A STUDY OF HOME PREPARATION
FOR SCHOOL ENTRANCE

A Thesis
Presented to:
the Faculty of the Department of Education
Indiana State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education

by
Marie Powell
August 1949
The thesis of Marie Powell, Contribution of the Graduate School, Indiana State Teachers College, Number 654, under the title A STUDY OF HOME PREPARATION FOR SCHOOL ENTRANCE

is hereby approved as counting toward the completion of the Master's degree in the amount of 8 hours' credit.

Committee on thesis:

F. Griffith
Mary Alice Banker

Chairman

Representative of English Department:

Laban O. Smith

Date of Acceptance 9/19/49
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## CHAPTER

### I. THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED
- The problem ........................................... 1
- Statement of the problem ............................ 1
- Importance of the study .............................. 1
- Definitions of terms used ........................... 2
- Home preparation ................................... 2
- Organization of remainder of the thesis ......... 2

### II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .................. 3

### III. NEEDS OF THE CHILD IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY .......................... 10
- Childhood education ................................ 10
- Health .............................................. 11
- Eating .............................................. 12
- Sleeping .......................................... 13
- Elimination ........................................ 14
- Playing ............................................ 15
- Outdoor play ....................................... 17
- Indoor play ...................................... 17
- Clothing .......................................... 19
- Social growth ..................................... 20
- Affection .......................................... 20
- Independence ...................................... 21
- Contacts with others ................................ 23
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broadening experiences</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spiritual growth</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading-Readiness</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Numbers</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Education is a life-long process which begins at birth and continues throughout life. The speech, health, social adjustment habits, and attitudes are well formed by the time the child reaches five or six years of age. If he is physically and mentally healthful at this age, he is enrolled in a public or parochial school. Until he has reached this age the major part of his life has been spent within the home or a social agency. It is the responsibility and the privilege of the home or agency to provide his early education and training and thus prepare the child to continue the learning process when he enters school.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was (1) to provide information which would assist parents in preparing the child for school entrance; (2) to show how such home preparation would be an outgrowth of the child's daily living; and (3) to secure information on which a handbook might be based.

Importance of the study. Home preparation for the preschool child has been stressed as being one of the most
important aids in educating the child. Gesell and Ilg emphasize this point of view when they say, "The smoothness of the child's school entrance will hinge largely upon his emotional maturity." Where no nursery schools or kindergartens are available the main responsibility for developing such maturity devolves upon the home.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

*Home preparation.* Home preparation was interpreted to mean the training which the parents give the child in order that he may be emotionally stable, have good health habits, have good habits of conduct, and have the ability to work and play with others.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

The remainder of the thesis will be devoted to a discussion of the following topics: (1) the needs of the child in a democratic society; and (2) summary and conclusions.

---

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

No books have devoted their entire content to the subject under consideration, but many contain valuable information on child guidance and care within the home.

Gesell\(^1\) presents a guide for the study of the preschool child and gives a comprehensive summary of the development from four weeks through five years with specific treatment of motor, language, personal and social behavior.

Health is of vast importance throughout life and the foundations for future health are laid in the first six years of a child's life. In a bulletin, Your Child From One To Six, the authors give the following statements in regard to health:

The foundation for health is laid in the first 6 years. The healthy child who lives a regular life and has good health habits—who eats well-planned meals at regular hours, plays vigorously out of doors in the sunshine—has the best chance of laying a good foundation for future health.\(^2\)

Authors agree that the health of the child is of vast importance for the accomplishment of the individual.

\(^1\)Gesell and others, The First Five Years of Life (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1940), 393 pp.

Experience likewise has shown that a child with low general health is listless, easily fatigued and has a very short attention span. He often fails to retain what he has learned. Harrison says, "Quality and quantity are always influenced by the general health status of the child."3

A statement from Arlitt verifies the importance of health habits in early life:

No factor is more important in preventing the onset of illnesses of various sorts than proper habits of health and hygiene. No period is more important for setting up these habits than is the period from infancy to six years of age. The whole range of bedroom and bathroom habits must be set up by the kindergarten age, if the child's health is to be normal and if his attention is to be freed from his physical self sufficiently to enable him to acquire the material which the school presents. If he has not acquired toilet habits, habits of sleep and rest, and habits of eating which ensure that he will eat correct foods in adequate amounts, he will function below par, be more prone to disease, and be less able to attend to and react normally in both home and school situations. None of these sets of habits listed can be acquired easily after school age. In many cases they are acquired only after tremendous effort and struggle on the part of teacher, parent and child; in many other cases they are never acquired and the child goes through life with a severe handicap.4

Chenery5 tells how her sister cultivated acceptable character in her two young children through the teaching of


truthfulness, obedience, honor and reverence. When the children related events that the mother knew had not occurred the mother said, "That's a make-believe story, isn't it?" The children then readily admitted that this was true.6

This mother likewise practiced truthfulness with her children. Such a mother would never tell her child that the stork brings babies to their mothers. She would, as Strain says, answer them truthfully and say, "All babies grow in their mothers in a special little place made ready for them."7 This author also says that if this answer satisfies the child then no further explanation is necessary. However, as long as the child asks questions the parent should continue to answer.8

