

## **Annotated Bibliography: Research for Ready! Set! School! Activities**

### **Prepared for Ready! Set! School!, A Project of the Utah Family Center/Utah PTA**

#### **Friends & Family (Social/Emotional)**

##### **I Know Me**

Brown, J. D. (1998). *The self*. New York: McGraw Hill.

Children's self concept becomes a psychological construct in which the terms of "me" and "not me" are defined.

Charlesworth, R. (2000). *Understanding child development: For adults who work with young children* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

No matter what the culture, children develop a concept about themselves from the feedback they receive from people and objects in their environment.

Kostelnik, M. J., Whiren, A. P., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L. C., & Gregory, K. (2002). *Guiding children's social development: Theory to practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

As children's sense of self emerges, interactions with people and objects in their environment affect their self-awareness, self-concept, and self-esteem.

Phinney, J. S., & Rotheram, M. J. (1987). *Children's ethnic socialization: Pluralism and development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Children acquire the behaviors, perceptions, values, and attitudes of those around them and come to see themselves as members of such groups.

Pipp\_Siegel, S., & Foltz, C. (1997). Toddler's acquisition of self-other knowledge: Ecological and interpersonal aspect of self and other. *Child Development*, 68, 69-79.

By the age of two, toddlers begin to distinguish themselves from others which is important in developing a sense of autonomy.

Yamamoto, K. (1972). *The child and his image*. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Through social interactions and play, young children develop a picture of themselves (self concept).

##### **I'm a VIP**

Katz, L., Tello, J. (2003). "I love me!" How to nurture self-esteem. *Scholastic Parent & Child*, 10(6), 82-85.

Parents need to acknowledge their children's likes and dislikes and help them accept themselves, their families and their culture. Children will internalize this sense of awareness and acceptance and begin to feel confident in who they are.

Kostelnik, M. J., Whiren, A. P., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L. C., & Gregory, K. (2002). *Guiding children's social development: Theory to practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

From ages 3-5 years, children's self-concept includes attitudes of their likes and dislikes about objects and activities.

Markey, U., Markey, D. J., Quant, B., Santelli, B., & Turnbull, A. (2002). Operation positive change: PBS [positive behavior support] in an urban context. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 4(4), 218-230.

A parent training program (Operation Positive Change) for parents dealing with problem behavior of their children teaches parents the importance of acknowledging their children's likes and dislikes.

Poole, C. (2001). First likes. *Scholastic Parent & child*, 9(3), 39.

From infancy, children likes and dislikes. Acknowledging and responding to this set of preferences makes children feel loved and secure. Toddlers gains autonomy as they demand that their preferences be accepted. Limits and a structured environment with interesting choices help toddlers gain ability and confidence to make good decisions.

### **My Feelings**

Boone, R. T., & Cunningham, J. G. (1998). Children's decoding of emotion in expressive body movement: The development of cue attunement. *Developmental Psychology*, 34, 1007-1016.

A young child depends on the expressive cues and actions of another person to determine the emotion rather than on the context in which the action is taking place.

Broadwater, K. (2004). The arts bring solace. *School Arts*, 104(1), 44.

The arts helped comfort children and counter the effects of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks by giving them an avenue to express their deep emotions and shock.

Charlesworth, R. (2000). *Understanding child development: For adults who work with young children* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

One of the most difficult things for young children is to learn how to express their aggression in appropriate ways. The adult must not be overly aggressive or permissive, nor restrict the expression of emotions. A delicate balance must be found which allows expression of emotions within socially acceptable boundaries.

Hoffner, C., & Badzinski, D. M. (1989). Children's integration of facial and situational cues to emotion. *Child Development, 60*, 411-422.

Children initially rely of facial expressions to tell them how someone else is feeling.

Kostelnik, M. J., Whiren, A. P., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L. C., & Gregory, K. (2002). *Guiding children's social development: Theory to practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

"Words are a satisfying, more precise way to express emotions and frequently are an appropriate substitute for physical action" (p. 133).

Oring, S. A. (2000). A call for visual literacy. *School Arts, 99*(8), 58-59.

Visual communication offers young children a constructive way to express their emotions.

Peake, T. H., & Egli, D. (1982). The language of feelings. *Journal of Contemporary Psychotherapy, 13*(2), 162-174.

Children need to describe and label their emotions when the emotional experience is actually occurring. Doing this helps children learn that their emotional state is describable (internal cues) and that this emotion has a context (external cues).

Shapiro, L. (1997). *How to raise a child with a high EQ* [emotional intelligence]. New York: Harper Collins Publishers.

Young children's choices of inappropriate actions to express their feelings may be due to poor modeling, lack of know-how, or immature understandings of their own emotions.

### **Play Time**

Axline, V. (1964). *Dibs: In search of self*. New York: Ballantine.

Play therapy helped a young boy solve his emotional problems.

Brown, S. (1994). Animals at play. *National Geographic, 186*(6), 2-35.

The profiles of 90% of 26 convicted murderers in Texas showed either the absence of play as children or abnormal play like bullying, sadism, extreme teasing, or cruelty to animals.

Crain-Thoreson, C., Dahlin, M. P., & Powell, T. A. (2001). Parent-child interaction in three conversational contexts: Variations in style and strategy. *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 92*, 23-37.

In a longitudinal study of language exchange between parents and young children in three different conversational contexts, book reading, remembering a family outing, and toy play, it was determined that the play context better allowed the parents to “draw out their children’s language and stretch their children’s linguistic abilities” (p. 3) than did the other two contexts.

Dansky, J., & Silverman, I. (1973). Effects of play on associative fluency. *Developmental Psychology, 9*, 38-43.

This study showed a causal link between play and creativity.

De Temple, J. M., & Beals, D. E. (1991). Family talk: Sources of support for the development of decontextualized language skills. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education, 6*(1), 11-19.

When comparing contextualized (used to control children’s behavior) and decontextualized (rich in narrative, description, explanation, and interpretation) language in the specific child-mother activities of book reading, toy play, elicited reports, and mealtimes, it was found that toy play with pretend narratives was richest in decontextualized talk.

El’Konin, D. (1978). *The psychology of play*. Moscow: Pedagogica.

Scientists in Russia found children had greater self-regulation, concentration, and attention during play than during other activities.

Garvey, E. (1974). Some properties of social play. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly, 20*, 163-180.

Through group play, young children learn to examine the nature of rules and rule making such as turn alteration and cooperation.

Istomina, Z. (1977). The development of voluntary memory in preschool-age children. In M. Cole (Ed.), *Soviet developmental psychology*. White Plains, NY: Sharpe. (Original work published in 1948).

In a play condition, children could remember a list of grocery items better than in a testing condition.

Johnson, J. E., Christie, J. F., & Wardle, F. (2005). *Play, development, and early education*.

Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Relates theory and research of play to educational practice and policy.

Johnson, J. E., Christie, J. F., & Yawkey, T. D. (1999). *Play and early childhood development*. New York: Addison Esley Longman, Inc.

Combines theory and research on children's play, focusing primarily on children 3-6 years old.

