

CHAPTER 1

WHY HAVE A HOME NURSERY SCHOOL?

Nearly twenty-six years ago when our oldest son, Matthew, was four, I explored the various nursery schools to which we might send him. The choice was based on the school's reputation, cost, the distance from our home, and other factors. Eventually, we narrowed our choice down to two.

The first was a co-op group that was inexpensive, but the mothers were required to help a certain amount of time each month. With two other pre-schoolers, I would have had to find a baby-sitter for them on those days, which was an impossibility, both from a cost and a time standpoint.

The second school required no time on my part, and, though quite expensive, it seemed the best choice with my time limitations.

After several weeks, however, I found my son becoming increasingly unhappy. He enjoyed school, but he would return home tense and demanding. In addition, he acquired some new words I didn't like. I felt that something was going wrong somewhere.

It was at this time that my husband and I sat down to analyze exactly what our purpose was in sending Matthew to preschool. We knew we wanted him to gain social skills before he started kindergarten and become familiar with a school learning structure. Furthermore, we wanted to help him broaden his horizons and become acquainted with the world in which he lived. As we talked about what we wanted for him, an idea began to form—why couldn't we have our own nursery school just for our children? The more we thought about it, the better the idea sounded.

We talked with several preschool experts in both public and private schools. One of these "experts" said she personally would like to see all families do what we were considering. She felt that the nurturing time between a mother and child during the preschool years was much more important than the associations he could be making with other children.

With this kind of encouragement, I read numerous books and periodicals on the subject. I studied the curriculum used in the child development preschool at a nearby state university. I talked to teachers and visited a number of preschools. Then, on a trial-and-error basis, I developed our program. As our children grew, their needs and situations varied. Nursery school time was always adapted to each child's needs and his/her interest span.

When my youngest child turned five, she was one week behind the cutoff for kindergarten. So that year, I put her into a mother's morning-out program once a week besides *Teach Me Mommy*, so she could begin to associate with other children in a learning situation. Does that surprise you to learn that? No, remember that my philosophy about pre-schooling (and it should be yours too) is that your program should meet the needs of **your** child. That doesn't mean that you send him off to a commercial nursery school at the age of two. A balance should be made which is in the best interests of each of your children. Keep them with you as long as possible!

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How old should a child be to begin home preschool?

Three years old, or two years before the child will begin school, is a good time to start. That doesn't mean you shouldn't spend activity time with younger children. Reading to children should start from the time that they are babies, and there should always be time spent in finger plays, painting, playing with play dough, etc. However, by age three, most children have a long enough attention span to appreciate and enjoy a more structured learning situation.

We live in an area with very few children for my son to play with. Don't I need to send him to a preschool, so he can have interaction with other children before he begins kindergarten?

The answer to this depends upon how old the child is. If he is three or under, I would say, "No!" He can become just as autonomous on his own at this time alone with you than with others. This can be the time to build his skills—listening, drawing, thinking, counting—then he will have the self-confidence he needs when he is with other children more. If he will be starting school in a year, short periods of time (2–3 hours) two or three times a week are a good way to introduce him to situations involving other children and social experiences. You could contact other mothers and have a play group where the children would rotate homes and spend a morning or two a week together.

I am a working parent but would like to spend some quality time with my child every day. How can I best utilize your book?

The units and days are organized so that you can select how many activities you use and how many books you read. The preparation time is minimal. The book is set up to coincide with the school year with lesson plans for three days each week. If you are not going to be able to spend that much time, you may want to eliminate a chapter from time to time, to coordinate your lessons with the seasons. I know a divorced father who has his preschooler on the weekend. He uses *Teach Me Mommy* to have activities planned when he sees his daughter.

I have three preschoolers. How can *Teach Me Mommy* work for me?

I always tried to time our nursery school activities so that the baby was down for a nap. When I have had younger children "attending" too, their attention span has naturally not been as long, so I also tried to provide them with other toys to amuse themselves at the same time.

Won't a child be poorly adjusted in kindergarten if he hasn't attended a commercial preschool program?