Obedience, likewise, is very important in rearing children. Chenery says:

Acts of obedience to proper and recognized authority prepare the child for his later life. There will always be something for him to obey. It is not easy for him to give up his own will, even for the sake of right; but if this is expected of him in childhood, he is prepared to recognize the importance of right all through life. The child that begins by obeying a good and conscientious parent will naturally be better prepared to obey his own conscience in later years.9

---

6Ibid., p. 11.
8Ibid., pp. 95-96.
9Chenery, op. cit., pp. 33-34.
The parent also needs to give some consideration to the occupation of the child before commanding him to do something. If he is absorbed in his own work or play, according to Chenery, "The mother should think twice before she asks him to leave it to get her a glass of water."\(^{10}\)

Nursery school books were reviewed in order to better formulate the needs of the young child and the means by which many of these needs are met. Since nursery schools are not available for all children, these needs must be met in the home. Landreth\(^ {11}\) is of the opinion that the first need of a child is to enjoy his experiences and help the child to learn to live happily with others. She says:

The child who eagerly seeks companionship with others is ready to learn to adapt himself to the demands of a social group, to develop understanding of other children's feelings, to share their interests and activities and to add to their own enjoyment through his own interests and activities. He is ready to develop the social techniques necessary in getting along happily with other people.\(^ {12}\)

Chittenden\(^ {13}\) says that a child should soon learn that he must show consideration for others if he is to be an

\(^ {10}\)Ibid., p. 35.


\(^ {12}\)Ibid., p. 11.

acceptable member of the group. If he is taught to ask for toys rather than to grab them, if he plays fair, and takes turns, then other children will welcome him as a playmate.

To quote Chittenden further:

Because this learning is more effective when taught by a group of children, it is highly desirable that a preschool child have frequent opportunities to play with others his own age. The child who acquires this social learning early will have less difficulty adjusting to his school group than a child who waits until his public-school career to learn it.14

Reynolds15 stresses the need for activity as being important in helping the child to develop normally. She says, "The choice does not lie between prohibiting or permitting an eighteen-month-old child to handle everything in the house but rather in providing materials that he can handle with safety and enjoyment."16

The preschool-age child seems to be constantly on the go, but Reynolds17 says that they are getting informal rest when they sit, squat or lie on the ground for a very brief time.

Certain minimum rest periods before meals and at afternoon nap time, should be provided for children of

14Ibid., p. 107.


16Ibid., p. 72.

17Ibid., p. 85.
preschool age, whether at home or in nursery school. Contrary to public opinion children do not fight rest in itself; they fight only our way of giving it to them; and when adults give a little attention to surroundings and techniques for getting children to rest, the desired attitudes usually result.\textsuperscript{18}

Baruch,\textsuperscript{19} in her discussion of the teaching of manners to children, says that they are best taught through imitation.

We can be helped too, in our relationship with our children, by disregarding manners for a long, long time. The more important things are, that a child enjoy his food, and that he gain a deep conviction of our wanting him to be happy. Whether he uses fingers or forks makes really very little difference. When he arrives at the age of reason, he will use his fork no matter what has happened earlier.\textsuperscript{20}

If the child is to be prepared to take his place in the society in which he lives he needs to have something to do. This point is stressed by Street as follows:

A child needs something to do, something which gives him pleasure and at the same time gives him the opportunity to be useful. It is useful activity which makes the child feel that he is a part of the cultural group in which he finds himself.\textsuperscript{21}

Children always have questions which require answers and the parents need to give special attention to the answers. The Staff of the Child Study Association of

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., pp. 85-86.


\textsuperscript{20}Ibid., p. 76.

America\textsuperscript{22} has endeavored to answer some of these perplexing questions as they have been presented to them by the parents. Keliher\textsuperscript{23} relates facts about growth and the development of the individual that would make him a helpful member of our democratic society. She deals with questions about sex, sex development, and how to present factual statements in regard to the process of human reproduction.

Alschuler\textsuperscript{24} stresses the importance of cooperation of parents in the rearing of children. She discusses the fundamental habits of eating, sleeping, and elimination and how dependent the child is upon the parent for making these become habits. Her book presents vivid pictures of how the children of two, three, four and five grow and develop. In her summary she says:

As we think over the way children of two, three, four and five grow, we realize that there is form and sequence in their development. One child may develop more slowly or more quickly than another, but as we observe hundreds of them we realize that certain kinds of behavior are fairly typical of children of given ages, and that in general definite types of behavior follow one another in orderly succession\textsuperscript{25}.


\textsuperscript{25}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 153.
CHAPTER III

NEEDS OF THE CHILD IN A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Childhood education. It is agreed that our society is a democratic society and that the young child should be educated to take his place in such a society. The chief aims of childhood education should be to help the child accept responsibility; to help him make personal decisions and choices; and to help him adjust himself socially. In general his education should, as Fuller says, "Provide for the whole child in his social setting." 1 This then would include the mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth of the child.

Levinger and Murphy, 2 research workers in the field of education for young children believe that education should do the following: make contacts with children of different ages possible; furnish richer experiences; and provide opportunities for doing what the child wants to do with special help when needed.