Johnson, J., Ershler, J., & Lawton, J. (1982). Intellective correlates of preschoolers' spontaneous play. *Journal of General Psychology*, 106, 115-122.

This correlational study revealed a positive relationship between IQ scores and two types of play: sociodramatic play and constructive play.

Saltz, E., Dixon, D., & Johnson, J. (1977). Training disadvantaged preschoolers on various fantasy activities: Effects on cognitive functioning and impulse control. *Child Development*, 48, 367-380.

Preschool children from impoverished backgrounds who were engaged in socio-dramatic play and adult-facilitated role enactment of fairy tales had significantly higher scores on sequencing and comprehension tests when compared to youngsters in a control-group. Play also resulted in gains in IQ scores.

### **Ready, Set, Go!**

Fiese, B. et al. (2003). Doing chores actually improves kids' health. *Natural Health*, 33(4), 1-3.

Research provides evidence that family routines and rituals benefit a child's physical and mental well-being, and help strengthen family relationships.

Hester, P. (2002). What teachers can do to prevent behavior problems in school? *Preventing School Failure*, 47(1), 33-38.

Daily routines for young school children helped ameliorate classroom behavior problems.

Kerr, M. M., & Nelson, C. M. (2002). *Strategies for managing behavior problems in the classroom* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Young children need a consistent and structured environment in order to develop stability and predictability over time.

Kostelnik, M. J., Whiren, A. P., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L. C., & Gregory, K. (2002). *Guiding children's social development: Theory to practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

Children as young as two- and three- years old have the capability of making short-term and simple plans. If given experience in planning, children can plan and implement increasingly complex tasks for longer periods of time.

Larson, S. (2005). Teaching for transformation in today's challenging youth. *Reclaiming Children and Youth, 14*(1), 27-31.

Responsibility is fostered in young children as they learn to take charge of their own thoughts, feelings, actions, and resulting consequences.

### **Yours and Mine**

Kostelnik, M. J., Whiren, A. P., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L. C., & Gregory, K. (2002). *Guiding children's social development: Theory to practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

Give children sample scripts to practice asking for permission to use something, how to negotiate for turn taking, and also how to express their desire to finish using something. Do not insist that children share everything all of the time. Prompt empathetic feelings by pointing out that others are waiting and would like to have a turn also. Give specific praise when sharing occurs.

Miller, S. A. (2000). Learning to share. *Early Childhood Today, 15*(2), 32-34.

As young children learn that sharing is temporary loaning, they take pleasure in sharing with each other. They are not happy when toys are taken without permission, nor when toys are not returned to them. Four-year-olds enjoy experimenting with making deals and trades and turn-taking.

Sawyer, L. M., Luiselli, J. K., Ricciardi, J. N., & Gower, J. L. (2005). Teaching a child with autism to share among peers in an integrated preschool classroom: Acquisition, maintenance, and social validation. *Education & Treatment of Children, 28*(1), 1-10.

Results of a study of a 4-year-old boy with autism showed that priming with scripted behaviors before a play session, and in-session prompting and reinforcement improved sharing behaviors.

### **Look, I'm done!**

Dickinson, A. (2000). What, me mulch? *Time, 156*(10), 82.

Quoting from research done by Ellen Galinsky, director of the Families and Work Institute in New York City, Dickinson notes that children who do work at home have a strong work ethic for life. Children need to be involved in the workings of the household with well-defined chores. Mastering these chores can boost competence and confidence. Galinsky also noted that excessive praise is condescending and counterproductive. If the chore is not well done, go back and reinstruct.

Fry, P. S., & Preston, J. (1980). Children's delay of gratification as a function of task contingency and the reward-related contents of task. *The Journal of Social Psychology, 111*(2), 281-291.

Delay of gratification is maximal when task performance is a requirement and when the task is related to the promised reward.

### **What? Why? Where?**

Dunst, c. J., Bruder, M. B., Trivetter, C. M., Hamby, D., Raab, M., & McLean, M. (2001).

Characteristics and consequences of everyday natural learning opportunities. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education, 21*, 68-92.

Child functioning is enhanced when children are given frequent and varied opportunities to participate in activity settings and when parents respond to their child's initiations within the activity settings.

Hutt, C. (1971). Exploation and play in children. In R. Herron & B. Sutton-Smith (Eds.), *Child's play*. New York: John Wiley & sons, Inc.

Exploratory behavior of novel objects precedes true play behavior.

Power, T. (2000). *Play and exploration in children and animals*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Children need time and opportunity for exploratory play which consists of object procuring, manual investigation, and question asking.

Kostelnik, M. J., Whiren, A. P., Soderman, A. K., Stein, L. C., & Gregory, K. (2002). *Guiding children's social development: Theory to practice* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

Investigative exploration is most often the first step in learning how to solve problems.

### **A Place for Me**

Black, R. (March 1999). Indoor paradise. *Family Life, 72-77*.

Indoor play is important in the child's social, psychological, and intellectual development, and also teaches a child how to entertain him/herself. The best way to help a child in this development is to organize a personal play space for the child.

Shepard, A. (2005). Make it better for young ones. *Times Educational Supplement*, Issue 4639, 24-25.

Teachers in Great Britain eased young children's stress by providing a learning space that children would recognize and be comfortable in.

Wilford, S. (2005). Sharing the power of play with parents. *Early Childhood Today*, 20(3), 18-19.

Parents should be encouraged to designate and equip a space in the home where their child can play alone or with a friend.

## **Words & Language (Language and Literacy)**

### **The A, B, C's**

Bowman, M., & Treiman, R. (2004). Stepping stones to reading. *Theory into practice*, 43(4), 295-303.

When pre-readers possess knowledge of the names of the alphabet letters, they can form systematic connections between print and speech.

Carroll, J. M. (2004). Letter knowledge precipitates phoneme segmentation, but not phoneme invariance. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 27(3), 212-225.

Two studies of preschoolers, one longitudinal and one a letter training intervention study showed that letter knowledge was related to the development of phoneme awareness which is a strong predictor of reading achievement.

Catts, H. W., Fey, M. E., Zhang, X., & Tomblin, J. B. (2001). Estimating the risk of future reading difficulties in kindergarten children: A research-based model and its clinical implementation. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 32(1), 38-50.

This longitudinal study determined that a strong predictor of second grade reading achievement is letter identification in kindergarten.

Dombey, H., & Moustafa, M. (1998). *Whole to part phonics: How children learn to read and spell*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Reading environmental print or "logographic reading" is the first stage of reading development.

Griffith, P. L., Klesius, J. P. (1992). *Kindergarten children's developing understanding of the alphabetic principle*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the National Reading Conference, San Antonio, TX. (ERIC Document reproduction Service No. ED353571)

A study of 79 kindergartners found that phonemic awareness rarely developed in the absence of letter name knowledge.

Hammill, D. D. (2004). What we know about correlates of reading. *Exceptional Children*, 70(4), 453-468.



The combined results of three meta-analyses which examined over 450 studies showed that among the best predictors of emergent reading ability are letter and alphabet knowledge.

