleased when they do good work in school, but most children are happiest when other children like them and want them for their friends. They want to be chosen to be someone's partner or to be included in a game on the playground.

These are characteristics teachers often observe that indicate children have good social skills:

Shares and takes turns

Sits quietly in a group when being read to

Says "please" and "thank-you" most of the time

Doesn't interrupt when others are talking

Understands the danger of talking to strangers

Participates in group activities

Offers to help another child

Feels sorry for a child in trouble

Gives a compliment

Doesn't touch other children unnecessarily

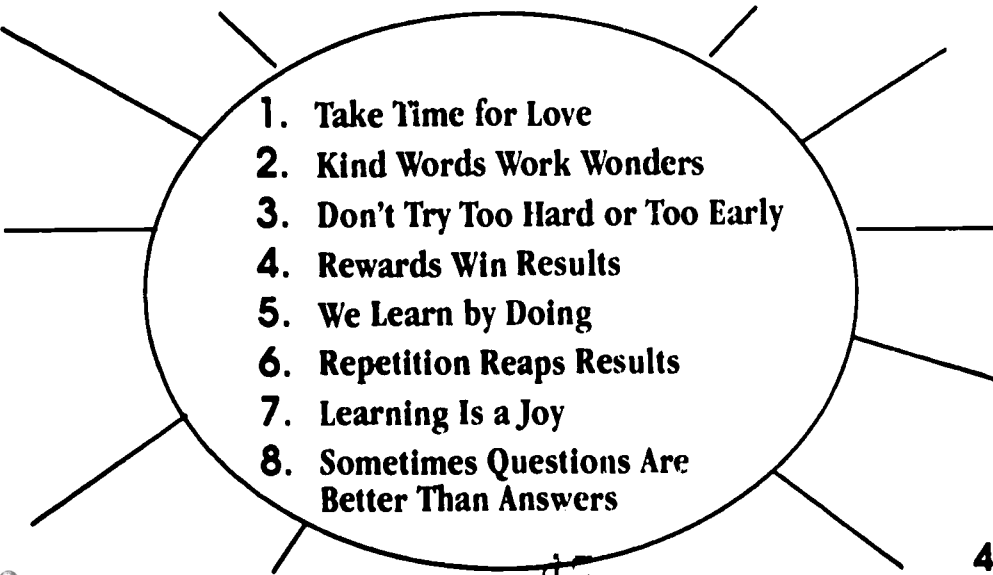
HOW TO ENCOURAGE SOCIABILITY

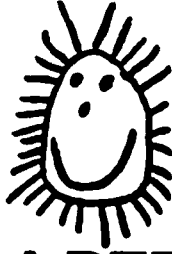
Self-confidence is the basis for good social skills. Parental behavior that encourages self-confidence builds good social skills. Keeping in mind what we have previously said

about children differing emotionally, children also differ in their social abilities. Some children like to be with others all the time, while others like solitary play for extended periods and seek playmates only occasionally. Children are individuals.

A parent who has a solitary-minded child might want to provide some opportunities for social interaction with other children. On the other hand, the parent of an overly socially oriented child, should provide opportunities for solitary time.

We will end this chapter by reminding you of the eight guidelines which can help you in raising children who have emotional and social skill stability.

- 
- 1. Take Time for Love**
 - 2. Kind Words Work Wonders**
 - 3. Don't Try Too Hard or Too Early**
 - 4. Rewards Win Results**
 - 5. We Learn by Doing**
 - 6. Repetition Reaps Results**
 - 7. Learning Is a Joy**
 - 8. Sometimes Questions Are Better Than Answers**



CHAPTER 5

EARLY-LEARNING ACTIVITIES

On pages 45-48 is an example of a kindergarten report card similar to one used by a public school system known for its excellence. In the preceding chapters, we have discussed in detail the types of motor, social, and emotional skills listed on the report card. In this chapter, we shall describe early-learning activities which will help your child to develop the cognitive skills that are listed. These are skills your child needs in order to learn to read, write, and do arithmetic.

SIGNS OF INTEREST IN LEARNING

Like many other children, when Sarah was three, she spent hours playing with miniature cars and trucks. Without thinking much about it and without expending much time or effort, her Mother and Dad used the interest in cars and trucks to teach Sarah their names and uses. Her parents engaged in an early-learning

activity with Sarah, providing her with a wonderful opportunity to increase her vocabulary and knowledge base. Best of all, Sarah learned because she was interested.

How soon a child will be ready for cognitive learning will vary greatly. One toddler learns to talk at two; another may feel no need to talk until three. Most important of all, however, is to not push or force your child to learn a skill he or she isn't ready for. It is important to remember the guideline, "Don't Try 'Too Hard or 'Too Early." Your child will let you know naturally what he or she is interested in learning. Follow your child's lead with picturebooks, puzzles, and magazines on the subject of interest. Begin collections, if appropriate, and talk about the similarities and differences among the items. Approach your child's interest in as many ways as possible.

Your child may be ready for cognitive learning when you see that he or she:

Likes to be read to

Shows interest in numbers

Can listen to a story or take part in a conversation for 15 minutes or more

Asks questions beginning with "why," "what," "when" or "how"

Talks about special interests

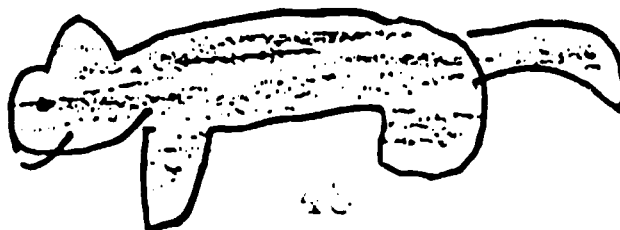
Asks questions about everything

Can play by himself or herself for 15-30 minutes or longer

Typical Kindergarten Report Card

NA Indicates that performance was not measured at this time. + CONSISTENTLY / SHOWS GROWTH - SELDOM	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER
SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT				
Participates in group activities				
Contributes to group discussions				
Listens to the ideas of others				
Works and plays well with others				
Selects appropriate activities				
Controls behavior				
Follows directions				
Pays attention				
Makes an effort to do careful work				
Completes work				
Works independently when necessary				
Shows self-confidence				
47				