---


Health. Since education is to provide for the growth of the whole child, his health should be given first consideration. Robust health is necessary if the child is to engage in vigorous games with other children.3

In pre-school years periodic visits to the family physician often correct physical defects and disabilities, such as defective hearing and defective vision. When such defects are given attention prior to school entrance a good foundation is laid. The correction of these defects aids greatly the future resistance to diseases.

Authors of Your Child from Two to Six say:

Parents are learning more and more that it is wise to go to a doctor to keep their children well rather than to go to him only to cure illnesses that might have been prevented. Besides giving the child regular health examinations the doctor will give him protection against certain diseases and will tell the parents what they can do to guard against other diseases. He will advise the parents as to the child's health habits.

The healthy child is active, alert, and interested in everything. His color is good and his eyes are bright. His skin is smooth, his muscles firm, and his body straight and strong. He is gaining in size and weight. He plays vigorously, creeping, running, jumping, climbing, according to his age. His mother may find him a strenuous companion, with his never ending desire for activity. He is probably a bit noisy, getting pleasure out of banging and shouting and singing. But when it is bedtime he sleeps soundly. He is hungry at mealtime and needs no coaxing to persuade him to eat. His bowels move regularly.

---

teeth are clean and in good condition. He does not have aches or pains.4

A child should be prepared for a visit to the doctor or dentist and should be told in advance what will be done in so far as the parent is able to do so.

Good health of the child is due to proper health habits which have been an outgrowth of home teaching and training. Therefore, one of the first duties of parents is to teach the child to do habitually and without conscious effort the things which make for good health. Health habits consist of the daily activities of the child, such as eating, sleeping, playing, eliminating, keeping the body clean and suitably clothed.5

Perhaps one of the best final health precautions, prior to school entrance, is for the parent to take the child to the summer round-up where children are examined by physician and nurse. The round-up should be a requirement for every school community. By this means remediable defects can be brought to light and cared for before the opening of school.

Eating. When the child is learning to eat solid foods he may express a dislike for certain foods. Chittenden says:


5Ibid., p. 12.
Dislikes may be expressed by children and many times they are based only on a difference in texture or flavor between the new food and the old familiar food. If new foods are presented in small amounts and along with familiar foods, the child is much more likely to accept them. Occasionally particular foods have real physiological effects on children; for example, some children are allergic to tomatoes. In instances like these the food cannot be given and some fairly suitable substitute must be found if the food causing the allergy has nutritive value that is highly desirable in the child's diet. They (children) should be encouraged to like a wide variety of foods so that they do not become "finicky eaters."  

Often a child's appetite is affected if adults are too insistent upon "good manners" during mealtime.

A little child has not the muscular control necessary to keep him from spilling food; his spills should be accepted without blame. He will not learn to use "please" and "Thank You" until they really mean something to him. And the best way to teach them is not by reminding him constantly to use them but by constantly using them in his presence.  

If good eating habits are formed before the child enters school, he will be ready to accept the nutritious meals which are now being served in many of the school lunch rooms.

Sleeping. Reynolds says that there are certain points about sleep that are desirable for any age if the body is to

---

7Ibid., p. 94.
maintain a proper balance of rest and nutrition. This author does not recommend a certain number of hours of sleep but her recommendations are for concentration on attitudes toward sleep and provision for adequate rest. She says:

Specific guidance for forming good sleeping habits in the pre-school years consists in planning a day with a balance of exercise, food, and rest. Overexcitement should be avoided in so far as possible, and provision should be made for more hours of rest than the child usually sleeps. Add to this comfortable sleeping arrangements and an attitude of welcoming rest and sleep. These are essentials of good sleep behavior. We can do no more than lead the child to rest; he cannot be made to sleep. Fortunately nature will do that when we do our part properly.

In regard to sleep, Teagarden¹⁰ says that the doctors have said that insufficient sleep lowers the resistance to disease. This being true the home should have the sleep behavior well mastered before the child enters school. Observation has proven that the child's attention is not up to par if his night's rest has been disturbed.

**Elimination.** The third fundamental habit, elimination, is one that should be mastered by the time the child enters school. However, even then the six-year-old does not always have full control of elimination.

Authors do not suggest a definite time for toilet

---

training, for they say that much of the responsibility rests with parents. This may still be true of the two-year-olds. The adult must oftentimes see that he gets to the toilet on time, help him button and unbutton clothing and see that he washes his hands after going to the toilet.

In summarizing the fundamental habits of eating, sleeping and eliminating Reynolds says:

The fundamental habits of eating, sleeping, and elimination figure largely in the literature about the preschool child and it is easy to understand why this is so. They are important to future physical and mental well-being and the age from two to five is the time when they can be easily formed or corrected. What is more natural than that parents, child guidance clinics, and nursery schools should all devote considerable attention to them. It would be too bad if the educational plan for young children stopped there, however. The world is full of so many interesting things that children should know about and do. The real purpose of the fundamental habits is to develop a body so healthy and so automatic that the individual is equipped and free to explore these fascinating possibilities.11

Since this is the real purpose of these habits, it is necessary that the child have these under automatic control before entering school and then his mind is free to concentrate on the newer activities and adjustments of school life.