Haney, M., & Hill, J. (2004). Relationships between parent-teaching activities and emergent literacy in preschool children. *Early Child Development and Care, 174*(3), 215-228.

This study reports a statistical significance between parents explicitly teaching their preschoolers the letter names and high scores on most emergent literacy tasks.

Meyer, L. A. et al. (1990). *The development of reading ability in kindergarten*. Urbana, IL.

(Technical Report No. 515). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED324649)

Results from this study showed that children's performances in reading at the end of kindergarten were directly affected by their knowledge of letters when they enter kindergarten, and their home reading activities.

Molfese, V. J., Beswick, J., Molnar, A., & Jacobi-Vessels, J. (2006). Alphabetic skills in preschool: A preliminary study of letter naming and letter writing. *Developmental Neuropsychology, 29*(1), 5-19.

Upon examining 79 preschoolers, it was determined that children with high letter-naming scores also had high scores in letter and number writing. Highest writing scores were found for first name writing compared to writing or copying letters and numbers.

Rogers, N. (2003). *Improving students' literacy through the use of rhythm and rhyme*. Chicago: Saint Xavier University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED479865)

Using children's own names to learn letters and sounds proved to be an important strategy to help first grade students who were below grade level in their reading skills.

### **Let's Read**

Bowman, M., & Treiman, R. (2004). Stepping stones to reading. *Theory into practice, 43*(4), 295-303.

Building a solid foundation for reading and spelling requires that children truly understand that there is a systematic relationship between printed and spoken words.

Day, K. C., Day, H. D. (1984). Kindergarten knowledge of print conventions and later school achievement: A five-year follow-up. *Psychology in the schools, 21*(3), 393-396.

In a K-4 longitudinal study, it was determined that low scores on concepts about print in kindergarten effectively predicted children who would later be retained in school.

Feeley, J. T. (1983). *What do preschoolers know about print in books?* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Reading Association, Anaheim CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED230897)

This study investigated the book handling and print concepts knowledge of 37 preschool children ages 2-5 and found that prerequisite knowledge for beginning reading can be provided by care givers [parents] who frequently read to their children.

Hammill, D. D. (2004). What we know about correlates of reading. *Exceptional Children*, 70(4), 453-468.

The combined results of three meta-analyses which examined over 450 studies showed that among the best predictors of emergent reading ability are print awareness and book handling.

Horner, S. L. (2001). The effects of observational learning on preschoolers' book-related behaviors and alphabet knowledge. *Child Study Journal*, 31(1), 1-11.

Preschoolers who observed a child model ask questions about the print in an alphabet book paid closer attention to the print, asked more questions, and showed larger gains on an uppercase letter-naming task than preschoolers who did not observe the model. Implications are that teachers and parents should read aloud to preschoolers daily, and point to the print and encourage questions and comments about the print.

Justice, L. M., & Ezell, H. K. (2002). Use of storybook reading to increase print awareness in at-risk children. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 11(1), 17-29.

Preschool children from low-income households who participated in 24 print-focus reading sessions outperformed their control-group peers in posttesting on the print awareness measures of words in print, print recognition, and alphabet knowledge and in overall performance.

Justice, L. M., Skibbe, L., Canning, A., & Lankford, C. (2005). Preschoolers, print and storybooks: An observational study using eye movement analysis. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 28(3), 229-243.

Using eye-gaze analysis to study ten pre-school children's attention to print in a picture-salient storybook and in a print-salient storybook, it was determined that pre-school children attended less than 3% of their time to print in a picture-salient story book and 7% more to print and print regions in a print-salient storybook. Children's alphabet knowledge was not associated with the variance in children's visual attention to print. (Further research needs to be done regarding children's attention to print when it is pointed out to them by another.)

Senechal, M., LeFevre, J., Thomas, E. M., & Daley, K. E. (1998). Differential effects of home literacy experiences on the development of oral and written language. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 33(1), 96-116.

Storybook exposure explained statistically significant variance on K-1 children's oral language skills. Parent teaching of reading and printing words explained statistically significant variance in children's written-language skills.

### **Telephone Talk and Car Talk**

Catts, H. W., Fey, M. E., Zhang, X., & Tomblin, J. B. (1999). Language basis of reading and reading disabilities: Evidence from a longitudinal investigation. *Scientific Studies of Reading*, 3, 331-362.

Later reading ability and disability can be predicted by oral vocabulary and grammar performance of pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children.

MacDonald, J. D. (1989). *Becoming partners with Children: From play to conversation. A developmental guide for professionals and parents.* (ERIC Document reproduction Service No. ED386267)

This book presents the Ecological Communication Model resulting from research of parent-child interactions. Reciprocal conversations between a child and a responsive adult foster in the child emotional attachment and later social communication with peers and play skills such as turn taking.

Mushi, S. L. P. (2000). Parents' role in their children's language acquisition. Chicago, IL: Northeastern Illinois University (ERIC Document reproduction Service No. ED449536)

Parents used various strategies and prompts as they communicated using advanced language with their preschool children and found that as children heard a "lot of language" (a word/utterance or two every 5 minutes) they produced a "lot of language."

Pullen, P. C., & Justice, L. M. (2003). Enhancing phonological awareness, print awareness, and oral language skills in preschool children. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 39*(2), 87-98.

Research findings support the need for promoting vocabulary and grammar proficiency during the preschool years.

Scarborough, H., & Dobrich, W. (1990). Very early language deficits in dyslexic children. *Child Development, 61*, 1728-1743.

Preschool children, whose conversation showed a relatively greater number of grammatical errors, and poorer receptive and expressive vocabulary knowledge than their peers, developed substantially more reading problems by second grade.

Steinhaus, P. L. (2000). Nurturing phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge in pre-kindergartners. In L. Katz (Ed.), *Issues in early childhood education: Curriculum, teacher education, & dissemination of information*. Proceedings of the Lillian Katz Symposium. Champaign: IL. (November 5-7, 2000) (ERIC Document reproduction Service No. ED470892) Full text available at:

<http://ericecece.org/pubs/books/katzsym/steinhaus.pdf>

Dialogue was an effective strategy of accomplishing the goal of phonemic and alphabetic knowledge when the teacher focused on the dialogue, reflected before responding, and allowed her 4- and 5-year-old students' context to permeate the classroom context.

### **Rhymes and Songs**

Bernhardt, B., & Major, E. (2005). Speech, language and literacy skills 3 years later: A follow-up study of early phonological and metaphonological intervention. *International Journal of Language and Communication Disorders, 40*(1), 1-27.

Twelve preschool children who received a phonological intervention program followed by a metaphonological intervention program (which included both rhyming and alliteration tasks) were tested three years later on literacy development. The strongest predictor for literacy development was performance on the metaphonology tasks at the end of the original metaphonological program.

Catts, H. W., Fey, M. E., Zhang, X., & Tomblin, J. B. (2001). Estimating the risk of future reading difficulties in kindergarten children: A research-based model and its clinical implementation. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools, 32*(1), 38-50.