Our children have had no problems adjusting to school and leaving home for that time each day. Rather, since they had adjusted to learning situations in our home, they were eager and willing to start kindergarten. Their teachers have frequently commented that they are confident and knowledgeable in so many subjects. They have interaction with other children at church and in our neighborhood, so it has not been hard for them to make the adjustments to being with other children in school.

The results of research conducted internationally supports my own experience. In an excellent review of studies undertaken in 13 countries to determine results of various types and settings of preschool instruction, the first two of five generalizations that emerge are these:

- "There is *widespread evidence* that participating in a *preschool program* promotes cognitive development in the short term and *prepares children to succeed in school*."
- "There is *no strong or consistent evidence* that the *form* of the preschool experience (pedagogic approach, daily schedule, or setting [i.e., home preschool vs. commercial preschool]) influences long-term outcomes for children."

The reviewer goes on to cite a massive study in the U.K.: "Comparisons among children who attended play groups, private or public nursery schools, or no preschool at all showed that *experience in any preschool* (including play groups) contributed to cognitive development and school achievement throughout the period studied. Disadvantaged children gained slightly more from attending preschool

than did more advantaged children. Contrary to the researchers' expectations, preschool experience did not affect aspects of children's socioemotional development, such as self-concept, skill in getting along with other children, or their ability to apply themselves to schoolwork."

The researchers concluded that "*preschool experience per se had more influence on children's subsequent development than the type of preschool attended. 'Provided the child receives proper care, has interesting activities and other children to play with (which are common elements in the majority of preschool institutions), the actual type of preschool experience matters very little.'*" (Italics mine. Source: *Early Childhood Programs in Other Nations: Goals and Outcomes*, Sarane Spence Boocock Ph.D., professor of sociology at the Graduate School of Education at Rutgers University, 1995. Available online at: http://www.futureofchildren.org/lto/05_lto.htm)

Of course, every child is different and so I say again, **meet your child's needs.**

I don't have a lot of free time in my day. Can I really do preschool teaching successfully?

If you're like most (68%) of the mothers in America with children at home, you are in the labor force. There is a definite amount of time involved in preparation and organization for each day's study. Hopefully, this manual will make it easier for you. Even if one doesn't have to work, we all spend time each week doing housework, cooking meals, preparing for church, and volunteering in the community, etc. Isn't time spent with our children well worth it? After the initial preparation and material gathering, the work is minimal.

I run a preschool. Your ideas are excellent. Can I adapt them?

Certainly. Sometimes the phraseology needs to be changed. In units such as Chapter 4, Day 1, Who is in My Family?, you may want to have each child bring a picture of his/her whole family to share. You can put the pictures on a bulletin board for the week. If you have children of other nationalities or ethnic groups, their parents could be good resources for the December holiday chapter.

I have found that I need to go back to work. How can I choose a nursery school or day care center for my preschooler?

That is a very important but sometimes difficult question to answer. Here are some criteria you might want to use:

- Ask other mothers about different schools and what they liked or disliked about each. Of course, everyone's opinion is different, but it should help you narrow down the field.
- Talk to the school director and determine his or her philosophy about preschool education. Some may put a lot of emphasis on play, while others may emphasize intense learning. Only you can determine what approach you want to see used with your child.
- Visit the school and sit in a classroom to get a feel for the attitudes of the teachers. This will tell you a lot about the atmosphere there. Plan on spending at least 30 minutes.
- Check on the ratio of children to teacher. Eight or ten to one is ideal. If there is a large class with only one teacher and no assistants, you can be sure that there will be neglect for many (even though the teacher wants to meet everyone's needs).
- Determine what kind of training and background the teacher has had. I was surprised to learn that many states have no requirements as to training and teacher competency when giving preschool licenses. A teacher doesn't need to have a college degree, but they should have had some education in preschool or young child instruction.

You still should try to have your own nurturing time with your child, however, whether he is in someone else's nursery school or not. The activities in this book will help you do this with a minimum of time and preparation.

Just out of curiosity, how did *your* children do in school, now that they are nearly all grown?