Playing. The play of the child is not to be neglected, for, "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy." Gesell

11 Reynolds, op. cit., p. 97.
Ilg conclude that the modern child has too many set tasks and not a sufficient amount of leisure and self-activity time. They say, "Deeply absorbing play seems to be essential for full growth. Children who are capable of such intense play are most likely to give a good account of themselves when they grow up."  

Well-equipped backyards are the ideal place for play periods, with a well ventilated room or porch as a substitute in unfavorable weather.

Observation and readings have shown that the play for one and two-year-olds, for the most part is of an individual nature. This age requires frequent changes of activities as well as frequent changes of playthings. They need equipment which will develop the larger muscles of the body. Such equipment would include play material for climbing, feeling, pulling, lifting and throwing. By the time he is three he has better coordination of these muscles. Then transportation toys to push, pull or ride take precedence over others.

From the ages four through six the child prefers companionship in his play. The number of boys begins to

---


13Ibid., p. 82.
decrease with these ages. Children of these ages have very vivid imaginations and need few toys to carry out their desires, even in dramatization.

Outdoor play. In backyards where much of the play originates, there can be found small smooth boards for carrying; packing boxes, sturdy enough for climbing; a sandpile with small trucks, boxes and shovels for use in the sand; a swing and a slide.

One yard which was observed was used by a family of children ranging in ages from one to eight. Neighbor children were frequently added to the number. In addition to some of the above mentioned play equipment there was a playpen for the one-year-old where she could be isolated when she became "too much trouble" for the older ones.

Indoor play. "Dress up" dramatic play is a source of joy, especially on rainy days. Boys occasionally participate in this play, if they are permitted to play the part of father.

For creative expression, the child finds modeling clay, wallpaper cleaner, painting equipment, crayons, scissors and paper quite useful. Painting may be done at an easel or on the floor. Finger painting is a favorite pastime with many children.

Gesell and Ilg\(^{14}\) found that the five-year-old child

\(^{14}\text{Ibid.}, p. 83.\)
still found great enjoyment in playing with blocks. The girls use them to build houses for their dolls and towers. The boys use them for building bridges, roads, tunnels and houses.

Rhythmic motions are a part of the child's play activities. Manufactured toys are not required for such play. Oftentimes two blocks of wood, two smooth sticks, a can of pebbles, a pan with an old spoon furnish sufficient rhythm for a "circus parade" or a "band concert."

Cadden\textsuperscript{15} tells how her children found an old mattress to be a very useful piece of play equipment. They jumped, rolled, and turned somersaults on it. By placing one end on the floor and leaning the other against the chair they found it made a good slide.

Both group play and individual play are necessary to the child. The former helps him to adjust himself better socially by developing self-control, leadership, self-reliance and cooperation. Learning to play alone is also beneficial for the child is sometimes without playmates and must entertain himself.

The benefits of group play are essential to the child if he is to be able to easily and quickly adjust himself to the new adventures of the school room. It is through play

activities that the child first begins to learn. Chittenden says, "Play is the young child's means of learning, for through it he develops physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially. He needs the kinds of play experiences that will contribute to his best health."  

Clothing. In the discussion of clothing the following points are essential: the garments must be comfortable; they must be simple; they must be durable; they should have large buttons and buttonholes; and they should be attractive. Fuller says that in the early years the sensible clothing for both boys and girls is the "T-shirt" and overalls. They protect the legs from cold and the knees from abrasions.

Comfortable clothes are made of soft, light-weight fabrics that are durable and easily washed. Proper footwear will be long enough and broad enough to allow the toes to move easily. The younger the child the more supervision is necessary to see that laces are tied, that clothes meet the waistline, the buckles and buttons are fastened, and that mittens, caps, and rain apparel are worn when needed.


18 Loc. cit.
Social growth. The first social group into which the child is introduced is comprised of members of his immediate family. Within this group he should be given a feeling of security. He should know that he is wanted and should be treated as a valued member of the family. His personal needs should be met within this first social group.

The child's needs are no less than the needs of an adult, namely: affection, independence, mutual understanding, a sense of being of value, and a sense of being appreciated by others.

Affection. McVicker writing about the security of five-year-old children, says that the elements of affection are: respect, warmth, interest and reasoning together.

A child whose parents love, respect, befriend, and help him solve his problems is certainly ready to start life on a comfortable secure foundation. Affectionate parents are not unmindful of the misdemeanors of the child, but their form of punishment is of the depriving type rather than the emotional type. The secure child is taught obedience through trust in the parents rather than through fear of punishment.

Fear of punishment often results in untruthfulness. Likewise, examples of untruthfulness on the part of parents

---

also cause children to lie. According to Breckenridge and Vincent, "Many children lie because, although truth is more obvious than falsehood, they observe that adults and other children lie. When parents consciously or unconsciously lie to others or to the child, they can expect him to follow their example."\(^{20}\)

Overstreet,\(^{21}\) writing on the elements of security, says that parents are the most important element in the child's development. It is they who set the standards of daily performance in the home. If parents' demands are beyond the child's abilities, they lessen his chances of becoming a competent human being. Competence results if he experiences the warm feeling of success rather than failure.