This longitudinal study determined that a strong predictor of second grade reading achievement is phonological awareness in kindergarten. One way for children to develop phonological awareness is through the use of rhymes.

Cunningham, P. M. (1991). *Phonic they use: Words for reading and writing*. New York: HarperCollins.

Research indicates that nursery rhyme knowledge before entering kindergarten is a strong predictor of successfully being able to learn to read.

Danielson, E. (2000). *The importance of nursery rhymes*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED442117)

“Exploring rhymes in games, poetry and songs is an enjoyable way to provide knowledge and skills that can later help children become successful readers and writers” (p. 11).

Maclean, M., Bryant, L., Bradley, L. (1987). Rhymes, nursery rhymes, reading and early childhood. *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 33, 255-281.

In this study conducted in Great Britain, it was determined that children who knew nursery rhymes were better at detecting rhyme and also did better in early reading.

Myers, G. (1994). Playground poetry. *English Today*, 10(2), 35-41.

Children who know nursery rhymes have an advantage over those who do not in learning language patterns, increasing in vocabulary, and determining syllable structure.

Padak, N., Rasinski, T., & Mraz, M. (2002). Scientifically-based reading research: A primer for adult and family literacy educators. Research to practice. Kent, OH: Kent State University, Ohio Literacy Resource Center. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED469865)

The National Reading Panel (NRP) reviewed research for emergent reading strategies/methods that lead to future reading success. Among other things, it was found that predictable familiar stories, repetitive language or phrases, and rhymes are useful for fluency development.

Partridge, S. (1992). *Nursery Rhymes, a pathway to reading?* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED353539)

If handled properly, sharing nursery rhymes can help children develop skills in learning to read. Each session must be non-threatening, inspiring, and

challenging for the children. Children need to know that their parents are also enjoying the nursery rhymes, not just reading them out of duty.

Rogers, N. (2003). *Improving students' literacy through the use of rhythm and rhyme*. Chicago: Saint Xavier University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED479865)

Through a systematic use of nursery rhyme lessons, first grade students who scored below grade level in reading improved their knowledge of letters and letter sounds, gained confidence in their reading ability, and improved on their one-to-one matching.

### **Scribbles and Letters**

Bus, A. G., Both-de Vries, A., de Jong, M., Sulzby, E., de Jong, W., de Jong, E. (2001).

Conceptualizations underlying emergent readers' story writing. *CIERA Report*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED458616)

Case studies in a Dutch kindergarten showed that as children wrote stories, they often combined correct letter symbols with early forms of writing such as random letter strings or pseudo-cursive scribbles. The older kindergarten children gradually increased their use of invented spelling over the early forms of writing.

Eldredge, J. L., Baird, J. E. (1996). Phonemic awareness training works better than whole language instruction for teaching first graders how to write. *Reading Research and Instruction*, 35(3), 193-208.

First grade children who were taught sound-letter correspondence wrote more words, better overall compositions, and were better able to spell words than children who were not taught letter-sound correspondence.

Gentry, J. R. (2000). A retrospective on invented spelling and a look forward. *Reading Teacher*, 54(3), 318-332.

As children develop conventional spelling skills, they use invented spelling [kid writing] which informs instruction and enhances assessment of literacy skills. Young children need acceptance of their writing along with a print rich environment and manipulatives such as letter tiles or magnetic letters to learn letter patterns and correct spelling.

Harlin, R. P. ( 1984). *What do prereaders know about print?* Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the New York State Reading Association, Kiamesha Lake, NY. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED255891)

A moderately strong, positive relationship was found between the level of print awareness and the level of reading readiness in K-2 educationally disadvantaged children.

Sulzby, E. (1992). Transitions from emergent to conventional writing. *Language Arts, 69*, 290-297.

Young children need some letter-sound knowledge, concept of word knowledge, and comprehension ability in order to become good readers and writers.

Wollman-Bonilla, J. E. (1999). *Writing for real-world functions and audiences in family message journals: New insights into writing instruction*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Montreal, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED4429302)

Research of first grade children's writing success showed that parents play an important instructional role in children's writing. Explicit instruction and clear assignments may enhance young children's power as writers. Children gain writer ownership as they write about real functions and to real audiences.

### **Words All Around Us**

Dombey, H., & Moustafa, M. (1998). *Whole to part phonics: How children learn to read and spell*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Reading environmental print or "logographic reading" is the first stage of reading development.

Fingon, J. C. (2005). The words that surround us. *Teaching Pre K-8, 35*(8), 54-55.

Research has shown that as children are made aware of the print in their environment, they soon learn that symbols represent words and sounds. Families can use environmental print activities to encourage reading in their young children.

Gerard, M. (2004). What's a parent to do?: Phonics and other stuff. *Childhood Education, 80*(3), 159.

Young children do not need inappropriate isolated drills, worksheets, and flash cards to learn how to read. The print in their surroundings constitutes the initial stage of reading development. Parents can use environmental print to subtly begin teaching reading and the alphabet.

Kuby, P. et al. (1994). Developmental progression of environmental print recognition in kindergarten children. *Reading Psychology, 15*(1), 1-9.

Researchers found that children's reading and creative skills benefited from the use of environmental print, especially that which children themselves gathered from their immediate environment.

Purcell-Gates, V. (1996). Stories, coupons, and the "TV Guide": Relationships between home literacy experiences and emergent literacy knowledge. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 31(4), 406-428.

In looking at the range and frequency of literacy practices in 20 low SES status homes, it was found that children knew more about the alphabetic principle in homes where literate members read and wrote for their own entertainment and leisure.

Stegelin, D. A. (2003). *Family literacy strategies: First steps to academic success* (Monograph from The Child Care Leadership Training Institute. Clemson, SC) (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED478230)

Research shows that as young children see the people in their homes engage in literacy activities during daily routines, are provided with reading and writing materials, are read to daily, and are made aware of environmental print, they will incorporate literacy into their lives. This monograph gives many and various activities for family literacy events.

### **Weather Report**

Armbruster, B. B., Lehr, F. Osborn, J. (2003). *A child becomes a reader: kindergarten through grade 3. Proven ideas from research for parents* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED482969)

Children can build comprehension skills when parents help them use information print to develop the strategies of summarizing and making predictions and inferences.

Mellor, N. (Sept 1996-Sum 1997). Using information texts with the under 5's. *Early Childhood Review: Papers from Goldsmiths Association for Early Childhood*, n2-4. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED460752)

Children can be taught that information text helps generalize specific knowledge to other areas of their world.



### Simon Says

Berg, A., Cressman, K. S., Pfanz, T. (1998). *Improving reading comprehension through vocabulary*. Chicago: St. Xavier University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED420051)

An action research project with young inner-city children demonstrated that children's vocabulary knowledge could be increased by using charts, games, journals, and portfolios.

Hirsch, E. D., Jr. (2003). Reading comprehension requires knowledge—of words and the world. *American Educator*, 27(1), 10-13, 16-22, 28-29, 48.

Research indicates that one of the keys to reducing poor reading comprehension is to build children's vocabulary.