I have just one child at home now—Brittany, a senior in high school—so I think I can look back with some perspective. From the outset, my primary objective was not to have my children be accelerated beyond their peers. Instead, my primary objective was to *nurture* them by *spending time* with them and *strengthening the natural bonds* between mother and child. I hesitate to respond to your question for fear of appearing immodest, but I believe that ***Teach Me Mommy*** and the time I was able to spend with my children in this program contributed significantly to the fact that:

- all seven of our children were invited to be in gifted programs in their schools
- two were National Merit Finalists and two were Semi-Finalists
- three were presidents of the National Honor Society (an academic honors society for high school students)
- four were school newspaper editors
- six graduated, or will graduate, in the top 5% of their class
- two were finalists in Governor's Honors for the State of Georgia
- two were STAR students (highest SAT scores)
- they have so far earned nearly \$100,000 in tax-free scholarships for college
- all benefited from taking Advanced-Placement courses which gave them college credit and saved them and us thousands more by testing out of many lower-level college courses

The last two points are important, because there was no way we could get all these kids through college on my husband's income alone! The older children are currently in graduate programs (medical and dental schools) or are married or both and the younger ones (except Brittany) are undergraduates or married or both. Again, academic achievement was not our primary objective. It was an unplanned yet happy result of the time we spent together.

Lest you be concerned that these children excelled only academically, we have had five Eagle Scouts, one Atlanta Football Club Scholar Athlete, three All-State Orchestra or All-State Chorus finalists, six student body or senior class officers and one Miss Teen Of Georgia, as well. There are many other things that go into raising successful children besides preschool. I believe, however, that the foundation laid in our ***Teach Me Mommy*** program gave them a significant head start. We feel extremely fortunate and grateful that each one continues to do well.

IN CONCLUSION

As I consider our home nursery program that began so many years ago, I have reached the following conclusions:

- It was a wonderful opportunity for me to spend quality, nurturing time with my children. I don't know a child who wouldn't rather spend time with his own mother playing, reading, and learning.
- When our baby was awake and our two-year old was restless, the ratio of teacher to child was still only one to three, which is much better than in any commercial nursery program.
- Nursery school has been a good opportunity for my older children to help prepare things for the little ones to use. They helped mount pictures and clip stories. Many times, the one in kindergarten told a story he had read or something he had done in school that I could use. On days when my older children were out of school because of snow, they have even been the teachers.
- I also have been able to control the material used to teach my children. My purpose in having a home nursery school was not to try to teach our children to read or count at a young age, but for them to look to their parents as a source of knowledge and understanding. I didn't pressure our children to develop more quickly than they were ready. However, I did teach our children skills such as the handling of scissors and the use of crayons, glue, and books. I also tried to help them have confidence in their ability to learn things and to understand what others will be teaching them in the future.

The most important thing is that you spend time with your children! The time that a parent has with a child before he starts school is so short. It is important that children have the loving attention of their parents as much as possible.

Once, after one of our children visited an excellent nursery school in a former community, he came home saying that he liked our nursery school better, because he could be with Mommy. That assured me that all the effort was worth it. There are few joys equal to teaching your children within the walls of your own home!

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 LUCK 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.

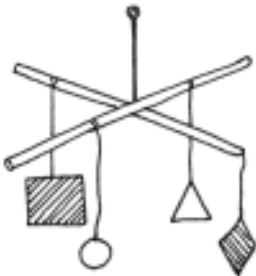
TEACHING AIDS

Mobiles:

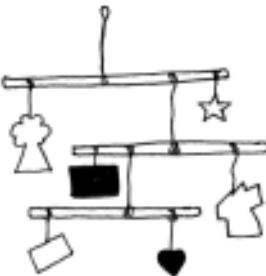
I have found that mobiles are a nice way to display many pictures. Mobiles also keep pictures away from younger brothers and sisters. Here are several kinds, ranging from simple to complex. Feel free to use whichever type is the best for you, regardless of the illustration that might appear next to the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



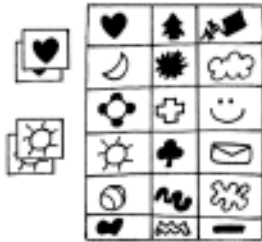
Tissue Pictures:

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:

CHAPTER 3
ME AND MYSELF



DAY 1	MY NAME AND AGE
DAY 2	PARTS OF MY BODY
DAY 3	THINGS MY BODY CAN DO
DAY 4	FACIAL EXPRESSIONS
DAY 5	MY SENSES
DAY 6	CLOTHES WE WEAR

In this chapter the child will learn his name and age and will have the opportunity to explore the many things that he can do with his body, both in play and in everyday experiences.