NA indicates that performance was not measured at this time. + CONSISTENTLY / SHOWS GROWTH - SELDOM	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER
COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT				
Solves problems on his/her own				
Listens				
Recalls with accuracy				
Displays appropriate oral vocabulary				
Discriminates visually (designs, letters, words)				
Recognizes alphabet letters				
Upper case				
Lower case				
Discriminates auditorily				
Beginning consonant sounds				
Rhyming sounds				
Associates sounds and letters				
Counts objects to 30				
Recognizes numerals to 20				
Forms numerals 1-10 satisfactorily				





NA indicates that performance was not measured at this time. + CONSISTENTLY / SHOWS GROWTH - SELDOM	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER
PSYCHOMOTOR DEVELOPMENT				
Able to coordinate body movements				
Able to coordinate eye-hand movements (e.g. cutting, drawing)				
Able to respond with creative movement				

NA Indicates that performance was not measured at this time. + CONSISTENTLY / SHOWS GROWTH - SELDOM	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER
ATTENDANCE INFORMATION				
Days Present				
Days Absent				
Times Tardy				



LEARNING COLORS

When they enter kindergarten, many children know the names of the basic colors, as well as more subtle ones, such as pink, gold, tan, gray, and silver. In kindergarten, children use crayons, paints, and colored construction paper all day long. Knowing colors by name helps them follow the teacher's directions and make decisions about choices that have to do with color. This ability gives children self-confidence. It also provides one of the first opportunities for children to develop the concept that objects can be placed into categories, such as colors, shapes, foods, buildings, and so on.

There are fascinating books designed to teach colors to very young children. Parents need to help their children become aware of colors. You are engaging in an early-learning activity with your child when you ask questions like these:

Would you like to wear your blue sweatshirt or your red one?

Did you see that bright yellow car?

Which color do you think stands out most on the cereal box?

LEARNING SHAPES

Many children enter kindergarten able to recognize shapes, such as squares, rectangles, triangles, circles, and diamonds. Knowing shapes is directly related to learning to recognize the letters of the alphabet. Capital and small letters are made up of shapes and the child who recognizes the shapes has a head start on learning the letters.

When your child is ready, teach him or her the names of these shapes: circle, square, triangle, rectangle, and diamond. Encourage your child to draw circles, triangles, and squares. Then invite your child to create pictures using circles, triangles, and squares.

Children learn shapes from books, "Sesame Street," puzzles, and toys, but it isn't necessary to use only these materials. Your kitchen is filled with wonderful shapes. While preparing breakfast or cleaning up after dinner, make an early-learning game by asking your child to point to a rectangle, hide a circle, or eat a square cracker.

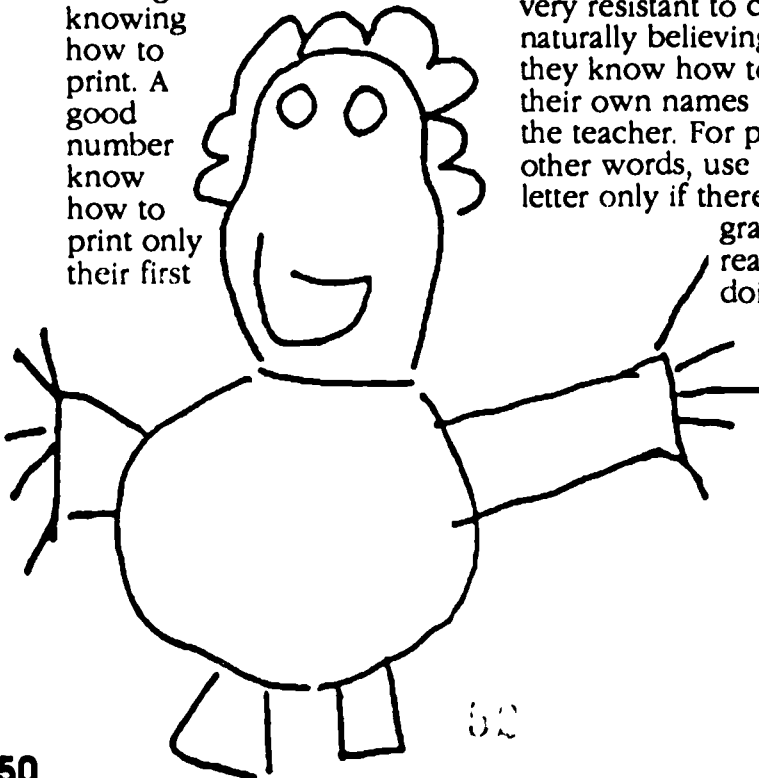
UNFORCED WAYS OF TEACHING THE ALPHABET

Educators used to disagree about whether or not to teach children the alphabet before they entered first grade. Times have changed. Today, most kindergartens teach children to recognize and print both capital and small letters as a prelude to learning to read. Many children enter kindergarten able to recognize letters.

SHOULD I TEACH MY CHILD TO PRINT?

A few children enter kindergarten knowing how to print. A good number know how to print only their first

name, but may mix up the capitals and small letters. Although it is useful to be able to recognize the letters of the alphabet, it is not necessary to know how to print them. If you do teach your child to print his or her name, use a capital letter only for the first letter of each name and use small letters for the rest, unless his or her name has an extra capital, as in McDowel. Children get confused when they have been taught at home to print their names in all capital letters and then are told to write their names a different way in school. Many children are very resistant to change, naturally believing that they know how to write their own names better than the teacher. For printing other words, use a capital letter only if there is a grammatical reason for doing so.



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GOOD-TIME ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING THE ALPHABET

A list of enjoyable activities for teaching the alphabet is provided here. It is important to enjoy the time spent with your child and remember the guideline "Don't Try Too Hard or Too Early."

1. Sing the alphabet song with your child.
2. Find an attractive ABC book to read to your child. There are many to choose from in your bookstore or local public library.
3. As you are driving in the car with your child, point out letters in signs you see along the way. "Look at the 'S' in the stop sign. Can you see another 'S'?" "Can you find the first letter of your name on that big sign?"
4. At breakfast, ask your child to find certain letters on the cereal box.
5. Have your child pick out particular letters in newspaper headlines.
6. Provide your child with a tape of the alphabet song to listen to.
7. Help your child name letters in alphabet soup and alphabet cereal.
8. Provide building blocks with letters on them for your child to play with.
9. Watch "Sesame Street" with your child and discuss the letters.
10. Write letters on paper with glue and have your child cover the glue with beans, rice, or colored sand.
11. Have your child practice writing letters in the air with his or her finger.
12. Print the names of people important to your child and help him or her look for similarities and differences among the letters.
13. Invite your child to write letters or his or her name in sand with a stick or finger.
14. Encourage your child to make letter shapes out of clay strips, or better yet, cookie dough and bake them!

15. Talk about the shapes of letters using words like "line," "circle," "curved," "straight," and "crossed."
16. Cut letters out of sand paper or other stiff material and encourage your child to feel them.

EASY WAYS TO TEACH NUMBERS

Children love to count and some enter school knowing how to count from 1 to 10; others can count from 1 to 100. In the stores there are stunningly clever books, toys, and games designed to teach children to count, but there are also hundreds of objects in your own home that will do the job.

Some children even know how to do simple addition and subtraction when they enter kindergarten. These are worthy achievements, but sometimes they can cause misunderstanding. For example, a mother asked that since her daughter knew how to count, couldn't she begin to learn how to add. The answer is important. Counting by itself is simply memorization. To add or subtract or to use numbers in playing a game, a child must know what the numbers actually represent.

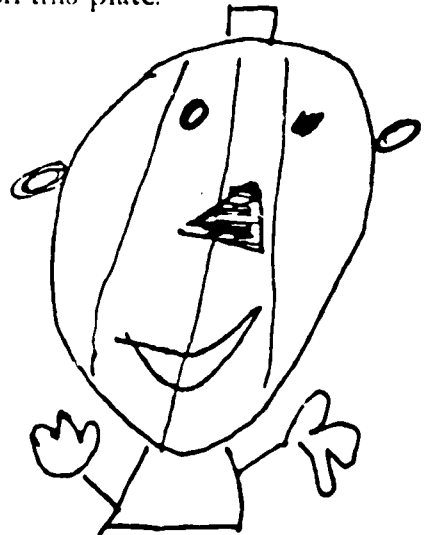
Try this on your child.

"Amanda, would you please bring me six spoons from the drawer?" If Amanda, without help, brings six spoons, then it's fair to say that she understands what "six" means. If she brings four, five or seven spoons, she does not know the number six. In order to do arithmetic, children must understand what the numbers mean. Without much effort, there are dozens of times during the day when you can develop your child's number concepts using these kinds of statements and questions:

You may take three stickers.

Count the dots on the dice, then move your game piece that same number of spaces.

How many carrots are on this plate?



EASY WAYS TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO THINK

Amanda can count to 100.

Scott knows all the nursery rhymes in his book.

Becky is constantly asking me questions.

Which child is thinking? Knowing many facts is not necessarily thinking. That is memorizing, which is important, too, because facts are tools of thinking. You often need to know certain facts to engage in productive thinking about a particular subject. But thinking itself involves wondering how or why. Curiosity, which leads to investigation or asking questions, and problem solving are thinking activities. Thinking involves seeing the relationship between one fact and another

THESE CHILDREN ARE THINKING

Anita is watching a spider crawl.

Nathan is trying to put a jigsaw puzzle together.

Andrea asks, "Why does soap make bubbles?"

Like learning to play a musical instrument, thinking takes practice. When Anita watches the spider, she may be thinking about how it crawls or where it is going. Nathan is thinking about the relationship of shapes and Andrea is asking a really technical question.

Often, as a parent, you want to make problems or small hardships disappear for your child. But these can be extremely valuable thinking experiences. When a puzzle piece doesn't quite fit, let your child find the different possibilities, even though you can readily see the piece is upside down. Use your best judgment, however. You don't want your child to suffer through intense frustration with something way beyond his or her ability.

Parents can encourage their children to think in two simple ways:

1. Ask your child "why," "when," "where," "what," and "how" questions.

"Why do you think the boy in the story is sad?"

"How can we add more blocks to your tower without making it fall over?"

"What would you do if you were the girl in the movie?"

2. Answer the questions your child asks with praise.

"That's a good question, Michael. I am glad you asked."

FIVE LEARNING GUIDELINES TO HELP YOUR CHILD BE SUCCESSFUL IN KINDERGARTEN

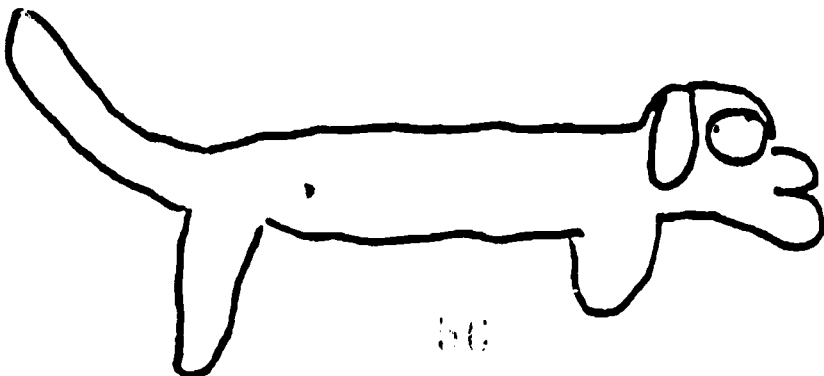
1. Talk to Your Child

It may sound strange or too simple to say that one of the best ways you can prepare your child for kindergarten is to talk to him or her, but it's true. And the best time to begin is from the day your child is born. Daniel does not have to understand or remember every word you say. In time, without effort, he will learn to concentrate

on sounds and to increase his vocabulary by copying his parents.

When Daniel was born, he didn't recognize any sounds. By talking to him, his mother taught him her language, including all the soft and hard sounds of the consonants and vowels. The more she talked, the more Daniel learned to discriminate between sounds. That is the first step in learning to read. The more words your child knows, the better he or she will be able to comprehend language. Your child will be better at following directions, asking questions, expressing his or her feelings, and understanding what he or she sees and hears.

On pages 55 and 56 is a skills list explaining simple techniques you can use that will help your child be more successful in kindergarten.



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Talking to Your Child

1. Give everything its proper name.

Example: Instead of "We're going 'bye-bye,'" say "We're going to the grocery store."

2. Use words that will expand your child's vocabulary.

Example: Instead of saying "big," use words like "large," "giant-sized," "enormous" or "huge."

3. Use objects to reinforce the meaning of words.

Example: This measuring spoon is tiny. This teaspoon is medium-sized. This tablespoon is large. This is a mixing spoon. It's huge.

4. Speak in sentences instead of a single word.

Example: Instead of saying "Okay" or "Good," say "That is correct" or "You did that perfectly (or splendidly, thoughtfully, artistically)."

5. Give compliments for using an appropriate word.

Example: "'Survive!' That's a very adult word to use. You really are learning a lot of words."

6. Without criticism, repeat correctly a sentence used incorrectly.

Example: Child: "He done it."

You: "He did it."

Child: "Her and me..."

You: "She and I..."

Child: "I ain't got no..."

You: "I haven't any..."

7. Respond to comments by repeating them and then asking a question or giving additional information.

Example: Child: "That car acts funny."

You: "Yes, it is funny. When Grandpa Garcia bought his first automobile, the horn would blow every time he turned the corner. But we didn't laugh. We were embarrassed."

Child: "Birdie flew away."

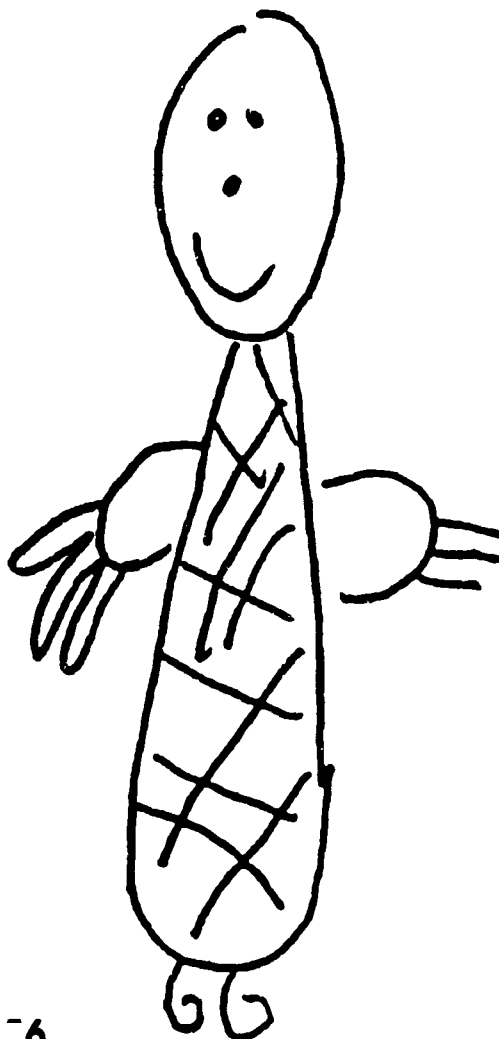
You: "Yes, the cardinal flew away."

8. Use vocal and facial expressions to show interest.

Example: "That is certainly an interesting idea. Let's think about it. I wonder what is making the waves so high today?"

9. Talk about what you are thinking or doing.

Example: "First, you need to dig a hole in the ground—about six inches deep. Then you add some fertilizer to the hole and mix it into the soil. Place the tulip bulb in the hole and cover with dirt. In the spring, a tulip will grow."



The Four Best Learning Centers for Talking

1. Your kitchen
2. The supermarket
3. The shopping mall
4. Bath and bedtime

2. Read to Your Child

One of the loveliest sights to see is that of a parent and a three- or four-year-old each carrying books out of the public library. Lucky child!

Next to talking to children, nothing will help them do better in kindergarten than reading to them. Parents can give no greater gift to their children than teaching them to love books.

Think of the benefits:

It provides a secure, warm emotional environment in which to bond parent and child.

It expands vocabulary.

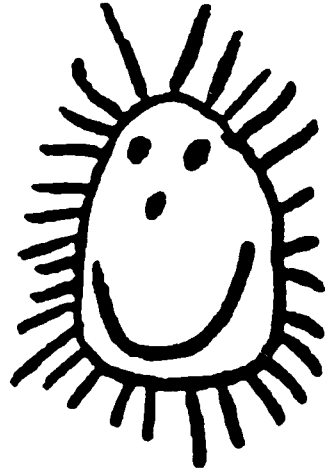
It teaches the richness of language and exposes your child to "book talk," which is different from speaking.

It provides information about the world.

It stimulates imagination.

It teaches children to listen.

It helps children understand about other kinds of people.



In years to come, the happy memory of being read to will stay with your child.

Not only is it important to read to your child, but you should also let your child see you read for your own pleasure and information. This lets your child know that reading is a life-long activity—not something to be learned and used only for school. Your child will see a greater purpose and usefulness in reading and will value reading much more.

A bibliography of appropriate books for your child is suggested at the end of this book. Also, your public librarian is a wonderful resource in your search for picturebooks. Most

children love books and would be delighted to pick out an inexpensive book on a trip to the grocery store. The greater access your child has to books, the better.

3. Sing to Your Child

Sing a song of sixpence,
a pocket full of rye.
Four and twenty
blackbirds
baked in a pie.

Singing to a child affords the same rewards as talking, but with the added benefit that singing imparts emotional warmth. From "Sing a Song of Sixpence," Daniel learns to hear initial consonant sounds and rhymes, both of which will help him learn to read. Mother Goose rhymes are particularly useful for this purpose. Check the bibliography at the back of this book for some Mother Goose books your child is sure to enjoy.

4. Play Games with Your Child

Games are another way of providing the benefits associated with talking and reading to children.



They encourage children to think, to use numbers, and to be sociable with both adults and other children. They provide opportunities to teach honesty, fairness, and how to win and lose. In addition, games have the virtue of being fun. A word of caution—be careful to avoid too much competition or a game can be a source of frustration and bad feelings.

There are many mechanical and electronic games on the market and many educational toys. Before you buy even an inexpensive item, make sure the packaging doesn't conceal a trivial game or toy inside and that it is for the appropriate age level.

Don't Forget the Golden Oldies

Checkers	Jigsaw Puzzles
Dominoes	Peg Boards
Ball Games	Hide and Seek
Candyland	Other Simple Board Games

5. Go Places with Your Child

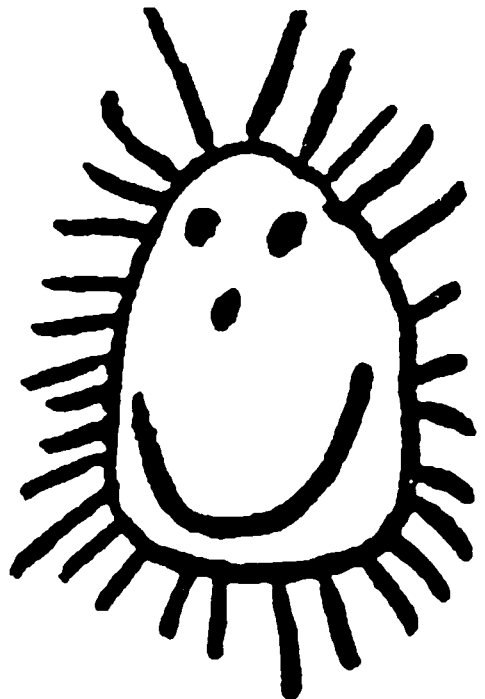
In the Room of Wonders at the Science Museum, a volunteer overheard this dialog:

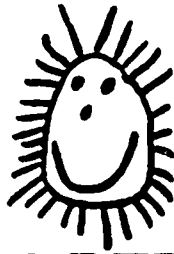
Mother: Pat, it's time to go home now.