Parents should refrain from favorable or unfavorable comparisons of one child with another, for this also lessens the child's chance of becoming a competent individual. The parent should be patient with the child and let him learn at his own rate of speed.

**Independence.** A valued member of a society must have some tasks to perform. The preschool child will soon learn


to put away his toys, if a box is provided for that purpose. He will also hang up his clothes, if the adults will provide low hooks which he can easily reach. If the performance of the small duties is carried out with the assistance of adults, drudgery of the task will be avoided. The length of the work period should be of short duration.

When the five or six-year-old child has been taught to carry out simple household duties well, he will be able to carry responsibilities at school. Then the small duties and routine of school life will not be too overwhelming.

Every child needs someone in whom he may confide. Parents are the ideal persons to receive the confidences of children. Parents, however, should not assume an attitude of authority.

Blatz and Bott\(^2\) believe that the parents should not insist that the child tell everything, but that parents should be ready to listen when the child has something to say. Advice should be given willingly with no strings attached. Such training will help the child to feel more secure and give him the assurance that he has a loyal friend and companionable parent. Chittenden\(^3\) says that the child


should feel that the parents love him no matter what he does.

Contacts with others. When the child, through the above mentioned elements, is made to feel secure within his own family, he is ready to adapt himself socially to groups outside the family circle.

It should be the responsibility of the parents to provide opportunities for making contacts with children of different ages. These contacts should vary from individual to group relations, as well as from informal grouping, for free play, to formal and guided group experiences. Such contacts emphasize cooperation and sharing. Chittenden believes that families can set an example of cooperative living. From the very beginning of group life, a child knows what cooperation is because he has lived it.

Sharing. Sharing is experienced early in life. Even the infant soon learns that his mother’s time and attention are shared with other members of the family. Later he learns that if he is to live happily in that family, he must confine his play activities and play materials to certain areas of the house designated for his use. He is not to infringe upon the rights of others.

The family in a democratic society is democratic in

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 108.\]
its structure. Each member is a contributing factor and shares family finances, work, play and planning. These factors, according to Chittenden, make the family democratic.

Budgeting is one form of sharing which should be given consideration when the child is old enough to have money. One interviewed mother said her son was given a weekly allowance when he started to school. She and he talked over the amount he would need each week and how much he needed for various items. They agreed to use envelopes for each separate item. The envelopes were labeled thus: School Lunch, Church and Sunday School, Pencils and Paper, and To Spend. The latter label indicated that the amount in that envelope was to be spent as he chose. After this was spent there was to be no supplementing by other members of the family.

The child, when he begins to earn money, needs the guidance and help of the parents in the wise use of his own earnings. A discussion of the family income and budget would help the child to realize the importance of cautious spending. Then he may suggest that some of his own money might be used.

---

in meeting some of the expenses, such as some items of his own clothing. This makes him a responsible member, assuming his share in the family finances.

**Broadening experiences.** Vacation trips made with the parents furnish ideal experiences for the child. Away from the busy routine of daily living, the father becomes more of a "pal" and less a stranger to his own son or daughter. These trips are often of the explorative type where the child learns about the things of nature.

Anderson\(^{26}\) says that readiness means being prepared and that preparation requires some particular type of experience. Experiences of the rural child prepare him with knowledge of animal life, gardening and farm life in general. Wood\(^{27}\) suggested that the child should be encouraged to observe a mother hen with her brood of chickens, a dog and puppies, a cow and calf, a mare and colt, a cat and kittens, and birds in their nests or pictures of them in the nests. Such observations acquaint the child with child and parent relationships which would have universal appeal.


A trip to the grocery store with the mother affords an opportunity for the child to learn more about the choice of foods, the various ways of food preservations, prices and values of food. He also learns that the groceryman is a necessary helper in his daily living.

Trips to dairies, dairy farms, lumber yards, railroad stations, buildings under construction, fire and police stations, zoos, parks, lakes or brooks help to expand the child's understandings. Usually the child likes to make repeated visits to such places. Levinger and Murphy believe that such trips mean happy experiences with kind, interested adults. They suggest also a visit to the school which he would attend.

In the home the child's wants should be given the same consideration as those of the adults. The child should be privileged to do what he enjoys doing, such as playing with clay and water, smearing paint, playing silly games, giggling, making tents from blankets, using the table for a boat, or even making a cup out of his ice cream.

---


29 Ibid., p. 39.
Levinger and Murphy say:

A child, physically and emotionally satisfied in infancy, realistically and affectionately introduced to the necessary conformities of social life, having plenty of opportunity for normal, childlike exploration and activity growing in a world where friendliness toward people of other groups in general, is not likely to be delinquent, dull, or hostile. The prescription is simple, yet it involves basic thinking and planning in relation to almost every phase of our culture—the kinds of apartments, houses, and yards we live in; the time schedules we obey; the relative values put upon family living and fun as compared to achievements, salaries, or social climbing; and our willingness to give young children what they need instead of being too concerned about saving money.30

The child who is reared under such circumstances has no cause for displaying some of the less desirable practices such as thumb-sucking or temper tantrums.

