

CHAPTER 2
WHERE DO I BEGIN?



GETTING STARTED
EQUIPMENT
RESOURCE MATERIAL
TEACHING AIDS
P.S.

GETTING STARTED

This book contains the directions you will need to begin and develop your home preschool. The materials are geared to children from ages three to five, although many of the ideas can be used for an older child as well. **Remember to gear your activities to the skills of your child.** For example, a three-year-old will become frustrated if he is expected to be proficient with scissors, but a five-year-old can master that skill. Some of the crafts and many of the treats are prepared mainly by the adult, but the child can help as he is able. Don't pressure him to do things his young body is not ready for yet.

Begin by making a file folder or a large manila envelope for each subject you will be covering during the year (see **Table of Contents** for the subjects you will probably want to use). Then, begin to fill them with ideas you find. For example, I went through old magazines and catalogs to find pictures I could use. The public library is a rich resource for books on various subjects, including craft ideas that can be incorporated into various themes. Over the years, I've found new pictures and stories to add. Older children will bring home ideas from school that can be adapted to the younger one's learning. In addition, I looked through recipe books to find treats and surprises that could be used with some of the topics. As you go along, you'll find many new ideas and sources you will want to add.

Next, develop a simple plan for each day. Our "school" is set up for three days a week, for one and a half to two hours a day. If that is too much for you, begin with just twice a week. The important thing is that, barring emergencies, once you have set the time, stick with it! Schedule appointments or other activities for non-school days or times. Your children will quickly learn when you will be meeting and will need that order in their lives. Feel free to skip days or skip around so that the book resources will fit **your** situation and time schedule. If you work doing the week and are doing **Teach Me Mommy** on the weekend, compact the week into one day's activities and do that.

A blank weekly outline that I use is included at the end of this chapter. It's based on the format used in the various chapters in this book, but if this doesn't work for you, feel free to make up your own! By filling out the outline in advance, you can quickly see the things you'll need each week and what you need to plan for. An example follows:

SUBJECT: FAMILIES			
	MONDAY:	WEDNESDAY:	FRIDAY:
INTRO.	DESCRIBE FAMILY MEMBERS -LET THEM GUESS WHO THEY ARE LOOK AT PICTURES OF FATHERS, MOTHERS, ETC.	SHOW PICTURE OF FATHER -WHAT DOES HE DO? -WHAT DO OTHER MEMBERS DO?	SHOW PICTURE OF GRANDPARENTS, TALK ABOUT THEM
BOOKS	ARE YOU MY MOTHER? WANTED... A BROTHER	JUST ME AND MY DAD TEN, NINE, EIGHT	GRANDMOTHER LUCY MARY JO'S GRANDMOTHER
FINGERPLAY, RECORD, SONG	FINGER FAMILY	/	MY GRANDMOTHER
ART WORK, CRAFT, PROJECTS	DO FAMILY MOBILE- WHITE PAPER BOARD, CRAYON, CLOTHES HANGER, THREAD	MAKE COUPONS FOR FAMILY MEMBERS- WHITE PAPER, CRAYONS (COPY COUPON PAGES)	DECORATE FRAME GET PHOTOS TO CHOOSE FROM, BUTTONS TO GLUE ON, CRAYONS
TREATS	MARSHMALLOW PEOPLE- MARSHMALLOWS, TOOTH- PICKS	MAKE A COOKIE FOR EACH FAMILY MEMBER FOR DINNER	GRANDMA'S GINA MERZAPS

Now let's discuss the steps used in these chapters. Most areas have an identifying picture so you can quickly locate what activity to move to next.

MATERIALS:

Each day has a list of materials needed. Having these items on hand will allow you to better present the information and concepts for the day. Most of the time, snacks are not individually listed because those are often more complex. However, when you fill out your work sheet, be sure and list what you need for the snack you have chosen.

PROJECTS:

Because there are several projects to choose from, you can decide which one you would like to do depending upon your time, resources, and child's age. You will only need the items listed next to that particular project.

INTRODUCTION:

Begin each day with some introduction time. This is when you acquaint your child with the day's material. Most of what you need to say is written out for you, but you will want to add your own thoughts. We spend from five minutes to half an hour on this, depending on the material and the attention span of the child.