Pat (age 4): You go home. I want to live here.

Throughout this book we have emphasized that children will have an advantage in kindergarten if they understand and can use language. We've also said that the home, a supermarket, or a shopping mall are super learning centers. If you have the time and facilities are available, take your child to science and natural history museums, a planetarium, an aquarium, and art galleries.

If your city doesn't have these, take your child for walks in the woods. Go outside together at night to look at the stars. Examine the edges of a creek or a pond. Visit a farm or walk across a field. Observe the varieties of buildings in your town and have conversations about them. Make a garden or build a doll house or castle out of boxes. Remember that every new learning experience will serve your child well in kindergarten.





CHAPTER 6

SELF-HELP SKILLS THAT MAKE KINDERGARTEN EASY

On the first day Kelly entered kindergarten, she unbuttoned her sweater, tied her shoe, and took care of her toilet needs without help.

On the first day Melinda entered kindergarten, she was too timid to tell the teacher she needed to go to the bathroom. She wet her pants and then cried in embarrassment.

In kindergarten, Kelly was on her own. Even with a perceptive and helpful teacher, she had to perform, on her own, the numerous little tasks that her Mother may have helped her with at home. Kelly felt confident because she had learned self-care skills at home.

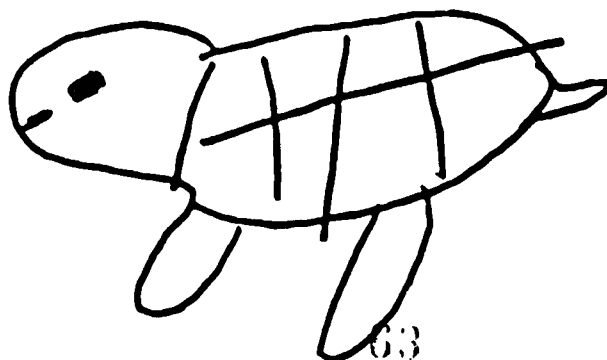
Self-care skills are habits children need to learn to take care of themselves alone. It takes lots of patience to instill habits.

With encouragement and help, 2-year-old Justin was taught to pick up a pile of blocks, 2 1/2-year-old Andrew was taught to brush his teeth, and 3-year-old Aaron to dress himself.

It is easier for a parent to tie a child's shoe than to teach his or her child to tie the shoe him or herself. Self-care skills are best learned if parents are patient when their children make mistakes. Complete mastery of all self-care skills is not necessary. Tying shoes, for example, is often very difficult for some children. Little fingers need to be quite strong for this skill. Some jacket zippers pose big problems, too. Freed of pressure and supported by encouraging words, your child can learn to take care of himself or herself in school.

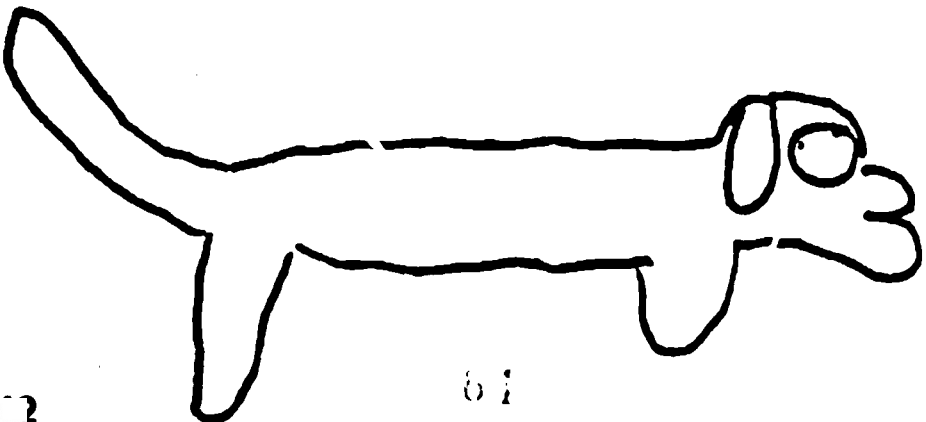
A SELF-CARE SKILL GUIDE FOR CHILDREN AT AGE 5

Dressing Skills	
Skill	Mastered
Can button and unbutton clothing	
Is able to start zipper in jacket and slide it without jamming	
Is able to buckle a belt	
Can put on and remove shoes and boots	
Can tie shoe laces	
Can hang up clothes on hanger or hook	
Can put on or remove a garment, such as a sweater	
Is able to put on snowsuit or jacket without help	
Knows where to put mittens or gloves for safe keeping	



A SELF-CARE SKILL GUIDE FOR CHILDREN AT AGE 5

Personal Care Skills	
Skill	Mastered
Knows how to ask to go to the bathroom	
If a boy, knows how to use a urinal	
Can take care of toilet needs without help	
Washes hands after using toilet	
Can blow nose using tissue and disposes of tissue properly	
Can wash and dry hands well	



A SELF-CARE SKILL GUIDE FOR CHILDREN AT AGE 5

Eating Skills	
Skill	Mastered
Can carry a plate of food to the table	
Can eat neatly with a fork	
Finishes eating in a reasonable amount of time	
Knows how to use a napkin	
Doesn't talk with a mouth full of food	

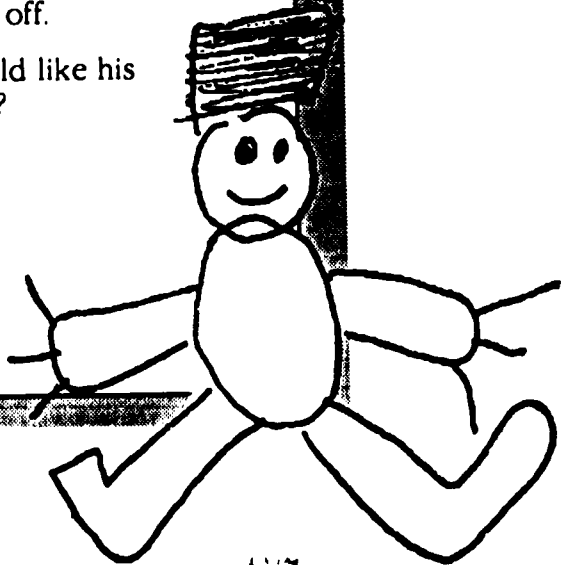


A SHOPPING GUIDE TO MAKE SELF-HELP EASY

Kindergarten is a work place that requires work clothes. Children's work clothes should be simple, washable, and sturdy. They should not be tight or too loose and should be easy for a child to manage independently. When shopping for school clothes, examine them for these features:

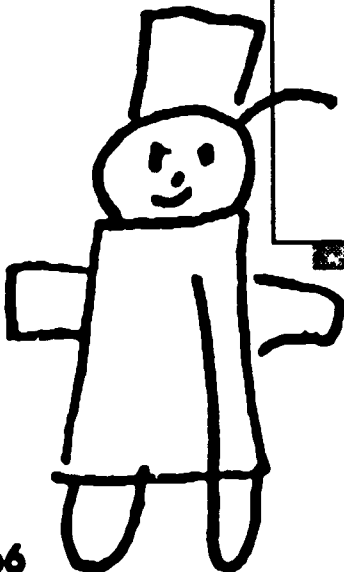
1. Are the fasteners and buttons easy to manage? They should not be at the back of the garment. Shoulder snaps are difficult, too.
2. Does the zipper glide easily? Is there enough firm fabric on each side of the zipper so the fabric won't catch?
3. Do the shoes have Velcro flaps for children who have difficulty tying laces?
4. Are buttons and button holes large enough?
5. Do the boots slide easily over shoes?
6. Do coats and sweaters have loops at the back for easy hanging on hooks? If not, they end up on the floor.

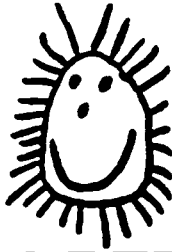
7. Is the belt easy to fasten?
8. Does the snowsuit have wide legs so your child does not have to remove shoes in order to put it on or take it off?
9. Can mittens or gloves be securely fastened to the outer garment?
10. Are there pockets for holding tissues?
11. Will the shoulder straps slide off?
12. Are the garments easy to manage in the bathroom? Jumpsuits are difficult.
13. Cardigan sweaters and sweatshirts are easier than pullovers to take off or put on when your child feels too warm or too cold. Classrooms are usually cool, but when children play, they often want to take their sweaters off.
14. Does your child like his or her clothes?



KEEP THESE TIPS IN MIND, TOO

1. Backpacks may be too difficult for kindergarten children to put on without help. School bags should fasten easily and be big enough to hold 9" x 12" (22.9cm x 30.5 cm) books and papers.
2. Clothing which children might remove during the day should have nametags. You can improvise with adhesive tape and permanent markers.
3. Bracelets and necklaces are a distraction and should be worn only for special occasions.
4. Your child will need a painting apron or covering, such as an old shirt.
5. Many schools furnish pencils, crayons, paints, and paper. If you do buy a pencil box, keep in mind that a simple one is easier for your child to manage than one with many compartments.





CHAPTER 7

SEPARATION DAY

September is coming. The start of kindergarten is at hand. Some nervous feelings are going to be normal. After all, kindergarten does mark a major shift from your child's dependence on you to a degree of dependence on himself or herself, as well as dependence on another adult, a teacher.

YOU MAY HAVE TO MAKE A DECISION

Parents A: The Changs

The Changs are really excited about the prospect of Freddie entering kindergarten. Since his birthday was in January, he will be one of the older children in the class, which is good. He has acquired most of the motor, emotional, social, and academic skills suggested in this book—not all, but quite a few. Freddie, too, can hardly wait for

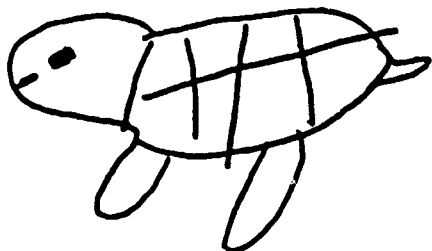
September. He is a happy, self-confident youngster.

Parent B: Vincent Juliano

Vincent Juliano has custody of his son, Mark, and has a lot of doubts about whether he should send him to kindergarten this September. Because of his work schedule, it would help Dad a lot if his son could go, but Mark, who won't be five until the end of October, will be one of the youngest children in the class. Also, there is the fact that he has many more skills yet to acquire. Mark is a sweet, quiet boy. After much thinking back and forth, Vincent decides to hold back Mark's entry into kindergarten for a year. Vincent plans to locate a preschool that will give Mark an extra year in which to develop.

Parent C: Lakisha Carter

Raising Elisha alone has not been easy for Lakisha. Elisha is the right age for kindergarten, but she has only partially mastered many of the skills helpful for success in school. Elisha likes being with children, but she's a little timid and perhaps a little insecure. It would ease Lakisha's babysitting problem if Elisha were in school, but she doesn't want to push Elisha. Lakisha really doesn't know what to do.



HELPFUL HINTS IN MAKING A DECISION

Parents A and B have made their decisions. Freddie will enter kindergarten in September, and Mark will attend a preschool. Lakisha is in a quandary and doesn't know what to do. For the many parents in this position, here are additional suggestions to help in making a decision:

Your Child's Age

Historically, the chronological age of five was the sole determinant in deciding when children should enter kindergarten. Today, we recognize that children with identical chronological ages vary widely in their social, intellectual, and emotional maturity. Studies show that older kindergartners have a higher percentage of success in school than the younger ones. As a group, younger children also experience more adjustment problems, which are apt to carry over into later grades. Generally, girls adjust more successfully than boys. When there is doubt about a child's readiness, delaying entrance for a year is a preventive measure that can increase the chances for a successful kindergarten experience.

Your School's Expectations

Some school systems have high academic standards. The majority of its pupils do above average on standardized tests and a good percentage do superior work. Knowing your school's academic expectations for its pupils is another factor to consider

when deciding whether or not to send your child to kindergarten as soon as he or she can legally attend. You may want to ask for advice from your school if you are not sure about your child's readiness.

Other Sources of Help

If after much thought, you still can't make up your mind, don't hesitate to talk to your child's day care or preschool teacher, a Sunday school teacher, the kindergarten teacher at your school, or a member of the administrative staff. A professional may have another perspective that will help you. Some schools have testing or screening programs for pre-kindergartners that are useful. Others have a well-developed preschool program that may be the answer you are looking for.