Osborn, J. H., & Armbruster, B. B. (2001). Reading: Phonemic awareness, vocabulary acquisition, teaching and intervention. *Basic Education A Monthly Forum for Analysis & Comment*, 46(3), 7-11.

Young children must acquire most of their new vocabulary through repeated exposures to both spoken and written language.

### Car Boogie

Peynircioglu, Z. F., Durgunoglu, A. Y., & Oney-Dusefoglue, B. (2002). Phonological awareness and musical aptitude. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 25(1), 68-80.

A study of Turkish and American preschoolers showed a relationship between musical aptitude and phonological awareness.

Rodriguez, M. V. (2000). *Home literacy in the everyday life of three Dominican families*. Paper presented at the Annual conference of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED442570)

This study found that young children often initiate exploration of literacy through such things as listening to music.

Dombrower, J. et al. (1982). *Teaching both sides of the brain: Book II reading*. Glendora Unified School District, CA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED239962)

Brain hemisphere research shows that music activities help children develop vocabulary and comprehension skills.

Turnipseed, J. P. et al. (1974). *Effect of participating in a structured classical musical education program on the development of auditory discrimination skills in pre-school children*.

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Mid-South Education Research Conference, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED102089)

Seventy-seven 5-year-olds were divided into experimental and control groups. Weekly musical experiences from 20-50 minutes in length were implemented with the experimental group. Post testing showed that the experimental group developed better auditory skills and greater ability to handle instructional tasks than did the control group.

### **Letters on the Fridge**

Foorman, B. R., Francis, D. J., Fletcher, J. M., Mehta, P., & Schatschneider, C. (1998). The role of instruction in learning to read: Preventing reading failure in at-risk children. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 90*(1), 37-55.

This study of 285 first and second graders showed that explicit instruction of the alphabetic principle (sound-symbol correspondence) helps reading achievement.

Gentry, J. R. (2000). A retrospective on invented spelling and a look forward. *Reading Teacher, 54*(3), 318-332.

Young children need acceptance of their writing along with a print rich environment and manipulatives such as letter tiles or magnetic letters to learn letter patterns and correct spelling.

Snow, C. E., Scarborough, H. S., & Burns, M. S. (1999). What speech-language pathologists need to know about early reading. *Topics in Language Disorders, 20*(1), 48-58.

In this summary of the National Research Council's conclusions, the alphabetic principle (sound-symbol correspondence) is named as one of the key developmental milestones relevant to reading success.

Steinhaus, P. L. (2000). Nurturing phonemic awareness and alphabetic knowledge in pre-kindergartners. In L. Katz (Ed.), *Issues in early childhood education: Curriculum, teacher education, & dissemination of information*. Proceedings of the Lillian Katz Symposium. Champaign: IL. (November 5-7, 2000) (ERIC Document reproduction Service No. ED470892) Full text available at:

<http://ericece.org/pubs/books/katzsym/steinhaus.pdf>

Research identifies knowledge of the alphabetic principle (sound-symbol correspondence) as a key factor in the literacy acquisition process and greatly facilitates decoding efforts.

## Numbers & Shapes (Mathematics)

### 1, 2, 3 and Everybody Counts

Becker, J. (1989). Preschooler's use of number words to denote one-to-one correspondence. *Child Development, 60*(5), 1147-1158.

In this study of preschoolers' use of number words to denote one-to-one correspondence, it was determined that young children do use number words to denote cardinal value and that this knowledge is integrated with their knowledge of one-to-one correspondence and both increase as children grow older.

Caulfield, R. (2000). Number matters: Born to Count. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 28*(1), 63-65.

Recent research on babies' brain development shows that the brain is prepared to undertake species-specific activities such as talking and counting and that babies have a concept of number up to the number three. Counting interactions between parents and children using everyday objects not drilling or forcing memorization of numbers) are helpful in children's development of number concept.

Curtis, R. P. (2000) *Preschooler's counting in peer interaction*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED447919)

The findings of this study on the counting competence of 3- to 5-year-olds indicate that preschool children are able to take what they have learned in interactions with an adult into their peer interactions, and that games and collaborative group activities may provide particularly fertile ground for preschool mathematics education.

Fluck, M., Linnell, M., & Holgate, M. (2005). Does counting count for 3- to 4-year-olds? Parental assumptions about preschool children's understand of counting and cardinality. *Social Development, 14*(3), 496-513.

Parent's have a tendency to overestimate 3- to 4-year-olds understanding cardinality when they can do rote counting. Parents must not assume that just because their guided counting activities with their preschoolers are "error free" that does not necessarily mean that their young children have an understanding of the concept of number. Time and practice will help.

Fuson, K. C. (1980). *Effects of counting and matching on conservation of number*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Boston, MA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED197946)

This study compared 45 children aged 4.5- to 5.5-years old on conservation tasks. The 1<sup>st</sup> group was helped to count each set after transformation. The 2<sup>nd</sup> group was taught how to match by using string to connect each animal to a peanut. The 3<sup>rd</sup> group was given no help. The percentage of children giving judgments of equivalence differed significantly across conditions (69%, 80%, and 14% respectively). The results indicate that young children can be taught how to make correct equivalence judgments through counting and/or matching activities.

Irons, C. J. (2002). *Number representations that assist children to succeed in mathematics*. Kelvin Grove, Australia: Queensland University of Technology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED463973)

Research indicates that most children learn and master rote counting with relative ease. Counting with one-to-one correspondence is not the same as rote counting. This skill can be taught to children using a variety of number games. Children learn the concept of number prior to learning the number symbols.

Miller, K., & Gelman, R. (1983). The child's representation of number: A multidimensional sealing analysis. *Child Development*, 54(6), 1470-1479.

Research has demonstrated that counting plays a major role in the way preschool children think about the concept of number.

Van De Rijt, B. A. M., & Van Luit, J. E. H. (1999). Milestones in the development of infant numeracy. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, 40(1), 65-71.

The results of investigating 96 4- to 7-year-olds indicated that there was a strong development of numeracy skills during this period and that children who struggle with number concept can be helped through one-on-one number correspondence activities with an adult.

Wynn, K. (1989). *Children's understanding of counting*. Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the Society for Research in Child Development, Kansas City, MO. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED308018)

Three studies of 24 toddlers aged 2-3 years determined that, 1) children count objects better than sounds or actions, 2) children begin to develop an abstract mental representation of counting at a very young age, 3) when asked, "How Many?", only older children gave the last number word used in the count, 4) children learn the meanings of smaller number words before larger ones, within their counting range up to number 3 or 4.

Wynn, K. (1992). Children's acquisition of the number words and the counting system. *Cognitive Psychology*, 24(2), 220-251.

A longitudinal study of 2- and 3-year-olds showed that young children know that each of the counting words refer to a distinct numerosity, but need help and time to learn which numerosity.

### **Where Does It Go?**

Bovet, D. Vauclair, J., & Blaye, A. (2005). Categorization and abstraction abilities in 3-year-old children: A comparison with monkey data. *Animal Cognition*, 8(1), 53-59.