Levinger and Murphy31 express the belief that thumb-sucking probably results from early weaning and bottle-feeding with inadequate suckling time.

Arlitt32 notes that temper tantrums often result if the child is kept up late at night, taken out of the home frequently, or made to show off too many times. She suggests, too, that physical conditions might also be a cause, but more often temper tantrums are a means of securing attention or of

30Ibid., p. 39.
31Ibid., p. 41.
dominating adults or other children. She tells of one child who had been ill. The parents were against overtaxing her. She developed the habit of screaming and throwing her hands up to her head as if she had the headache. She had learned that she could get her own way if she did that when she was ill, and so resorted to the same actions long after she was pronounced cured.

The home environment has a great influence upon the child and the child has a right to expect certain conditions in his environment which will contribute toward his becoming an effective member of his social group. Chittenden gives the following as essentials of childhood:

1. Happy parents who love him sincerely and show him that they do.
2. A home in which there is harmony, respect for each individual, and a tolerance of differences.
3. A home which provides adequately for physical needs.
4. A social group which inflicts a minimum of pressure and frustration on him.33

Since education should prepare the child for life in a democratic world, it must take care of the present needs and look toward the needs of the future. As Anderson says, "Modern education stresses the development of functions that

enable the person to meet life situations as they occur." 

In early childhood education the child should be encouraged to attempt new tasks by which he can discover opportunities afforded him in his environment. Future success and happiness might depend upon this early discovery.

Within his home environment the child has opportunities for accepting responsibilities, namely: caring for pets, watering plants, planting and caring for his own vegetable and flower garden, and putting away his own clothing and toys. If he fails to care for his pets their outward appearance soon bring this very vividly to his mind. When he forgets to water his seedling and plants, they die from neglect. From such experiences and other similar ones he learns that his personal decisions and choices should be made in accordance with the needs and desires of other persons and other things.

**Spiritual growth.** If the home has the characteristics of a religious home the child will follow its teachings and examples. Staff members of The Child Study Association\(^{35}\) say


that spiritual development is contagious and if the child believes in God and His teachings, it must be learned from examples within the home. These examples are conveyed to the child through actions and words.

**Reading-readiness.** At school the child has a preparation for reading called "reading-readiness," but the real foundation for such preparation comes from the home. It is in the home where the child first learns the use of words through imitation. Here the adults must be cautious of their language. Chittenden says,

> A little child imitates the speech of those around him. Children of parents who say "ain't" and "he don't," probably will use the same incorrect expressions. The influence of early home examples is so powerful that school-age children taught the proper use of language, are still likely to use the incorrect expressions heard at home.\(^{36}\)

Wide experiences increase the vocabulary and improve the child's ability to express himself. Excursion trips, which were discussed earlier in the chapter, furnish interesting topics for questions and general conversation.

Birthday parties likewise furnish language experiences. Wording the invitation, plans for the party and conversations at the party are excellent opportunities for language development.

---

Stories have always been a source of joy to the child. With some interviewed mothers, the bedtime-story habit proved best, while others preferred the afternoon nap time. The main concern was that there should be a story time. Headley\textsuperscript{37} says, "Storytelling is an art which, when used wisely, can do much to inculcate in the child the appreciation of good literature."

Headley\textsuperscript{38} also stresses the importance of poetry for expressing an emotion or an experience. Then, too, it is often used for its beauty of sound. Mother Goose jingles, poems by Christina Rossetti, Robert Louis Stevenson, Rose Fyleman, Walter De la Mare, and A. A. Milne have proved very worth while for young children.

The following quotations from Headley contain suggested files of books together with age-placement:

The two-year-old should be supplied with books which he can carry about and handle. The first books might be made of linen, linenette, or heavy cardboard. The subject matter will deal with his daily experiences, such as getting dressed or playing with pets. Books by Dorothy Aldis, Ethel Wright, Mary Steichen Martin, and Lena Towsley give us good books for the two-year-old.

The three-year-old identifies himself so completely with the story characters that he will like to hear


\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Loc. cit.}
about the simple adventures of animals—especially if the text incorporates animal sounds into the story. Family and nursery-school experiences and the somewhat imaginative adventures of common toys and pets will also appeal to his growing interests. For books to meet the needs of the three-year-olds we turn to such people as Lois Lenski, Romney Gay, Dorothy Sherrill, and Margaret Brown.

The four-year-old feels that he is ready to go boldly out into the great world. He loves to hear about the adventures of The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper, The Little Toy Airplane by Inez Hogan, or the Pirate Twins by William Nicholson; but somehow he finds security and honest pleasure in such simple stories as The Twins and Tabifia by Helen and Alf Evers. Such nonsense tales as Johnny Crow's Garden by Leslie Brook will prove highly entertaining.