At the end of this chapter are two typical forms given to parents whose children are about to enter kindergarten. After reading them, you may have a further indication of whether or not your child is ready.

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR SEPARATION

For most children, leaving home to go to school marks the biggest change in their daily lives since they were born. It's also a big change for parents: A precious child is being sent off to kindergarten. Some children take separation day in stride, others have difficulty. Preschool experience is no guarantee that the adjustment to kindergarten will be easy. There are some "Don'ts" and "Do's" to help you reduce separation day anxiety.

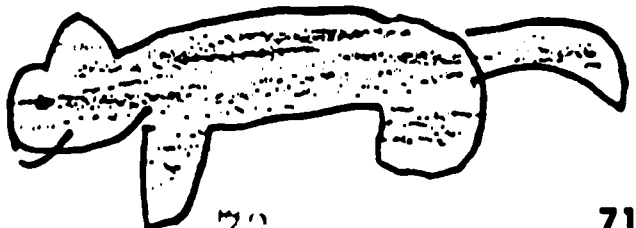


DON'T...

- 1.** Don't build up the first day in your child's mind as if it were a tremendous event. Be eager for your child, but don't continually bring it into your conversation. Let your child bring it up. Treat going to kindergarten as a normal occurrence.
- 2.** Don't allow older siblings or neighbor children to tease or alarm your five-year-old about school. Older children like to turn teachers and principals into ogres.
- 3.** Don't be overly anxious. Your anxiety is contagious and will reflect in your child.
- 4.** On the first day of school, don't stay in your child's classroom or hallway. If you've walked your child to school, say "good-bye" at the classroom door. Don't linger. If your child takes a bus, say "good-bye" at the bus stop.
- 5.** Don't let your child feel there is a choice about going to school. Don't engage in discussions about it. Be natural, but firm in tone. Be supportive and reassuring.

DO...

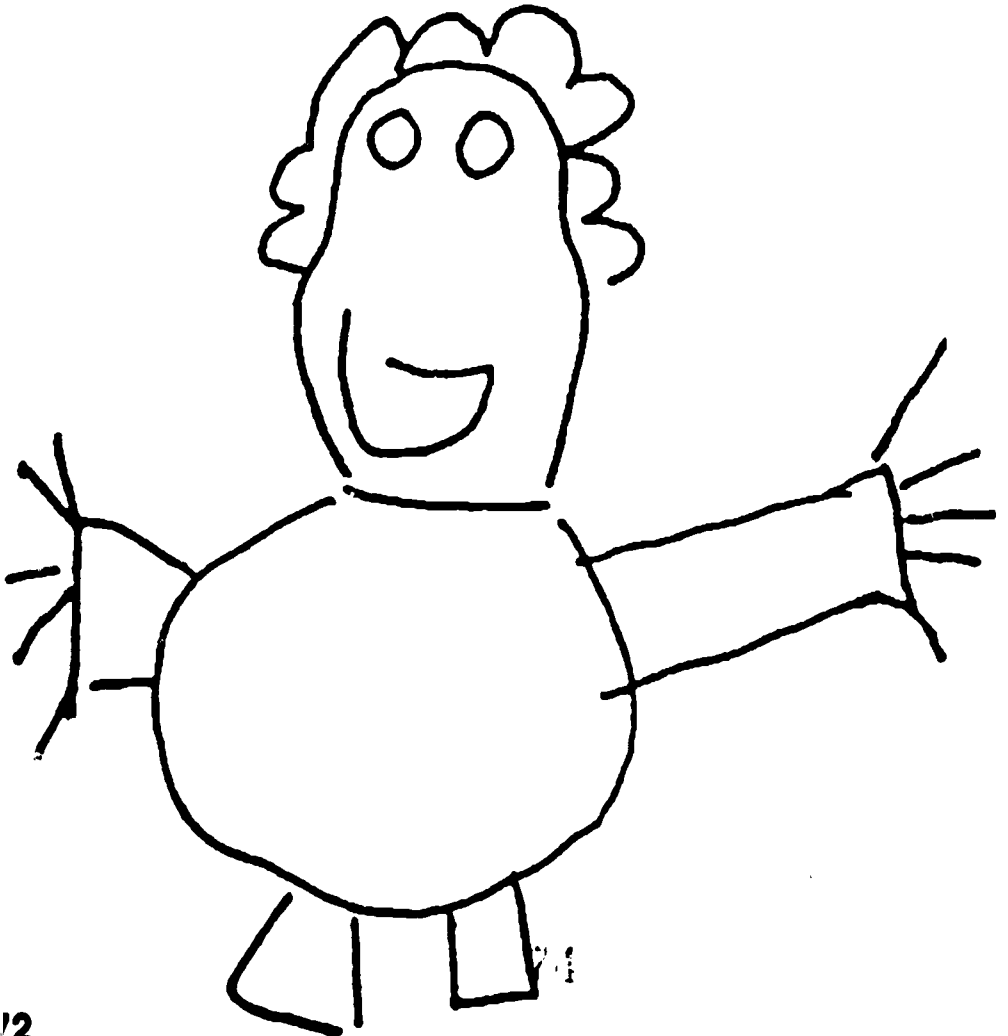
1. Explain to your child what you will be doing during school hours. Emphasize your customary activity, including work outside the home.
2. Explain beforehand what your child should expect to happen at school. A pre-first day visit to meet the teacher and see the classroom will help alleviate anxiety.
3. Explain what to do about going to the bathroom at school.
4. Answer all your child's questions about school honestly.
5. Explain how long the kindergarten day is.
6. Explain carefully how your child will get to and from school.
7. Tell your child where you will be when kindergarten is over.
8. Too much discussion can create anxiety. Let your child initiate conversation about kindergarten.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The first day of school marks a significant change in the daily routine for both you and your child. Some parents find the separation

difficult. Others, take the change in stride. For their children, it marks the first step of an adventure into the joy of learning and preparation for adulthood.



PARENT INFORMATION FORM

Child's Name _____

Birthdate _____

The age your child began walking: _____

The age your child first began to speak:

First words _____

Two or more words together _____

Sentences _____

Speaks clearly, consistent with other children
the same age?

yes no

Is your child easily able to:

1. Make sounds? yes no

2. Put words together? yes no

The language(s) most frequently
spoken in your home is:

Does your child:

Sing little songs or commercials

Pay attention to what you say or do most of the time?

Seem to be restless or fidgety most of the time?