Three-year-old children were tested on 3 categorization tasks of increasing levels of abstraction. It was determined that the children could do conceptual categorization (food vs. toys) and perceptual matching (same vs. different) without adult help. The third task required looking for various attributes. The children could not do this task by watching the examples, but were able to do it when the rules were explicitly explained to them.

Charlesworth, R., & Lind, K. K. (with Fleege, P.) (2003). *Math and science for young children* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning.

Classification skills help develop logical thinking and are fundamental concepts that apply across the curriculum. Before doing any adding or subtracting, children must be able to sort and classify.

Freund, L. S. (1990). Maternal regulation of children's problem-solving behavior and its impact on children's performance. *Child Development*, 61(1), 113-126.

This study investigated the effect of mother-child interaction on their children's later independent sorting tasks. The children who originally interacted with their mothers during a sorting task subsequently created more correct, adult-like groupings independently than did children who received corrective feedback from a female experimenter during the original sorting task.

Garrett, K. N., Busby, R. F., Pasnak, R. (1998). *Cognitive gains from extended play at classification and seriation*. Paper presented at the National Head Start Research Conference, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED423047)

A 4 month study of 4-year-old Head Start children showed that those preschoolers who were introduced to 1) the oddity principle, and 2) insertion into a series through using manipulatives of three-dimensional objects in classification and seriation games were significantly better than a comparison

group (who received no manipulatives nor mathematical games) at both classification and seriation.

Isenberg, J. P., & Jacobs, J. E. (1981). Classification: Something to think about. *Childhood Education, 57*(5), 284-288.

Classification activities help young children develop logical thinking skills.

Koopmann, L. (2003). *High/Scope Preschool key experiences: Classification, seriation, and number*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED480608)

Teachers and parents should support and encourage children to investigate math concepts by providing children with age-appropriate experiences. One concept that provides the basis of beginning mathematics learning is the relationship between similar things based on characteristics like color, size, shape, and texture.

Nguyen, S. P., & Murphy, G. L. (2003). An apple is more than just a fruit: Cross-classification in children's concepts. *Child Development, 74*(6), 1783-1806.

Results of this study reveal that 4- to 7-year-olds do not rely solely on one form of categorization, but are flexible in the types of categories they form and use when sorting items.

Pasnak, R. Holt, R., Campbell, J. W., & McCutcheon, L. (1991). Cognitive and achievement gains for kindergartners instructed in Piagetian operations. *Journal of Educational Research, 85*(1), 5-13.

Researchers in this study of disadvantaged kindergarten children who were lagging in cognitive development found that when children are taught classification and seriation by using a wide range and variety of exemplars and under the criterion of full mastery (through gentle corrections and prompts), eventually outperform their peers in independent classification and seriation problems.

### **What's the Pattern?**

Filliman, P. (1999). Patterns all around. *Teaching Children Mathematics, 5*(5), 282-283.

Patterning is the basis of all mathematics and has the power to help students understand higher-level mathematical concepts, and other disciplines in the world around us. Discovery of patterns also brings about an enjoyment of and appreciation for beauty.

Lin, C., & Ness, D. (2000). *Taiwanese and American preschool children's everyday mathematics*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED440757)

In this study comparing mathematical knowledge and mathematical activities of 114 preschoolers in Taipei and New York City, it was determined that the Taiwanese children showed much more complex play with patterns and shapes than did American children. Gender and SES were held constant and both groups were involved in free play activities which included pattern, shape, and spatial relation activities that were not culturally different in complexity. The only major difference was that the Taiwanese children spent significantly more time (10-15 minutes) in the pattern and shape and spatial relation activities than did the American children (6 minutes). Researchers also determined that certain play objects (i.e., Lego toys and blocks) were more strongly associated with pattern and shape mathematical thinking.

### **The Shape of Things and Puzzles**

Andrews, A. G. (1999). Solving geometric problems by using unit blocks. *Teaching Children Mathematics*, 5(6), 318-323.

When a class of 4-year-old children was supplied with hands-on manipulatives and a safe, supportive environment, they became creatively engaged in geometric and spatial activities and were able to investigate and make connections and construct understanding that became conceptual anchors to new and higher mathematics.

Clements, D. H. (1998). *Geometric and spatial thinking in young children*. Arlington, VA:

National Science Foundation. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED436232)

Children's ideas and understanding about shapes come as children explore shapes extensively with their bodies, hands, eyes, and minds, not just from passive looking at and naming pictures of shapes.

Clements, D. H., Wilson, D. C., & Sara, J. (2004). Young children's composition of geometric figures: a learning trajectory. *Mathematical Thinking and Learning an International Journal*, 6(2), 163-184.

Data from this study of 72 children ages 3 to 7 years strongly indicate that children move through levels of thinking in developing the ability to compose 2-dimensional figures. They initially gain competence through trial and error and

gradually by attributes—into pictures, and finally synthesize combinations of shapes into new shapes.

Lin, C., & Ness, D. (2000). *Taiwanese and American preschool children's everyday mathematics*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, New Orleans, LA. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED440757)

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Oberdorf, C. D., & Taylor-Cox, J. (1999). Shape Up! *Teaching Children Mathematics*, 5(6), 340-345.

Children need to learn geometry in order to help them make sense of their world. Geometry instruction should include not only shape properties, attributes, and characteristics, but also how the shapes interconnect and their similarities and differences.

Swindal, D. N. (2000). Learning geometry and a new language. *Teaching Children Mathematics*, 7(4), 246-250.

Students need time and opportunity to investigate three-dimensional figures in a setting that encourages questions in order to develop special sense.

van Hiele, P. M. (1986). *Structure and insight*. Orlando, FL: Academic Press.

Children's ideas about geometry progress from a holistic, unanalyzed visual beginning to a descriptive/analytic level. In order to arrive at the higher level, children must be given opportunities to investigate the parts and attributes, or properties, of shapes.



### Puzzles

Karnes, M. B., & Lee, R. C. (1978). *Games as an instruction strategy in early childhood education: Summative and formative evaluations*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED152858)

In this study of preschoolers, it was determined that instructional games such as puzzles foster cognitive and language development.

### Time

Charlesworth, R., & Lind, K. K. (with Fleege, P.) (2003). *Math and science for young children* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning.

Children learn time as a sense of sequence and duration of events. Learning time is dependent on language of general and specific time words along with relational and duration words. Parents and teachers can help children place themselves and events in time, acquire a concept of routine, and develop the ability to order things in a sequence.

Mock, S. (1999). Young children and time. *Montessori Life*, 11(4), 34-36.

Adults need to use more accurate language to help children develop a meaningful sense/concept of time. Activities and discussions that help children develop a concept of sequence, order and duration such as celebrations, calendars, clocks, and life cycles should be part of a young child's daily life.

Norton, D. G. (1989). *Sense of time: Its relationship to achievement*. Paper presented at a Research Seminar of the National Black Child Development Institute, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED316319)

Longitudinal research of mothers and children from impoverished areas in a large metropolitan city showed that most mothers did not talk about time to their children. Among those that did, increased talk about time was associated with increased seriation task scores.