DAY 1 MY NAME AND AGE

MATERIALS

Tape recorder and tape
Plain paper, glue

Snack: pretzels or cookie
dough

PROJECTS

Growth Chart: commercial or homemade (48" x 5" strip of newsprint, paper measuring tape, glue) growth chart

Birthday Cake: pattern for each child cut from white construction paper, paper candles, crayons

Name Plates: white construction paper, crayons

In advance, make a tape recording reciting lots of different children's names. When your child hears his name, he should stand up. Then have the recording give directions of something to do after hearing his name: "John, march around," or "Jennifer, jump up and down," etc. Have him follow the directions.



If he isn't already doing it, now is a good time for him to learn to write his name. Start by writing the child's name in large letters, both upper and lower case. Have him trace the letters several times. Then have him practice writing each letter individually. (It's more fun if the child can use a different colored crayon for each letter.)

Talk about what "birthday" means, and how we measure his age. Ask him, "How old are you?" and help him respond.

Show pictures of the child at different ages. Kids always love to talk about themselves as babies.

Help the child tell a story about himself: "Once upon a time, there was a little boy/girl named _____, who was _____ years old," etc. Help him include facts about himself, and the things he like to do. Sometimes, it helps for you to tell a story about the child first, so he understands the idea.



A Birthday for Frances, Russell Hoban
Big Beds, Little Beds, Dorothy Z. Seymour
Big, Bigger, Biggest, Edward Dolch
I'm Glad to be Me, P.K. Hallinan
The Birthday Party, Ruth Krauss

Happy Birthday Song



Happy Birthday to you.
Happy Birthday to you.
Happy Birthday dear _____ (Say child's name)
Happy Birthday to you.

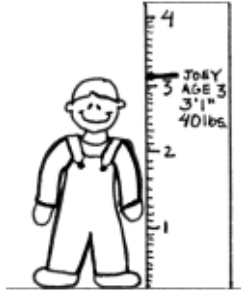
This might be a fun time to play marching music. Ask the child to hop, skip, or jump to the music, according to his name and age—a three-year-old, a four-year-old, anyone named Melissa, etc. Of course, if you just have one child doing this, he will think it's funny having you name other names besides his own.

A Birthday Cake



Today is (child's name) birthday.
Let's make her (or him) a cake.
We'll stir it and mix it
And then it can bake.
Here's our cake, it looks so nice.
The frosting we'll put on
And sing a birthday song

(show stirring)
(place cake in oven)
(make circle with arms)
(pretend to frost cake)
(pretend to blow out candles)



Growth Chart

Measure the child on a growth chart on the wall. This can be ready-made or homemade. To make one, cut a strip of newsprint, 48" by 5" and glue a paper measuring tape along one side. This can be decorated as desired. Weigh him, too. Write this information by his height and mark the date. This is a fun activity to repeat a number of times throughout the year.



Birthday Cake Card

Make a birthday cake card for the child out of white construction paper. Put name, age, height, and weight on it. Have the child color the candles (put the correct number for each age), cut each out separately and glue on the cake. Display this in the child's room.



Name Plates

Let the child color in the letters of his name on a piece of white paper. Then he can place the sign by different things in the house that are his. (You can make a number of these, and they can be taped to different belongings for a day or two.)



Help the child make his initials out of pretzel or cookie dough (recipes in Appendix). He can make some for the whole family if you would like.

DAY 2

PARTS OF MY BODY

MATERIALS

Doll
Pictures of body parts (drawn or cut from magazine)
Flannel board or large piece of cardboard to display pictures
Magnifying glass

PROJECTS

Fingerprint Art: blank sheets of paper, ink pad
Paper Child Puzzle: large sheets of butcher paper, crayons,
Snack: gingerbread men cookies

Begin by describing the child's physical characteristics and letting the child guess who it is. Talk about the color of his eyes and hair, height, clothes, etc. If you have several children, this can be repeated with all of them.