Seem to be happy most of the time?

Say "I can't" without trying?

- Lose control of his or her temper often?
- Speak in long sentences?
- Play well with other children most of the time?
- Get upset easily?

How old are your child's favorite playmates?
(Note any relationships)

How does your child usually get along with his or her brothers and sisters?

Does your child have any special fears
(dogs, darkness, etc.)?

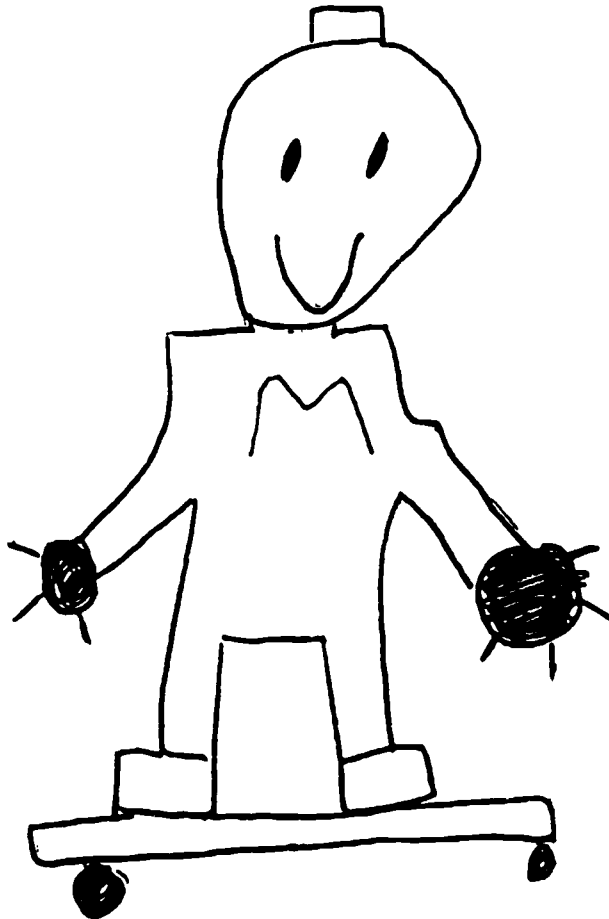
Do you have any special concerns about your child?

Does anyone have the opportunity to read stories
to your child?

Who?

Is there any other information that will help us understand your child?

Thank you for your time and patience in filling out this form.



PARENT'S CHECKLIST

The following is a checklist for your personal use. Many of the statements may be applicable for your child at the present time, while other statements will apply after your child has entered school. Continue to check these items periodically to help you see your child as a current or future kindergarten student and to give you an opportunity to help him or her improve in certain areas.

Does your child:

- 1. Have name labels in all of his or her belongings?
- 2. Know his or her name and address?
- 3. Know how to tie his or her shoes?
- 4. Know his or her left and right hand?
- 5. Put things away after work and play?
- 6. Play with others part of the day?
- 7. Play alone part of the day?
- 8. Watch too much TV?
- 9. Get enough sleep?
- 10. Remember to bring notes to school promptly?
- 11. Play away from the street?
- 12. Cross the street only at the corner?
- 13. Play well with others—waiting turn—taking rightful turn?
- 14. Accept a certain amount of defeat without crying or sulking?

- 15. Come promptly when you call?
- 16. Seem happy most of the time?
- 17. Take justified criticism gracefully?
- 18. Play without coming to you to solve his or her problems most of the time?
- 19. Have many opportunities to draw pictures?
- 20. Know how to cut with a scissors?
- 21. Know how to paste neatly?
- 22. Ask questions about many things he or she sees?
- 23. Have the opportunity to go to interesting places?
- 24. Speak distinctly and is understood by others?
- 25. Use new words he or she hears?
- 26. Seem to see and hear well?
- 27. Like to make things?
- 28. Like books? Can he or she interpret the pictures?
- 29. Retell stories or recite poems or songs heard at school?
- 30. Talk about interesting topics discussed at school?
- 31. Sit and listen 5 to 10 minutes without restlessness?
- 32. Play games involving numbers?
- 33. Have a sense of humor and laugh easily?

Keep this list after checking the items.
These reminders are just to help you
understand your child's development.

FUN BOOKS TO READ WITH YOUR CHILD

A Book of Hugs by Dave Ross

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?
by Bill Martin, Jr.

Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkina

Corduroy by Don Freeman

Curious George by H. A. Rey

Goodnight Moon by Margaret Wise Brown

Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes
by Super Chubby Books

Peanut Butter and Jelly: A Play Rhyme
by Nadine B. Westcott

Shoes from Grandpa by Mem Fox

The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats

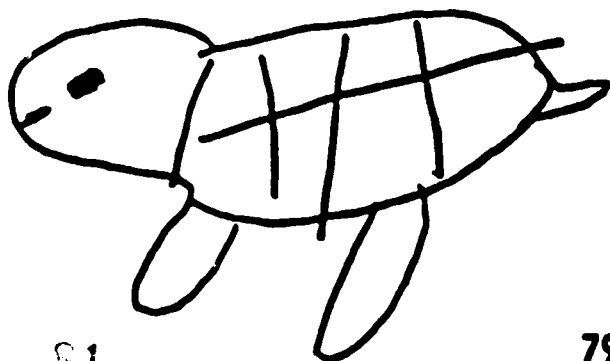
Swimmy by Leo Lionni

The Tale of Peter Rabbit by Beatrix Potter

There's No Place Like Home by Marc Brown

A Treasury of Mother Goose Rhymes
illustrated by Hilda Offen

The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle



smart kids,
better grades

How To Prepare Your Child FOR KINDERGARTEN

by Florence Karnofsky and Trudy Weiss

For more than 40 years, authors Trudy Weiss and Florence Karnofsky have taught hundreds of children in the elementary grades—from all economic levels and under a variety of educational philosophies.

Based on their observations of children who do well in school (and those who do not), the authors have concluded that no miracle teacher, model school, or advanced technology will help children succeed in school as much as the simple, positive efforts of the children's parents.

In writing the *Smart Kids, Better Grades* series, the authors have set out to help parents improve their children's performance in school. Each of the three books in the series contains hundreds of simple suggestions to help bring out the best in your child, help develop your child's listening ability, and increase concentration and comprehension—helping your child become a better reader, thinker, and communicator.

Other Books Available in the
Smart Kids, Better Grades Series

**How to Make Your Child
a Better Listener**

**How to Improve Your Child's
Language & Thinking Skills**