The five-year-olds as a group are ready for some of the simpler folk tales; e.g., The Three Billy Goats Gruff and The Little Rabbit That Wished For Red Wings. It must be recalled that an individual child may be ready to enjoy the fanciful tale at a much earlier age than the group may be expected to enjoy it. The purely fanciful tale, such as Many Moons Ago by Thurber, or Peter Pan by Grishina may well be reserved for the seven and eight-year-olds. The five-year-olds also enjoy stories about children not too unlike themselves as well as stories about birds, animal life, and tales of mechanical things. We look to the books of Marjorie Flack, the Petershams, the Haders, Emma Brock, Elsa Beskow, Robert McClokey, and Virginia Burtin to supply us with splendid books for the five-year-olds.

The six-year-olds want some books which they can read themselves but, because of their limited reading ability, most of the books which these children could read cannot be classed as literature. The six-year-old will enjoy hearing about the adventures of animals, community interdependence, factual and fanciful tales about mechanical things, informational stories about nature. The library for the six-year-olds would include such titles as Wallie The Walrus (Weise); Little Stone House (Haders); The Story Book of Things We Use (Petershams); The Five Hundred Hats of Bartholomew Cubbins (Suess); and Gone Is Gone (Gag). Some time in the child's sixth or seventh year he should enjoy with his group the inimitable stories of
When the child has been given such language experiences and story telling in the home, he soon has the desire to know what the printed page has to say. He becomes eager to read. This eagerness to read is one of the most important steps in preparing the child for reading.

**Numbers.** Preschool age children have a very vague sense of numbers and use words indicating them without appreciating their real meanings. Reynolds says, "Real understanding and use of numbers comes slowly, and very little should be expected at the preschool years."40

One mother41 related an experience with her daughter. The daughter was approaching her fifth birthday. Several weeks in advance the special date was marked on the calendar. Each evening, just before retiring, the closing day was marked off and the remaining days were counted. Such experiences gave the child experience in judging time. Other special days will furnish similar experiences.

However, it is not wise to stress the time element

39Ibid., pp. 162-163.
41Several mothers were interviewed by the writer for the purposes of supplementing and verifying data.
too much with the preschool child. Reynolds\textsuperscript{42} says that children use the terms that they hear adults use but they have no real understanding of time concepts such as, days of the week, months of the year, and years.

In an Indiana State Department of Public Instruction Bulletin\textsuperscript{43} suggestions were made for the development of mathematical concepts through the use of blocks. Through their use such ideas as "space," "high," "low," "down," "up," "many," "more," "few," "large," and "small" may be developed.

\textbf{Music.} The preschool child's enjoyment of music depends largely upon the parents' enjoyment of music. Alschuler, discussing the child's appreciation, says, "If from the beginning he is surrounded with good music, a basis for later appreciation is being laid. If possible sing simple lullabies and nursery songs to him."\textsuperscript{44}

Rose Heylbut says, "Music is the most natural, most individual form of human expression."\textsuperscript{45} If this statement

\textsuperscript{42}Ibid., p. 108.

\textsuperscript{43}Ruth G. Strickland, Mary D. Reed, and Anna Pauline Lanterburn, \textit{A Good Start in School} (Indianapolis: Indiana State Department of Public Instruction, 1946), p. 156.


can be accepted, parents should avail themselves of every possible opportunity of observing the child's reaction to rhythm.

Alschuler says:

Keep the child as aware as possible of different kinds of sound. Let him listen to the rhythmic tick of the clock or hold a watch close to his ear; let him watch the engine as it starts up, and let him hear the gradual acceleration of its puff, puff, puff. The rhythm of the homely chopping bowl being used in the kitchen, the wind as it gently sighs or rustles through the trees or the corn field, clock chimes or church bells, all can offer distinctive and lovely sounds to young ears. Sometimes on a walk a child hears a bird call and it is fun to make a game of finding the bird and describing its gay coloring.46

The child learns songs as he learns language, through hearing them frequently and through imitation. His choice of songs is those with action and subject matter within his range of experience.

Rhythmic play materials such as bells, blocks, pans, lids, sticks and spoons all give experiences in sound and rhythm.

Christianson47 says that music enriches the child's daily living and is a medium of expression. Thus the music which the child experiences in the home will benefit him when

46 Alschuler, op. cit., pp. 74-75.
he enters school. In the school room the child learns through various forms of expression. Alschuler\textsuperscript{48} believes that occasionally a child who is too self-conscious to join a group will forget himself and join in a singing game. This participation alone should be worth any effort on the part of the parent to interest the child in music.

\textbf{Art.} Art is a medium through which the child gives outward form and expression to his ideas, feelings and emotions, according to Headley.\textsuperscript{49}

Much of the material used for art expression by the preschool child has been discussed under "Play Material," and rightly so, for art is a form of play at this age.

The wide choice of creative materials gives the child a variety of ways to express himself. Clay, blocks, paints, crayons and scissors demand that the child be a participator rather than a spectator. They stimulate thinking, imagination, and invention. To the child, the use of these materials is not just for pastime, but to him it is an expression of his inner self.

The preschool art experience is beneficial to the school child not only as a subject in itself but it is also of benefit

\begin{footnotes}
\item[48] Alschuler, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 84.
\end{footnotes}
to him because of its correlation with other subjects. He will be able, through this previous experience, to appreciate the beauty of pictures, to express ideas gained from reading, and to create his own imaginative characters.