### How Tall am I?

Murphy, E. (2004). A mathematical measurement mystery. *Teaching Children Mathematics*, 11(2), 54-64.

In order for young children to grasp the difficult concept of measurement, they need to understand the various objects have attributes that can be measured.

Length is one of the first attributes that children can identify. Children can easily explore length measurement concepts through hands-on activities.

**Who has more?**

Irons, C. J. (2002). *Number representations that assist children to succeed in mathematics.*

Kelvin Grove, Australia: Queensland University of Technology. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED463973)

Counting helps children learn about the relative position of numbers and they soon learn about ranking and comparing numbers.

**Health & Safety (Physical Health & Safety)**

**My Little Muscles**

Bosma, A., Domka, A., Peterson, J. (2000). *Improving motor skills in kindergartners.*

Unpublished master's thesis, Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED453913)

In this study, 22% of 63 kindergartners had never used any type of modeling clay/dough at home. A positive relationship was found between the use of modeling clay/dough at home and fine motor delays in the children. After 4 months of providing fine motor activities (including clay) and communicating with the children the reason for and the importance of developing fine motor skills, the number of children with fine motor delays was cut by one-third.

Charlesworth, R. (2000). *Understanding child development: For adults who work with young children* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

Working with materials that can be molded (such as clay) enhances small muscle development and eye-hand coordination.

Lamme, L. L. (1979). Handwriting in early childhood curriculum. *Young Children*, 35(1), 20-27.

Small muscle development and eye-hand coordination are pre-requisite to developing handwriting skills.

Paulu, M., & Greene, W. P. (Eds.) (1992). *Helping your child get ready for school, with activities for children from birth through age 5.* Washington, DC: Office of Education Research and Improvement (ED). (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED352158)

Playing with dough is one way to help young children develop their small motor skills.

Wessel, K. E. (1988). *A program to improve fine motor development in kindergarten students*. Fort Lauderdale, FL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED326325)

Molding with clay was included as one of the daily fine motor instruction activities (cutting, lacing, pasting, weaving, and handwriting) in a 10 week intervention to help kindergarten children who had poor fine motor skills. The intervention was successful and the children improved in their manipulation and handwriting skills.

### **My Big Muscles**

Hannaford, C. (1995). *Smart moves: Why learning is not all in your head*. Arlington, VA: Great Ocean.

Physical movement plays an essential role in brain development. Studies indicate that children who spend extra time in physical activity show a higher level of academic success.

Hooper, J. M., & Leoni, E. (1996). A physical activity continuum and the surgeon general's report. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance*, 67(9), 62-65.

You can be physically active without engaging in a formal exercise program. Some of the health benefits of physical activity are weight control, decrease in blood pressure, and risk reduction of heart disease, diabetes, depression, and certain kinds of cancer.

Marston, R. (2004). An early childhood movement laboratory model: Kindergym. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, 15(2), 6-8.

Young children should regularly and frequently experience a variety of developmentally appropriate activities that enhance development of their locomotor, non-locomotor, and manipulative movement patterns.

Pica, R. (1996). Early childhood physical education: Educating the whole child. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, 7(6), 4-7.

From age 3- to 5-years old, children become increasingly able to imitate the movement of others. Obstacle courses can become more and more complex.

Poest, C., Williams, J., Witt, D., & Atwood, M. (1990). Challenge me to move: Large muscle development in young children. *Young Children*, 45, 4-9.

Maturation provides young children with the ability to use their motor skills to perform at a low level. In order for the performance level to increase, young children need continuous practice and instruction.

Sanders, S. (1996). Preschool is different. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, 7(6), 3, 9.

Specific motor skills need to be practiced in order to be developed. Preschool children learn best when the physical activities are changed frequently within the activity period. As children are given opportunities to practice the various motor skills, their health and confidence will increase.

Staley, L., & Portman, P. A. (2000). Red Rover, Red Rover, it's time to move over! *Young Children*, 55(1), 67-72.

A review of research of gross motor activities shows that children will not develop healthy, active bodies without the help of caring adults such as teachers and parents. A plan must be made for guided physical activity.

Werner, P., Timms, S. & Almond, L. (1996). Health stops: Practical ideas for health-related exercise in preschool and primary classrooms. *Young Children*, 51(6), 48-55.

Children need vigorous big muscle exercise daily to enhance their physical and psychological health.

### **I Can Do It Myself!**

Brazelton, B. (1977). From dependence to independence: The toddler comes of age. In *Readings in Early Childhood Education 77/78*. Guilford, CT: Dushkin.

The five major areas in which a child learns independence are: (1) Discovering all the things he can do by himself, (2) Understanding the importance of limits, (3) Learning from play and fantasy, (4) Imitating the voice, movement, and daily activities of other people, and (5) Developing language skills.

Frodi, A., Bridges, L., & Grolnick, W. (1985). Correlates of mastery-related behavior: A short-term longitudinal study of infants in their second year. *Child Development*, 56, 1291-1298.

This study found that 20-month-old children of mothers who allowed for independence displayed more task-oriented persistence in working with toys than did children of controlling mothers.

Leler, H. (1970). *Language development of socially disadvantaged preschool children. Final report*. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED041641)

In this study of 53 socially disadvantaged preschoolers and their mothers, significant positive correlations were found between children's language scores,

independence, and verbal initiative and their mothers' acceptance, use of praise, and rewarding of independence.

Lizhu, Y., & Xiaoyan, Z. (2005). A study of the cross-situational stability of three- to five-year-old children's independence. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 13(2), 171-178.

In examining the independence of 67 three- to five-year-old children, it was found that children's independence is an individual trait and grows gradually and that it is changeable in different situations.

Wichern, R., & Nowicki, S., Jr. (1976). Independence training practices and locus of control orientation in children and adolescents. *Developmental Psychology*, 12(1), 77+.

This study found that early independence training is associated with internal locus of control.

Wyman, W. C. et al. (1972). *Independence training and school achievement: A study of parental attitudes and expectations as related to children's elementary school success*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED075743)

In this study, a modest relationship was found to exist between early independence training and later school achievement.

### **You Are What You Eat**

Church, M. (1979). Nutrition: A vital part of the curriculum. *Young Children*, 35(1), 61-65.

When young children and their parents participated in a program of nutrition education, not only did the food knowledge of the children increase, but there was also a trend toward broader food selection. The results indicated that for young children to eat better, they need to be involved in multisensory experiences of looking, tasting, touching, preparing and eating a variety of foods.

Morton, H., Santich, B. (1996). Mothers' perspectives on the eating habits of two-year-olds: A pilot study. *Australian Journal of Nutrition & Dietetics*, 53(3), 100-105.

Children's desire to try new foods increases with age. Young children will more readily accept new foods if they are allowed to touch, smell, and taste them.

Helping to prepare foods, set the table, and eating with others are associated with better diets of young children.

Wolfe, P., Burkman, M. A., & Streng, K. (2001). The science of nutrition. *Teaching Elementary Physical Education*, 12(3), 16-19, 24.

Research confirms that proper nutrition is crucial to maximal brain functioning and optimal learning. From the start, children should experience a wide range of foods.

Worobey, H. S., Cohen, S., Kempner, C., & Worobey, J. (2000). *Picky eaters: Relating parental perceptions in fruit and vegetables consumption*. Paper presented at the Head Start National Research Conference, Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED443543)

In this study, it was found that less than half of all the preschoolers were eating the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables daily. Young children may not yet be ready for foods with strong and/or bitter tastes. The taste of some cooked vegetables may be too strong for some children who prefer eating them raw. It is important that parents and children work together to make sure that children get enough fruits and vegetables daily.

### **Just In Case**

Haines, J. E. (1986). Is fire safety a burning issue for your home? *PTA Today*, 12(2), 10-12.

Families need to take an active role in protecting their homes and family members from fire by removing fire hazards, installing, testing, and maintaining smoke detectors, and developing fire escape plans.

Parent Teacher Association (1994). How to escape a home fire (Take this safety quiz). *PTA Today*, 19(4), 10-11.

PTA recommends that every household develop a fire escape plan and practice it at least twice a year. Included is a checklist/safety quiz to help with this project.

Valinoti, E. (1994). It's an emergency! Do your children know what to do? *PTA Today*, 19(4), 5-7.

Parents must teach their children how to identify potentially dangerous situations and then how to respond effectively to emergencies.

Whitfill, K. (1994). PTA puts children first. *PTA Today*, 19(4), 4.

Parents can minimize the dangers their children face in the world by arming themselves with safety information and having conversations about safety subjects with their children.

**Follow the Leader**

Bosma, A., Domka, A., Peterson, J. (2000). *Improving motor skills in kindergartners.*

Unpublished master's thesis, Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED453913)

Researchers in this study found a negative correlation between the amount of time children played outside and their competence in gross motor skills, implying that the learning of gross motor skills best occurs when modeled and structured gross motor activities are used.

Calder, C. R., Jr., Zalatimo, S. D. (1970). Improving children's ability to follow directions.

*Reading Teacher*, 24(3), 227-231.

This study concluded that when children are explicitly taught how to follow directions and given opportunities to practice following directions, their ability to follow directions increases.

Ignico, A. (1991). Effects of a competency-based instruction on kindergarten children's gross motor development. *The Physical Educator*, 48, 188-191.

Researchers in this study found that when kindergarten children were specifically instructed how to develop their gross motor skills and had daily opportunity to practice these skills, they made improvement in the targeted areas over the children who were not given instruction nor daily practice time.

Kirchner, G. (2005). *Towards cooperative learning in elementary school physical education.*

Springfield, IL: Charles C. Tomas, Publisher, Lt. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. 488697)

Individualistic learning is an important and effective way for young children to acquire motor skills.

Maeda, J. K., & Murata, N. M. (2004). Collaborating with classroom teachers to increase daily physical activity: The GEAR Program. *Journal of Physical Education Recreation and Dance JOPERD*, 75(5), 42-46.

Research suggests that physical activity enhances academic performance.

Children also need daily physical activity to develop physical fitness and motor skills.

Zaichkowsky, L., & Larson, G. (1995). Physical, motor, and fitness development in children and adolescents. *Journal of Education*, 177, 56-78.

Children will be better motivated to learn gross motor skills and practice gross motor activities if they are taught in creative and fun, yet also demanding ways.

**Come and Get It!**

Bosma, A., Domka, A., Peterson, J. (2000). *Improving motor skills in kindergartners.*

Unpublished master's thesis, Saint Xavier University and Skylight Professional Development, Chicago, IL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED453913)

After a 4-month program of intense experience with small motor eye-hand coordination activities, kindergarten children's handwriting significantly improved.

Lamme, L. L. (1979). Handwriting in early childhood curriculum. *Young Children*, 35(1), 20-27.

Small muscle development and eye-hand coordination are pre-requisite to developing handwriting skills.

Wessel, K. E. (1988). *A program to improve fine motor development in kindergarten students.*

Fort Lauderdale, FL. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED326325)

Molding with clay was included as one of the daily fine motor instruction activities (cutting, lacing, pasting, weaving, and handwriting) in a 10 week intervention to help kindergarten children who had poor fine motor skills. The intervention was successful and the children improved in their manipulation and handwriting skills.

**I Can Dress Myself!**

Allen, K. E., & Marotz, L. R. (1999). *Developmental profiles: Pre-birth through eight* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.).

Albany, NY: Delmar Publishers.

Children should have clothing that is simple and manageable. Preschoolers can be taught how to lace shoes, button buttons, and buckle belts.

Charlesworth, R. (2000). *Understanding child development: For adults who work with young children* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

Young children can learn the basic concepts of health, hygiene, and safety along with basic routines such as dressing appropriately for the weather.

Marotz, L. R., Cross, M. Z., & Rush, J. M. (2005). *Health, safety, and nutrition for the young child* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning.

It is important to help children learn how clothing can keep them healthy and safe and to help them establish dressing skills. Chapter 12 contains an activity plan that teaches young children how to dress appropriately for the



weather (pp. 310-311), and also recommends that children learn how to button, snap, and zip before they enter school. Hand Washing

Charlesworth, R. (2000). *Understanding child development: For adults who work with young children* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Albany, NY: Delmar.

Young children can learn the basic concepts of health, hygiene, and safety.

Handwashing is especially critical. Children can and must be taught that germs can spread from poorly washed hands.

Grosse, S. J. (1999). *Educating children and youth to prevent contagious disease*. ERIC Digest. Washington, DC. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED437368)

Germs that cause contagious diseases are present on skin surfaces, in the mouth, nose, and eyes, on the scalp, and in body fluids. Because hands have contact with all these areas, frequent hand washing with soap and warm water is essential to reduce the spread of germs.

Marotz, L. R., Cross, M. Z., & Rush, J. M. (2005). *Health, safety, and nutrition for the young child* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Clifton Park, NY: Thomson Delmar Learning.

Germs on our hands can make us sick and/or spread illness to others. Children need to be taught why and when it is important to wash their hands, and the proper procedure and technique for washing hands. Make handwashing fun.

Thomson, B. (Ed.) (1994). *Staying healthy in child care: Preventing infectious diseases in child care*. Canberra, Australia. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED462132)

Soiled hands (especially those soiled with body *secretions* or blood) can spread many diseases. Children must be taught how to properly wash their hands and to wash their hands frequently, especially after coughing, sneezing, and going to the bathroom. Handwashing is the most important way of controlling infection.

### **Finger Plays**

Brinning, D., et al. (1969). *Perceptual motor activities in the home*. Jersey City, NJ. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED039676)

Finger plays are helpful for fine motor development, especially with children who have perceptual motor disturbances.

Finger plays and action rhymes—for infants and toddlers (1998). *Texas Child Care* 2(1), 38-42.

Finger plays and action rhymes aid preschoolers in language development, introduce number concepts, develop fine motor skills, and increase auditory memory. Includes 11 English- and 9 Spanish-language finger plays and rhymes.