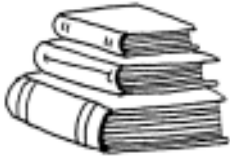
Ask what a "body" is. Help him understand that it's everything from head to toe.

Put pictures of parts of the body on a board or flannel board. Ask him what they are.

Show him a doll. Have him name each part of your body as you point to it. Then have him do so on his own body. This is easier for him the first time if you go from head to toe: head, hair, eyes, nose, ears, mouth, chin, neck, shoulders, etc. Then repeat, calling out different parts at random.

Draw a stick figure, leaving off the head. Ask what is missing. Repeat several times, leaving off different parts.

Have him look at his fingerprints through a magnifying glass. Talk about the fact that everyone has different fingerprints which make him special.



About Me, Jane Moncure
The Foot Book, Dr. Seuss
The Shape of Me and Other Stuff, Dr. Seuss
The Very Little Boy, Phyllis Krasilovsky
Tiny Toes, Donna Jakob



Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes (music in Appendix)

(Point to each body part as you sing about it)
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes.
Knees and toes, knees, and toes.
Head, shoulders, knees, and toes,
Eyes, ears, mouth, and nose.



Pointing

Point to your head. Now point to your nose.
Point to your knees. Then point to your toes.
Point to your leg. Now point to your eye.
Point to your elbow and then to your thigh.

Harry and Chester

Hello Harry	(point to hair)
How's Chester	(point to chest)
He just got back from the front.	(point to back, then front)
His feet were needed in the Army.	(point to feet, knees, then arms)
Hip, hip, hooray!!	(hands on hips then raise in air)

Your Hands



Open, shut him; open, shut him;
Give a little clap.
Open, shut him; open, shut him;
Lay him in your lap.
Creep him, creep him way up to your chin!
Open wide your mouth but do not let him in.

Me

Ten little fingers	(Hold up fingers)
Ten little toes	(Point to toes)
Two little ears	(Point to ears)
And one little nose.	(Point to nose)
Two little eyes	(Point to eyes)
One mouth	(Point to mouth)
And a chin	(Point to chin)
It's a big secret, But I'll let you in.	
It's me!!	(Point to whole body)



Fingerprint Art

Use an ink pad, including different colors of ink if desired, and blank sheets of paper. To help the child avoid getting the ink from his fingers all over, you can moisten a cotton ball with nail polish remover, so his fingers can be wiped off immediately after stamping the pad. Let him make shapes or designs. You can draw in features as shown, creating an ant, turtle, owl, mouse, bee, frog, etc.



Child Puzzle

Draw around the child on butcher paper. Have the child color in his face and the clothes he is wearing. Display it for the rest of the chapter. Or cut into a puzzle and let the child put it together.



Make gingerbread men cookies and decorate them.

DAY 3

THINGS MY BODY CAN DO

MATERIALS

Pictures of people cut from magazines, especially children, doing things
Snack: taffy, cookies, vegetables

PROJECTS

Body Collage: white paper, pictures of body parts, glue, white paper, pictures of people doing things, or drawn stick figures
Daily Activity Booklet: 4" x 11" strip of paper, marker, crayons
Mirror: Cardboard, aluminum foil or dime store mirror, glue, pen

Show pictures from magazines or books of a child "doing things." Ask what the child is doing in each picture. Ask what part or parts of his body he is using for each activity.



Have the child do movements with his body. Then ask him what part of his body he is using. For instance: "Jump up and down. Now what are you using?" (Your legs). Try having the child can swing his arms, wiggle his fingers, and nod his head.

Play "What do we do with it?" We hear with our _____; we see with our _____; we chew with our _____; etc. Repeat using incorrect statements, for example, "We smell with our feet," and let him correct you.

Ask him to name the things he can do by himself, such as wash his hands, brush his teeth, pick up toys, etc.