The introductions in this book have been kept simple deliberately . If your child wants to know more, you can turn to an encyclopedia or other books to help him increase his knowledge and answer his questions. The National Geographic Society has published a number of books in its "Young Explorer" series that are marvelous resources for a number of lessons. Specific titles will appear in appropriate units. A catalog of the books available can be received by writing:

National Geographic Society
Books for Young Explorers Pub.
P. O.. Box 2118
Washington, DC. 20013-2118
1-800-447-0647

BOOKS:

Next, I read one or more books to reinforce what we learned in the introduction. I have included many we have liked and reread through the years. After studying the lessons, I try to find these books at the library several weeks in advance, so I can make adjustments and changes in the lesson if I need to. You will want to add to this bibliography as you find other books that your children enjoy. New books on each subject are published all the time, so feel free to choose what looks interesting to you.



We have also purchased many of our favorites, which are now well-loved and well-worn! The Golden Book Press, Inc. has published a wide variety of books that can be purchased at toy stores, discount stores or even supermarkets for under \$2.00. These are nice, because they allow the child the opportunity to have his own books at a nominal cost.

I also want to mention a book that every parent should own. This is *The Read-Aloud Handbook* by Jim Trelease, Penguin Books. This national bestseller discusses how parents reading stories to their children is

important in the mental and creative development of a child. It includes a large bibliography of books appropriate from preschool through teenage years.



FINGERPLAYS:

Many chapters have finger plays the child can act out. Some of these are combined with song melodies.

SONGS:

Simple melody lines of most of the songs appear in the Appendix, so you can play them on the piano or keyboard if you wish. There are also a number of fun songbooks for children that you might want to use. Two we enjoy are:



Children's Favorites. A Walt Disney Story Tape with 25 familiar songs and words in a book and cassette tape. Available at toy or record stores.

Reader's Digest Children's Songbook, The Reader's Digest Association, Inc., 1985. One of the best collections that I've seen of favorite modern songs, (such as Muppets and Sesame Street tunes, movie songs and cartoons,) nursery rhymes and many old favorites. It comes with an extra book with just the lyrics.

Children love music and sometimes need only a song to get them walking like elephants or "flying" like airplanes. You can also buy tapes and play them on a cassette player. Libraries have tapes which can be checked out. Feel free to get into the act and don't be inhibited. A child loves it when his parents act and play with him!!

PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES:

Next comes activity time. I have provided several projects or activities to choose from for each day. Some require a lot of preparation or more help from the parent than others. Some involve a field trip. Choose what works best for your child or children and for your time. **Remember you don't need to do all the crafts listed—just pick one or maybe two.** For example, Chapter 3, Day 1, My Name and Age, you can choose to make a growth chart, a birthday cake card or name plaques. You don't need to do all three activities. The projects and activities you don't do can be saved for next year.



SNACKS:

In many lessons, I have suggested snacks that are appropriate for what you are studying. Choose one. You may also want to save these treats for the preschooler to share with the whole family at dinner time. You can make appropriate substitutions if salt or sugar intake is a problem. I also have found that just a glass of juice and a cracker is a nice way to end our time together. Some of the snack suggestions take some time, so you might want to do those as your project activity. If you don't have time to make homemade treats, purchased ones are just fine. Pre-made sugar cookie dough is available in the dairy section of your supermarket. Nice round cookies (such as Keebler Pecan Sandies® and many low fat brands now on the market) can be frosted to give to family members in Chapter 4, Families, decorated to look like pumpkins in Chapter 8, Halloween, or frosted pink with candy hearts for Chapter 16, Valentines.



EQUIPMENT:

Here are some items I use a lot. Most of the items are available at an office supply, school supply, fabric, or craft store. Make sure you have your supplies in advance so you aren't hunting for a pair of scissors while your child is waiting impatiently. An empty apple box will hold just about everything listed here except the newsprint paper.

Brown paper bags: both lunch and grocery bags are used for a number of crafts.

Butcher or newsprint paper: available from school supply stores, but many newspapers will let you have the ends of rolls for free. This is good where large sheets of paper are needed to draw the child's outlines or to cover cardboard boxes.

Cardboard: my husband saves the backs of pads of paper from work to serve as a backing for stand-up animals, pictures, etc.

Catalogs and magazines: save some of these as picture resources for families, clothing, homes, etc. *National Geographic Magazine*, although for adults in content, is a good resource for places, animals, and people.

Cheap white paper: you can buy this by the ream at office supply stores.

Coloring books: animals, holidays, etc. as pattern resources.

Construction paper: large 18" x 24" multi-colored pads are invaluable.

Crayons: a box of 16 or 24 is enough for a four year old. The big fat ones are nice for younger children. An elementary school art teacher once told me that you should take off all the paper on the crayons, so the child can use both the small tip and the long sides to cover—it's true!