Summary. The child who feels secure within his own environment makes good general adjustments, has a pleasing personality, accepts his share of responsibilities, and displays zest and enthusiasm for living, and is well prepared to take his place in a democratic society. He can be depended upon to help solve the major problems of such a society, by cooperation and united effort with others.

Staff members of the Child Study Association express the importance of early training in the following way:

In the deepest sense it remains true that childhood is the golden period of personality formation. What we learn before the age of six seems truly to determine whether later in life we feel happy or sad; are generous or mean; friendly toward others or hostile, suspicious or trusting, reasonable or stubborn; how freely we can express or control our aggressive and our sexual impulses—in short, all that is most important.50

50Staff Members of The Child Study Association of America, Parents' Questions (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1936), p. 11.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A summary of and conclusions based on data obtained from personal observation, personal interviews with parents, and the literature on early childhood education seem to adapt themselves well to outline form.

A. Give the child a feeling of security.

1. Treat him as a member of the family.
2. Show love and affection for him.
3. Show love and affection for all members of the family.
4. Keep the home a friendly place.
5. Give less attention to his wrong acts, and emphasize the good.
   a. Try to find the reason for such acts and remove the cause.
      (1) Does he suck his thumb? Is it when he is tired, hungry or frustrated?
      (2) Does he have temper tantrums? Is that because he gets what he wants when he does have them?
   b. Good acts should be rewarded with a smile, a nod or words of appraisal.
      (1) When he eats well compliment him.
      (2) A smile of approval when the child puts away his toys will give him the desire to put them away the next time he plays with them.
6. Make suggestions, "do's" rather than "don'ts."
7. Make no unfavorable comparisons of one child with another.
8. Teach obedience through parental trust, not fear.
9. Omit such practices as threatening punishment through fear.
   b. Refrain from scaring him with goblin stories.
   c. Never tell him the "bad man" will get him.
   d. Do not make him afraid of the policeman.
10. Answer the questions of the child when he asks them.
    a. Questions in regard to where babies come from should be answered truthfully in a way which he
can understand.

b. All other questions should be given equal consideration.

11. Remember he is a child and do not hold him to adult standards.

B. Allow the child to grow up without constantly hurrying, pushing and "nagging" him.

C. Teach him social manners.

1. Prepare him to greet guests at the door.
2. Permit him to answer the telephone.

D. Give him small tasks to perform.

1. Let him dress, undress and put away his own clothes.
2. Occasionally he should be permitted to give himself a bath.
3. Teach him to put away his own toys.

E. Provide a place for the child to play.

1. Make the back yard a playground.
2. Provide a well ventilated room or porch for days when he can't play outdoors.

F. Secure play equipment suitable for his age.

1. Give him packing boxes strong enough for climbing.
2. Have several simple jig-saw puzzles.
3. Place attractive and suitable books on convenient book shelves.
   a. Include two solid wooden blocks for keeping time.
   b. Give him two small smooth sticks for either keeping time or beating his drum.
   c. Help him make a drum from a large tin can using inner tubing laced over the openings.
5. Furnish him with creative constructive material.
   a. Give him building blocks.
   b. Give him access to some old clothes for "dressing up."
   c. Provide toy trains for him.
   d. Give him trucks, wagons, airplanes and boats.
   e. Secure a piano box for a playhouse.
   f. A wheelbarrow will add great joy to his play in the sandpile.
G. Allow him to have playmates near his own age.
   1. They help him to develop self-reliance, self-control, leadership, cooperation, and the give and take attitude.
   2. They also teach him to be a follower.

H. Guard his health through periodic visits to the physician and dentist.
   1. Give an accurate history which will be helpful to the physician.
   2. Confer with him in regard to any health problems.
   3. Comply with recommendations made by both physician and dentist.

I. Watch for signs of physical defects.

J. Provide the child with regular, nutritious meals.

K. Teach him proper toilet habits.

L. Use only the best language in the child's presence.

M. Increase his vocabulary by providing rich experiences which require a wide choice of words.
   1. Take him to see a train, the zoo, the airport, the grocery store, and take him on picnics.
   2. Read and tell stories.
      a. Encourage free discussion of them.
      b. Listen attentively to his reproduction of the stories.
      c. Be an interesting listener to his imaginary stories.

N. Give the child experience in budgeting.
   1. Allow only a certain amount for each week.
      a. Assist him in deciding what this amount must include.
      b. Provide special envelopes or boxes labeled for each item.
   2. When this amount is spent, there should be no supplementing.

The materials in this outline might well serve as a basis for a handbook or bulletin which could be supplied by
teachers to parents of preschool children.

With parental cooperation in a home which has provision for the above mentioned suggestions, the child is ready to take his place in the home, the school, and the community. He is made to feel secure; he has good habits of conduct; and he is able to work and play with others.

Teachers would welcome such home preparation and would find joy in guiding the child in an education which meets his present needs and anticipates some of his future needs. Both the school and home would then accomplish one of the aims of education, namely providing for the whole child in his social setting.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. BOOKS


**B. PERIODICALS**


**C. PUBLICATIONS OF LEARNED ORGANIZATIONS**