Help him notice the parts of our bodies that help us move—our joints (elbows, knees, wrists, knuckles, ankles, shoulders).



Hop, Skip and Jump Book, Jack Kent
I Can, Can You?, Ada Litchfield
Is It Hard, Is It Easy, Mary M. Greer
The Run, Jump, Bump Book, Robert Brooks
The Running, Jumping Throwing, Sliding, Racing, Climbing Book, Oscar Weigle

Mirror



Make a "mirror" out of cardboard for the child. The "face" can be made by gluing in aluminum foil or having the child draw his own face. On the handle of the mirror you can write his name and age, or the list of things the child told you earlier that he can do by himself. This little poem can be put on the other side:

"When I look in the mirror, what do I see?
A smiling face looking back at me.
That face looks so nice,
Now who could it be?
Well, what do you know?
That face must be me!"



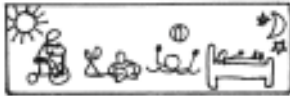
Body Collage

Make a collage of body-part pictures cut from magazines. This can include eyes, noses, ears, mouths, arms, hands, legs, etc.



Body Booklet

Have the child make a little booklet with pictures of people (preferably boys and girls) running, throwing, sleeping, etc. He can use the pictures from the introduction or you can draw stick figures that they can color. (See Chapter 2, Teaching Aids, for basic booklet instructions.)



Daily Activity Booklet

Cut a strip of paper, 4" x 11". Make a small chart with the sun on one side and the moon on the other. Draw little stick figures of what the child tells you they do during the day. Have the child color it.

Have the child make taffy (recipe in Appendix) and talk about using his arms and hands to pull and stretch it.



Make cookies and let the child roll out the dough. Talk about how he uses his hands and arms to do this.

Make a vegetable tray. The child can help peel the carrots and cucumbers if you hold his hand as he holds a vegetable peeler. If you make a dip to use, he can shake it or stir it for you.

DAY 4

FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

MATERIALS

Mirror
Pictures cut from magazines
or drawn of different objects
Tape recorder (optional)

PROJECTS

Happy-Frowny Face: paper plate, marker
Face Game: cardboard, marker, pencil
Snack: sugar cookie faces

Have the child look in a mirror. (Give him a hand mirror or have him stand in front of a bathroom mirror or some other large mirror.) Ask him to look surprised, angry, happy, sad, etc.



Still in front of the mirror, show pictures of different things. Let the child show on his face how each picture makes him feel, such as a birthday cake, a present, a rainy day, or a dog.

Make a list drawing a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other. Ask the child to think of things that make him happy. Then think of things that make him sad.

Use a tape recorder to play back crying, yelling, laughing, giggling, and other vocal sounds. Have the child name the emotion that he hears. Then you name an emotion, and record the child making that sound. Let him hear himself. (If you don't have a tape recorder, you can make the sounds at first, and then let the child make them.)



Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day,
Judith Viorst
Where the Wild Things Are, Maurice Sendak

If You're Happy and You Know It



If you're happy and you know it, make a grin,
If you're happy and you know it, make a grin,
If you're happy and you know it,
Then your face will surely show it,
If you're happy and you know it make a grin.

(Repeat with other verses:
"If you're sad and you know it, make a frown."
"If you're sleepy and you know it, make a yawn."
"If you're angry and you know it, make a scowl," etc.)



Happy-Frowny Face

Make a happy-frowny face (see illustration) for the child on a paper plate. Cut out eye holes in the middle. Let the child dance around, changing the face and his actions accordingly.



Face Game

Have the child make and color a “Face Game” to play. Cut out a hexagon and have the child color in six faces. Insert a short pencil through the center. Spin it like a top and take turns imitating the facial expression shown when it stops.



Bake already prepared, round sugar cookies (recipe in Appendix) or use refrigerator cookie dough available in the dairy section of your grocery store. Let the child frost them and put different faces on them with cinnamon candies or raisins.

Spread peanut butter on a cracker. Add a face with raisins, peanuts, etc.