Dried beans, peas, macaroni, etc.: used in collages, fish and turkey pictures, etc.

Glitter and sequins: these are optional. They are messy, but fun from time to time especially on December activities.

Glue gun: also good for quick drying jobs. Keep the hot gun away from your child.

Glue stick: easy for younger children to handle when gluing.

Glue: a quick-drying "craft" or "tacky" glue is best. It is available at most craft or hobby stores. It is thicker than ordinary glue and dries more quickly.

Ink pad: used for fingerprint animals, vegetable printing, etc. Make sure you use ones with washable ink. Crayola® makes a nice one.

Markers: you'll use these mainly to draw the outlines of pictures that the child will then color. Washable ones are easier to clean up in case of accidents, but they also smudge more easily when using. You will need to make the choice.

Pipe cleaners: these come in handy for insect feelers, Christmas decorations, animals, etc. I like having a lot of white ones that can be colored with a marker or paint, but an assortment of colored ones is nice too.

Scissors: your child should learn to use a good, blunt pair of scissors by the time he is four.

Spray adhesive: nice for gluing large sheets of paper to cardboard or construction paper. Use it in the garage or outside, only by you!

Stickers: available from gift shops, craft or hobby stores, stationery and school supply stores. Good for making theme booklets, decorations for holidays, etc. With the great interest in stickers among kids today, you can find just about anything in a sticker form.

Tempera: this can be purchased already mixed in unbreakable bottles from school supply stores. You can also mix up your own from powder and store it in small baby food jars. This paint can be used for every large painting job, and it's washable.

Tissue paper: available from art supply or craft stores. Tissue paper comes in large packages, but I prefer the small 5" square ones that come with several colors in a package.

Wiggly eyes: these plastic eyes come in various sizes and are available at craft or hobby shops. They are fun to use sometimes instead of traditional paper or cutout eyes.

Other items that will appear are:

- Acrylic paint
- Buttons
- Chalk
- Clothespins (old fashioned), the wooden kind which do not have a spring
- Cording
- Cotton balls
- Dowels
- Drinking straws
- Egg cartons
- Egg shells
- Empty margarine tubs
- Fabric scraps
- Felt
- Florist wire
- Food coloring
- Glycerin
- Ivory soap flakes, for the snow in your winter snow paperweights
- Milk cartons
- Moth flakes (poisonous), remember not the balls or crystals
- Orange juice cans with pull-tab lids
- Paper fasteners
- Paper plates
- Pellon® interfacing: stiff backing available at a fabric store
- Pompoms
- Popsicle® sticks
- Ribbon
- Small and large boxes
- Stapler
- String
- Tape
- Thumbtacks
- Tongue depressors
- Toothpicks
- Tracing paper
- Yarn

Nice to have:

- tape recorder
- globe
- flannel board

RESOURCE MATERIALS

Library:

I can't say enough about how wonderful the library is for your nursery planning and, best of all, it's free. A trip at least once every three weeks will allow you to get the books you need. The librarians will also get to know you and are often willing to help you find things. Many libraries have pictures of many subjects you can check out, as well as appropriate cassette tapes and videos.

Community:

So many people are willing to take the time to share their talents with our children. For example, a friend who is a police officer willingly showed his patrol car, even demonstrating the siren and lights. The firefighters did a lot of extra things for our children, because there were only two of them when we took them for a tour. We also traveled to a nearby farm, where the farmer's wife showed our child her chicken coop, the geese and a cow with her new calf. She even showed our son how she made butter out of cream! We chose a quiet time of the day for our bus ride, and the driver showed what levers he pushed to make the doors open and close and how the token machine worked. Many field trips require a call ahead to set up an appointment—a week's notice is usually fine.

Magazines:

Here are several magazines, which consistently have good material for younger children. Many libraries have magazines in their children's section that can be checked out. If you don't have access to a particular magazine to review before you order a subscription, write and ask them for a sample copy. Many church denominations have publications for children. These have good stories for preschoolers, plus many activities and easy recipes for kids. Check with your minister or rabbi.

Humpty Dumpty

Children's Better Health Institute
P.O. Box 7133
Red Oak, IA 51591-0133

Ladybug - children ages 2–6

P.O. Box 592
Mt. Morris, IL 61054-7824

This publisher also produces *Cricket* magazine for older children. These magazines have well written stories to supplement your materials.