DAY 5

OUR SENSES

MATERIALS

Boxes or bags
Pictures of ear, nose, mouth,
hand, eye
Tape recording of different sounds

PROJECTS

Face Plate: paper plate, glue, pictures of facial features
Senses Game: index cards, marker or crayon

Show picture of ears, a nose, a mouth, hands, and eyes. Let the child talk about what each can do.

Mark little bags or boxes with the names of the various senses. Fill each with some of the items listed or add your own. These should be prepared ahead of time for each sense. Blindfold the child (except for the “eyes” bag), and let him guess what is in each bag. If he doesn’t want to be blindfolded, he can just close his eyes.



Hearing: Rattle, bell, watch or clock, whistle, aluminum foil to crush or rattle, radio, silverware, seeds or beans in a box to shake.

Smell: Orange, banana, a match after the flame has been blown out, ammonia, perfume, flower, pine (candle or scent).

Taste: Apple, peppermint candy, cracker, peanut butter, jelly, licorice, lemon, pickle, salt, sugar, ice cream or something cold, cocoa or something warm.

Touch: Piece of cloth, round rubber ball, sand, sticky tape, ice, sandpaper, glass surface (mirror or bottle), shell, broom straw, feather, piece of fruit (orange, apple, banana).

Sight: Picture of a rainbow or butterfly, things to view through a piece of colored glass or colored cellophane, a magnifying glass to look at his skin, kaleidoscope.

Tape record sounds and see if he can name what he hears: running water, emptying ice from an ice tray, opening the refrigerator door, the door bell, etc.



Do You Know What I Know?, Helen Borton
Five Senses, Tasha Tudor
Hailstones and Halibut Bones, Mary O’Neill
If You Listen, Charlotte Zolotow
Listen! Listen!, Ylla

My Senses



(Point to each part as you talk about it).

My tongue can taste.

My eyes can see.

My nose can smell wherever I may be.

My fingers touch.

My ears can hear.

My body lets me know about whatever may appear.



Face Plate

Have the child glue pictures cut from magazines of eyes, ears, nose, and mouth onto a round circle face or paper plate putting them where they belong.



Senses Game

Cut plain index cards in half and draw eyes, ears, noses, mouths and hands on different cards. Have the child color them. He can then play a game by drawing a card and naming something that he can see, smell, etc., with that sense.



Let the child eat some of the food that he has previously tasted or smelled.

DAY 6 CLOTHES WE WEAR

MATERIALS

Pictures of different articles of clothing
Clothing in garbage bag or box

PROJECTS

Paper Dolls: construction paper, crayons, glue, fabric
Snack: cookies



Show pictures of different articles of clothing. Have the child name each one. (Catalogs are great sources for these.)

Pull clothing out of a large bag and let the child put each piece on. This is especially fun if you put in Daddy's big boots, a costume clown hat, Mommy's gloves or other articles of clothing he wouldn't ordinarily wear.

Talk about the different kinds of clothes we wear depending on the weather—jackets, snow pants, hats, and gloves in winter; shorts and swimsuits in summer, etc. Talk about what kinds of clothes we wear at different times of the day—pajamas or nightgowns at night, play clothes for outside with friends, special clothes for church or parties.

Talk about each part of the body and what we wear on it: head—hat or ear muffs: hands—gloves or mittens: body—shirt or blouse, sweater or jacket; legs—pants or skirt; feet—socks, shoes, slippers, or boots. The child can make-believe he is putting on the different articles of clothing as you talk about them.



Aaron's Shirt, Deborah Gould
All Dressed Up & Nowhere to Go, Daniel M. Joseph
Blue Hat, Green Hat, Sandra Boynton
Clothes, Debbie Baily
Clothes, Fiona Progoff
Clothes, Matthew Price
Elizabeth Jane Gets Dressed, Anne Tyrell
How Do I Put It On?, Shigeo Watanabe
Let's Get Dressed, Harriet Ziefert
New Shoes, Sam Vaughn
Oh Lewis, Eve Rice
Purple Sock, Pink Sock, Jonathan Allen
What Will I Wear?, Lyn Calder



Paper Dolls

Make paper dolls and have the child color in the clothes or glue clothes cut from fabric onto them.



Make cookies, cutting the dough into shapes of boots, hats, coats, pants, etc.