Ranger Rick's Nature Magazine - older children

Your Big Backyard - preschoolers

National Wildlife Federation
1400 Sixteenth St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20078-6420

These magazines have beautiful nature photographs, plus stories and activities. The children love looking at them. If you are looking for visual aid resource material, this magazine is invaluable. I cut them up, placing the appropriate pictures in the different chapter folders. You can also call 1-800-432-6564

Sesame Street Magazine

P.O. Box 2895
Boulder, CO 80321

A colorful magazine for preschoolers using learning concepts and familiar friends from Sesame Street.

Turtle Magazine for Preschool Kids

1100 Waterway Blvd.
Box 567
Indianapolis, IN 46206

This magazine emphasizes health, safety, exercise and good nutrition for preschoolers.

Zoobooks

P.O. Box 85384
San Diego, CA 92186-9708

This magazine covers different animals with many excellent photographs.

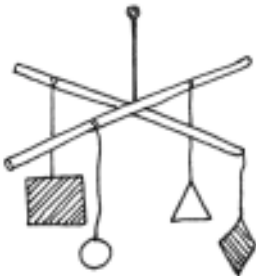
TEACHING AIDS

Mobiles:

I have found that mobiles are a nice way to display many pictures. Mobiles also keep pictures away from younger brothers and sisters. Here are several kinds, ranging from simple to complex. Feel free to use whichever type is the best for you, regardless of the illustration that might appear next to the activity in the book.



An ordinary coat hanger with yarn hanging down. This can be hung from a ceiling light or a curtain rod.



A cross made from cut pieces of clothes hangers, small wooden dowels, or even soda straws. Tie it firmly in the center and hang from a light or attach to the ceiling with a thumb tack.



The most elaborate kind is made from different length hangers or dowels, loosely joined with yarn, string or fishing line. This is the most attractive mobile, but it takes a little time to adjust the ends so they will balance evenly.



Paper Books:

Children love to make these little books. I take several 2" x 4" pieces of paper, fold them in half and staple the middle. On the front, I write the title (such as "My Butterfly Book"). The child can then fill them with appropriate stickers, glue in pictures, or draw his own pictures on the pages.



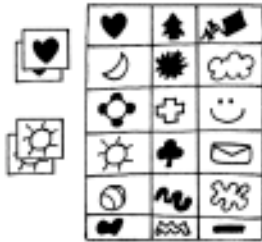
Tissue Pictures:

Another fun way to make pictures of holiday decorations is with 1" squares of colored tissue paper, available at an art supply or craft store. These are wrapped around the bottom of a pencil, dipped in quick-drying glue, and then pressed down on a pre-drawn outline. The steps are repeated until the picture is filled in. The child may also want to make abstract color designs.



Collages:

These are pictures made up of photographs or other kinds of material. For instance, when talking about fruit, the child can glue many pictures of fruit overlapping each other onto construction paper. You can also use dried beans, scraps of fabric, cotton balls—anything that can be glued down will work in a collage (when gluing heavy items, you may find that a glue gun works better because it lays down a thick layer).



Matching Games:

Make small cardboard game boards with squares for the number of different stickers or pictures you have. Place a different sticker in each square. Mount matching stickers on small cardboard squares. The child then must place each small square over the matching square on the board. From time to time in the book, there will be patterns to draw onto the squares.

POST SCRIPT

Here are just a few final hints to help things run more smoothly for you:

- **Relax:** remember that the purpose of this book is not to push your child into doing things he isn't ready for. Let him learn new concepts when he's ready for them. (By the way, the "he" referred to throughout the book can also be changed to "she" depending on the sex of your child!)
- **Be Flexible:** if you're about to study winter and days are balmy and warm, substitute another chapter (unless, of course, your winters are always balmy and warm!) Come back to the winter chapter when the weather changes.
- **Be Patient:** especially the first month, you'll notice your child's attention span will probably be quite short—a five to ten minute lesson and a ten minute craft may be enough. By the end of the year, the child will usually want things to go on all day!
- **Avoid Distractions:** it is terribly frustrating for both your child and you to have phone interruptions, etc. Take the phone off the hook or turn the bell down, so you can't hear it. Soon, others will know when you cannot be disturbed.
- **Be Willing to Share:** include other children in your activities, from time to time, if you are not already doing so. Field trips are a good time to do this. Parties are much more fun when others are included, and there are several parties scheduled for days when we talk about the holidays.
- **Have Fun:** remember that the whole point about your time with your child is to help him love to learn, to do things, to enjoy books, etc. Don't let the mechanics spoil that!

PLANNING PAGE

TREATS	ARTWORK, CRAFT, PROJECTS	FINGERPLAY, RECORD, SONG	BOOKS	INTRO	
					MONDAY
					WEDNESDAY
					FRIDAY

SUBJECT: