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Kindergarten handbook for parents of Palmetto Elementary School

Kerma Joan Gorringe Isaacson

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KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS
OF PALMETTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Interdisciplinary Studies: Integrative Studies Option

by
Kerma Joan Gorringe Isaacson
September 1997
A KINDERGARTEN HANDBOOK FOR PARENTS OF PALMETTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A Project
Presented to the Faculty of California State University, San Bernardino

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September 1997

Approved by:

Sam M. Crowell, Jr., Ed.D., First Reader

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ABSTRACT

The handbook was developed by this kindergarten teacher to fulfill an important need for parents and teacher. The materials selected for this handbook were carefully considered on the basis of their potential empowerment of parents and students. At Palmetto it is our mission to support the efforts of mothers and fathers to raise healthy and happy children.

The components of the handbook will contain general and specific information concerning the kindergarten in action. The first part tells about the characteristics of a five-year-old child. The second part of the handbook describes work and play in the kindergarten. The third part of the handbook describes when we respond to the environment.

The goal of the handbook is to share many suggestions that will enable parents to understand the purpose and programs of the school and to promote understanding and enthusiasm for school. In addition, it stresses the importance of home-school cooperation in making provisions for the child's development.

In preparing this handbook, data were gathered from the following sources: consultation with the principal and teachers at Palmetto Elementary School, general literature on the subject in the form of books, bulletins, and magazines.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First, last and always, I want to acknowledge the Source of everything that is life... and of life itself.

It is clear to me that all of us could produce a list of people who have touched our lives in ways so meaningful and so profoundly as to defy description; people who have shared their wisdom, told their stories, suffered our foibles in their infinite patience and who have seen us through all of it; seeing the best in us there is to see. People who have caused us to grow; to get bigger somehow -- I love you.

Dr. Sam Crowell -- whose extraordinary wisdom has shown me that my highest thoughts about human relationships do not have to remain fantasies, but can be dreams come true.

Dr. Todd Jennings -- for being so kind -- being kind is the first order of loving.

Valerie Ann Martin-Rivers whose love and friendship is a pearl of great price.

Debbie Arnold whose heart and spirit shine love.
DEDICATION

To my children, Annamay and Gary II, who continue to teach me how to love, who fill my heart with happiness and bring me constant joy. Being your mother is a precious gift. I love you. Mom

To my husband, Gary, with love.
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INTRODUCTION

Society is very interested in early childhood. Articles on child rearing and other topics are included in many popular magazines such as Parenting. Manufacturers of children's toys attempt to convince parents that by using their toys their children will increase their intelligence or certainly their readiness for school. Television networks are currently under fire from consumer groups concerned about the quality of children's programing and also the effects of commercials.

It is hard to imagine, looking back from the vantage point of the 1990s, that the philosophy in the eighteenth century regarding the education of the young was that children were depraved. Their only hope of salvation lay in their growing up in an atmosphere of fear and discipline (Weber, 1969). In 1772, Jean Jacques Rousseau wrote a book entitled Emile on the education of young children, which departed from the prevailing philosophy (Peck, 1988). The first words of the book are, "God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil" (Blenkin & Kelly, 1981, p. 49). From Rousseau we can trace the beginnings of child-centered early education; indeed, from Rousseau flows the entire progressive education movement.

In 1837, Friedrich Froebel founded the first kindergarten -- a term Froebel himself invented and the one we still use today. The principles upon which Froebel based his
kindergarten were: A strong conviction that children were innately good and that the kindergarten curriculum should be child-centered. The philosophy was based on the child's developmental needs rather than on society's expectations for what it wanted children to know. This idea still prevails in modern conceptions of kindergarten.

Froebel's philosophy of kindergarten can be summed up in his own words:

> The great aim and end of the whole enterprise is the education of a person from the earliest years through his own doing, feeling, and thinking and in conformity with his own nature and relationships so that his life is an integrated whole. This will be achieved if the child's activity is rightly fostered and his essential nature developed and experienced . . . not only the child's material environment but also everything which happens to him must express its reference to a higher unity of life. (Lilley, 1967, p. 67)

At the center of Froebel's kindergarten were what he called "gifts" and "occupations." The gifts comprised a variety of balls, cylinders, cubes, blocks, lines, rings, and sticks for the children to manipulate. The occupations comprised a variety of activities using both the gifts and other materials. For example, children could fold and cut paper in geometric designs, make mats by weaving, lay sticks according to a particular pattern.

Other occupations included pea-work (joining sticks and peas), sewing, drawing, and modeling in clay. The gifts and
occupations formed the core of the program, however, there were other important aspects too. Froebel considered it important that children care for animals and plants, and so there was a real "garden" connected with each kindergarten in which children would plant and take care of flowers and vegetables (Kraus-Boelte, 1876).

Froebel assembled a collection of stories, verses, songs, pictures, mottoes, and finger and movement plays for mothers to use with their young children; but these were also used in the kindergarten to introduce children to the world of literature. "These games are representations from nature -- its life and human occupations; they are more or less dramatic and are accompanied by some songs relating the story of action" (Kraus-Boelte, 1876, p. 67). Many of these movement plays were to be done with children in circles so as to emphasize the sense of community and belonging, a principle that underlies Froebel's techniques.

Teaching kindergarten children has undergone a gradual change. The kindergarten curriculum has changed throughout the nation with response to parent, teacher, and school administrator expectations. Research has shown there is a positive effect on learning when the teacher allows for and encourages student input on curriculum themes and activities.

The first experience of a child in formal schooling is one of the most important events in his or her early child-
hood. Most schools attempt to make the transition from home to school and classmates a happy and successful adjustment. Research has shown that the classroom environment can stimulate or discourage children's readiness to learn. Schwartz and Pollishuke (1990) encourage teachers to allow for student contribution in the development of a classroom environment that enhances learning. Most teachers recognize the importance of a room environment in which children can identify and in which they feel comfortable. Professional teachers and administrators have supported the philosophy that one can identify the "quality of education just by observing what appears to be honored" in a classroom (Huck, Hepler & Hickman, 1989, p. 10).

In kindergarten children first begin to understand that school is a place for learning and working. Most children arrive for their first school experience eager to learn and to work. Most will be working in groups for the first time. Effective learning centers allow children opportunities to interact, share, and cooperate with each other. Students become involved in peer teaching and gain valuable leadership skills. There is little pressure to compete with others because this approach to learning emphasizes cooperation. The goal is for children to do their best for their own benefit and for the benefit of the group. (Schwartz and Pollishuke, 1990, p. 4)

They will learn to share, to take turns, respect the rights of others, and to take care of themselves and their
own possessions. This is learning that is necessary for good civic behavior in the classroom and in the larger society. Part of the educational program for kindergarten children should be planned to prepare them to take their place in a democratic society. Children can also discover how other people have learned and have worked together by hearing stories. Shared reading is another interactive activity which encourages discussion and a sharing of ideas, experiences, and opinions. It encourages children to reflect on the story read (Landsberg, 1987).

In the daily life of the kindergarten, children are invited to work centers and activities, encouraged to participate, and given guidance in acquiring the complex skills involved in working with others. They will learn to share the attention of the teacher with others and learn to consider the rights of others in the use and care of classroom materials. Research shows that children derive a greater satisfaction in learning when it affords them the opportunity to explore through dialogue, writing, art, music, games, and role-playing (Schwartz and Pollishuke, 1990).

Such learning will be deepened and enriched if teachers use classroom problems that inevitably arise as opportunities for critical thinking and problem-solving. The most essential component of a rich classroom environment is the teacher. The teacher, as the facilitator of learning, "creates the climate of the classroom and arranges the learning
The teacher can help children in analyzing problems, considering why the problem arose, considering other alternatives they might have tried in coping with the problem, developing self-awareness of how alternative behaviors might bring different results in the ways that others in the group respond to them, and learning to appreciate behavior and values that are consistent with the democratic ethic. Children must have opportunities to discuss these more desirable behaviors, try them out, and examine how they lead to more harmonious and socially satisfying relationships with others.

To further support this learning, teachers should introduce stories, fairy tales, and nursery rhymes that incorporate conflict and raise value issues that are both interesting and understandable for young children. There is a natural connection between certain literature and children's lives. Children seek out those connections in their mental and emotional interactions with characters and situations within a story. Michelle Landsberg explains:

Books let us see how other people grow towards conclusions and solve dilemmas. More than that, they make us feel every step of the way; it's as though we could live a dozen lives simultaneously, and draw on the wealth of all of them to help shape our own lives. (Landsberg, 1987)

A few examples of such stories are "Jack and the Bean..."
stalk," "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," selections from Aesop's Fables, and Virginia Hamilton's The People Could Fly. In discussing these stories, children should identify the behavior of characters in the story, the effect of this behavior on others, examine why characters behave as they did, and consider whether other choices could have changed the results. These dialogues are intended to help children think through the consequences of behavior and to help them acquire those values of deliberation and individual responsibility that are consistent with the democratic ethic.

A second major goal of a kindergarten curriculum is to help children build their sense of self and self-worth through extending their understanding of the immediate world and deepening their appreciation of their own ability to explore, create, solve problems, communicate, and assume individual group responsibilities in classroom activities (Huck, Helper, and Hickman, 1989). Children should have opportunities, under the teacher's guidance, to explore the school and its environments--a new world for these children--as well as the landscape in the neighborhood, including its topography, streets, transportation systems, structures, and human activities.

Children should have opportunities to use large building blocks, wood, tools, and miniature vehicles as well as a variety of materials from a classroom that are imaginative and improvisational objects in order to construct real and
imagined neighborhood structures.

Activities in these centers carried on through group play become important beginnings of map work for young children. "Map work is a representation of a succession of events, states or acts" (Karlsberg and Karlsberg, 1994, p. 133). Children should be encouraged to build neighborhoods and landscapes and to incorporate such structures as fire stations, airports, houses, banks, hospitals, supermarkets, harbors, and transportation lines. Picture files, stories, and books should be used to deepen children's information about the places they are creating and the work that is carried on in them. In all of these activities children should understand the importance of role-playing as a means of acquiring valuable information and knowledge.

A third goal of a kindergarten curriculum is to help children take their first steps into times past. Well-selected stories can help children develop a beginning sense of role-playing. They should consider how it might have been to live in other times and places and how their lives would have been different. They should observe different ways people lived in earlier days, for example, getting water from a well, growing their food, making their clothing, and having fun in ways that are different from those of today. They can compare themselves with children in such stories as Daniel's Duck by Clyde R. Bulla; Thy Friend, Obadiah, The Adventures of Obadiah by Brenton Turkle; and
Becky and the Bear by Dorothy Van Woerkom.

Statement of the Problem

This handbook, designed for parents, will bring together two understandings. The first is an understanding of the child at the time school begins and during the first school year. The second is an understanding of school and what goes on inside the classroom and on the playground.

Why should a parent help their child start school? Because the challenge ahead of their child is so enormous that every bit of help a parent can provide will be extremely valuable. Parents need to think of their child as being in the center of a vast group of people. This group was called "knowledge workers" some thirty-five years ago by Peter F. Drucker (Drucker, 1994). Drucker now identifies the group as the members of your "knowledge society." A "knowledge society" is a collective group of individuals whose survival is based on learning and technology. It includes a wide range of men and women who work with their minds as well as their hands.

Education will become the center of the knowledge society and the school is the key institution... In the knowledge society, clearly, more and more knowledge and especially advanced knowledge will be acquired well past the age of formal schooling and increasingly perhaps through educational processes that do not center on the traditional school... Increasingly, an educated person will be somebody who has learned how to learn, and who continues learning, especially by formal education,
In addition, those who work in our knowledge society will find the ability to participate in teamwork to be vital to their success all through life. Students must continue learning, without formal teaching, in a never-ending process. "Teams," concludes Drucker, "become the work unit rather than the individual himself" (1994, p. 4).

Every child born in contemporary American society is born into a knowledge society. Kindergarten can help prepare today's child for this challenging destiny. Parents can help their child prepare for kindergarten.

To help children and parents learn their ways as learners, workers, and classroom participants is the purpose of this study. This handbook, designed for parents at Palmetto School, will have many suggestions that will enable parents to understand the purpose and programs of the schools and to promote understanding and enthusiasm for school. The handbook stresses the importance of home-school cooperation in making provisions for the child's development.

The handbook will contain general and specific information concerning the kindergartner in action. The first part tells about the characteristics of a five-year-old child. The second part of the handbook describes work and play in the kindergarten. The third part of the handbook describes how children respond to their environment.
The handbook’s cover will be a kindergarten child or group picture of Palmetto kindergartners. The title of the handbook will be *A Happy Year Ahead*. This handbook will serve as a guide for parents to help their young people make a happy adjustment to kindergarten.

Sketches by kindergarten children will be used throughout the handbook. As Campbell says:

> Facts are readily grasped when properly presented in visual form and good illustrations, are therefore, more popular today than ever before. The average reader derives more benefit from an illustration than from a table or a word description of the data. (1954, p. 50)

When this handbook is given to parents, it will be in the form of a loose-leaf notebook so additions and deletions can be made as deemed necessary. This will eliminate the cost of having the book reprinted in its entirety whenever changes are made.

**Importance of the Project**

The handbook will help parents understand what their child needs for wholesome development and how they themselves may learn in the process. The kindergarten year is of vital importance in the development of the patterns of thinking and feeling which determine whether children will be wholesome, well-adjusted, contributing members of a democratic society, or will be selfish, neurotic, aggressive destroyers of the democratic way of life (Gesell, 1974).

The handbook will serve as a communication tool about
some basic experiences children will have in kindergarten. In addition, it will help the parent understand their child's various areas of development. The handbook should communicate that there is nothing more important in a child's development than the way the parents and child feel about themselves and each other (Isaacs and Keller, 1979).

"Fortunate people learn from observing their parents or other role models how to relate in ways that foster affectionate bonds" (Karlsberg and Karlsberg, 1994, p. 139). For example, although a parent may not share the feelings of the child, the parent's caring attitude is nevertheless significant. Being empathetic establishes a safe environment for the child's emotional disclosure. Such an attitude also promotes the active listening process, of vital importance to the improvement of parent-child communication. Some of these important areas of parent-child relationships will be presented in the handbook. These researchers define positive parenting as having two important qualities. First, there must be a willingness to listen to and stand by a child through joys and frustrations. Second, a parent needs the ability to help a child discover and develop his or her strengths.

From the above research it is evident that parenting has important consequences for psychological development in children. It appears that this holds true regardless of social and economic background (Karlsberg and Karlsberg,
Positive parenting, that which exhibits a balance between permissiveness and authoritarianism, can contribute to a child's well-being and achievement.

**Rationale**

It is important to know the general characteristics of the four- to six-year-old child in order to plan experiences and activities that will promote the desire to learn both at home and at school. There needs to be a good balance between physical, emotional, social, and moral development if individuals are to learn to live effectively in our complex world.

In contemporary times the rationale for support of programs for young children comes from diverse sources. Because of the influences of television, computers, nursery schools, and books, kindergarten students show more interest in words, letters of the alphabet, numbers, being read to, and looking at books and magazines. Kindergartners are superior in number understanding, language usage, and copying in first grade. They showed better auditory discrimination and more satisfactory social adjustment. Kindergarten parents seem to reflect a higher quality of parent-school relationships. (Rich, 1991, p. 14)

Throughout the school year parents, teachers, and children all benefit when they work as a community. In this context "parents include all interested parties in the children's lives, such as grandparents, older siblings, aunts, uncles, and other relatives, day care providers, and foster parents" (Rich, 1991, p. 15).
Positive communication with the school enables parents to support their child's social, emotional, and academic growth at home. When parents are informed and understand what is happening at school, minor concerns can be handled easily and major concerns can be addressed cooperatively. In addition, informed and involved parents become rich resources as helpers and role models in the home and classroom.

Although individual variation exists, most children of ages four through six are in a transitional period of development. The school should accept the child where he or she is and help him or her develop to fullest capacities within the school environment. At the same time, there is sufficient likeness in interest and the responses of children of like ages to make group instruction effective.

The parents should know what things the children will be doing in school and why these activities are planned. The home can play a big part in furthering the common goals for their child's development. While teachers have the general information about children of certain ages, each parent knows his or her child intimately. Combining their knowledge, teachers and parents working together can make both home and school living happy, reassuring, and challenging environments for wholesome development and effective learning.
Development of the Handbook

During a kindergarten grade-level meeting, there developed a concern for better communication between parents, children, and school. The handbook idea was proposed at the next full faculty meeting. There were 42 educators in attendance. A hand-raising vote was taken and all hands were raised in agreement to the development of the booklet.

The handbook was developed by this kindergarten teacher to fulfill an important need for parents and teachers. The materials selected for this handbook were carefully considered on the basis of their potential empowerment of parents and students. At Palmetto it is our mission to support the efforts of mothers and fathers to raise healthy and happy children.

In preparing this handbook, data were gathered from the following sources: consultation with the principal and teachers at Palmetto Elementary School, general literature on the subject in the form of books, bulletins, and magazines.

Limitations of the Project

This project is applicable to Palmetto Elementary School and would not necessarily apply to all kindergartners. However, it is of such a general nature that it could be used in almost all kindergarten classes.
OVERVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The following research describes a philosophical background of kindergarten. It also examines curriculum and teaching methods used in kindergarten. Several studies are reviewed that determine the effects of kindergarten on children and the value of kindergarten to children.

At the very heart of any philosophy of education is the realization that learning is necessary for education to take place. There are a wide variety of internal and external perceptions about learning, however, and just as the individual personality make-up of different students influences their interaction with both peers and teachers, these differences have a tendency to modify the needs of learning (Satterly, 1981).

Within this conceptualization, learning should take place experientially, not simply by rote. Corresponding with the psychological theories of Piaget and Erikson, different individuals "learn" in both different ways and at different rates. At the same time, since different stages of development necessarily require different conceptions of events, activities, and methodology, educational philosophy must address the differences within the structure of the learning environment as well as the similarities (Crain, 1980).

Parents and teachers should pay particular attention to ways that creatively manage and challenge students of vary-
ing abilities and individual needs. By the parents' and teacher's own attitudes, learning can be transformed into an enjoyable activity. It can affect the terrible tradition of molding students without thought to their individualized needs and can provide the joy in the quest for learning.

Research has shown that to enable children to function positively, independently, cooperatively and to pull from their own experiences and to connect to learning, parent and teacher instruction should be done in a manner that is meaningful to children. Results of a study by four curriculum specialists observing elementary students' readiness for junior high concluded that "agents of curriculum improvement are strong advocates of cooperative and experiential learning and the 'hands-on, head-on' approach to instruction" (Trottier, 1993).

The learning experience should have positive and lasting effects. The learning process should stress not only intellectual abilities but moral and emotional attributes as well. By showing students a positive example that learning is an enjoyable and life-long process, students will realize that learning need not be a chore (Newman and Cowan, 1988). As a result of this scientific knowledge, parents and educators realize that action rather than abstract thinking is the predominant behavior trait of young children.

For learning to take place, the home and school environments must be conducive to the exploration of knowledge.
The student should have his or her own space and the freedom to utilize that space in a positive, educational manner.

Indeed:

By its very nature learning is the discovery of personal meaning. The basic principle of learning is as follows: Any information will affect a person’s behavior only in the degree to which he or she discovers the personal meaning of that information for him or her. This discovery of meaning is always accompanied by degrees of feeling that increase as the relevance of events to self increases. There can be no such thing as an "effective domain" (emotions) that is separate and apart from cognitive experience; cognition and emotion are inseparable. (Combs, 1979, p. 8)

In other words, learning must be personally meaningful, and emotions are a part of learning.

The parent and teacher should make the child’s environment as positive as possible. In this way, the student can take pleasure in discovery, revel in determination and be rewarded for victories. Since education is a people enterprise and charged with the responsibility of contributing to the growth and development of children, it has the added impetus to conceive itself within a positive, well thought out learning environment. For meaningful learning to take place, the environment must be conducive to the free and joyful exploration of knowledge and the world.

There is a deeper connection between joy and learning. And that joy of learning is described by Davis Fromberg:

The rapt concentration on the child’s
face as she learns each new skill is a good indication of what enjoyment is about. And each instance of enjoyable learning adds to the complexity of the child’s developing self. (Fromberg, 1995, p. 7)

It is possible for the effective parent and teacher to use his or her resources to insure that the learning environment is productive and positive, all the while realizing that the more positive the learning environment is, the more likely it is that learning will take place (Newman and Cowan, 1988).

Given the importance of positive learning experiences, parents can transfer these teachings to their own lives and the lives of their children.

Our task now is to continue the search for more effective ways to tell the story of our schools so that all parents’ groups not only may be proud of the achievements of American education thus far but may be well in-joined, contributing and cooperative partners. (Letton, 1955, p. 16)

Parent involvement in school is a unique educational enterprise because it includes as learners two diverse populations—parents and children. Few programs focus attention on these different age groups at the same time and under the same roof. Although parents learn through books, magazines, lectures and meetings, their most intensive education takes place in watching their children learn and grow. In fact, parent-child education affords the opportunity for what can be called practice-teaching for parenthood (Taylor, 1981).
The success of parent involvement has been documented in higher academic test scores, healthy parent-child relations, better school programs, and improved personal qualities necessary for a child's optimal learning (Flaxman & Inger, 1992).

There needs to be an elaboration on what success means according to the standards of parent involvement models. The following materials will be divided into the three domains that influence the child's life: the home environment, parental skills, and parent-teacher partnership with the school.

The Home Environment

A child's education begins in the home. The child assimilates and responds to both the psychological environment and the structures or rules that are implemented in the home. The child first learns of his or her value, i.e., self-worth, through the direct and indirect actions of the parents (or primary care-givers). She or he also learns cultural values which include the parent's attitudes about education, concepts about social relationships and responsibilities, and adaptive behavior to life circumstances, i.e., life skills. Hence, learning is a process by which cognitive growth is either fostered or inhibited according to social context: "Social context... supplies both a content to be assimilated and a set of conditions for learning and development" (Ryan and Stiller, 1991, p. 16).
In summary, the home environment is responsible for the success of a child's education and overall life style. The effects of parenting occur through time as well as how some parenting affects the motivation, autonomous behavior, and academic achievement of the child. According to Ryan and Stiller, assisting a child in building positive autonomy will "promote a sense of competence, relatedness, and mutuality" (Ryan and Stiller, 1991, p. 118). This is achieved by taking the child's frame of reference and perspective into account, as well as engaging the child in activities that build social and educational skills.

According to Shucksmith, Henry and Glendinning (1995), the home environment must be structured or have rules that will, in the long run, inculcate in the child a sense of perseverance and self-discipline. Structure helps develop intention, perceived control, and predictability, i.e., a comprehensive cause and effect. A structured home life occurs when parents consistently implement certain structure, such as making sure the child goes to bed at the regular time, reading to the child at bedtime, and/or making sure a certain amount of time is set aside for homework instead of TV viewing, and/or utilizing "recipes" or learning activities designed to develop necessary life and academic skills.

Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried (1994) examined the role of parental motivation in children's achievement pat-
terns. As mentioned above, healthy families are emotionally supportive while simultaneously encouraging the innate resourcefulness of their children. The authors specifically focused on motivational practices involving mother's encouragement of task endogeny and provision of task-extrinsic consequences. The authors describe the task endogeny as "pleasure in and orientation toward learning and task involvement" and task extrinsic consequences as "practices that emphasize external control, diminished autonomy, or devaluation of competence" (Gottfried, Fleming, and Gottfried, 1994, p. 110).

This study of parental motivation made the following conclusion:

The encouragement in children of intrinsic motivation and task endogeny is positively related to children's academic intrinsic motivation and achievement whereas the provision of task-extrinsic consequences is negatively related to such performance. Further, these effects persisted over a one-year period. Thus, even though parents may have good intentions when rewarding their children, the outcome is translated into controlling the children's behavior, with the attendant negative results of such control. (Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried, 1994, p. 112)

In contrast, encouraging task endogeny supports the child's autonomy and self-determination in learning activities. The importance of this study is underscored by the authors: "This is the first direct empirical evidence that children's academic intrinsic motivation is socialized in
the home by their mother's active encouragement" (Gottfried, Fleming and Gottfried, 1994, p. 106).

In conclusion, healthy family relationships can have a positive impact on behavior. The healthy family acts as a protective, nurturing unit for the child. The healthy family simultaneously encourages the child toward increasing levels of autonomy and self-responsibility. Healthy families are orderly, with clear structures and authority. Helping children to like themselves and to have a positive self-image is the greatest gift any parent can bestow on their children. Positive self-esteem is one of the important elements to successful living. The perfect parent does not exist. But any parent, in any culture, can find ways to make themselves and their children feel good about themselves and face life on an equal basis. Whereas dysfunctional families tend to be rigid and authoritarian, healthy families possess the right degree of flexibility to adapt to changing situations.

Dorothy Rich of the Home and School Institute believes that the foundation of success for children lies in cultivating the right attitudes and values about oneself and oneself in relationship with others. These "recipes" are assignments that parents give to children such as, "What did I do right?" or "How does it feel?" These exercises increase and improve parent-child participation, self-confidence, motivation, affect responsibility, perseverance,
initiative, caring, teamwork, common sense and the ability
to problem-solve. Dorothy Rich claims that today, "successful
learners are those who have essential life skills... they take what they know and put it together in new ways to

**Parent Skills: Parent Education**

The subject of parenting is a multifaceted issue. Many
have explored this topic, pulling bit by bit at the layers
in order to reach the core of the parenting experience and
its importance for children. Parents' beliefs about them-
selves, others, their place and/or value in the world, and
child-raising concepts are passed down to the child and
eventually get enacted in society (Grams, 1973).

For many families, access to the basic necessities of
life -- food, shelter, health care, and work -- is limited,
while alcohol and drugs are easily obtained. Children are
more likely to live in poverty today. If one were to aver-
age the family incomes of all U.S. families with children,
one might conclude, on average, children are currently
living in families that are somewhat better off socio-econo-
mically than they were in the 1960s and 1970s. The aver-
age figures, however, hide an important fact -- that the gap
between wealthy families and poor families has widened
significantly in recent years (Swick, 1991).

These factors can result in poor nutrition, single-
parent homes, fatherless children, chemically dependent

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parents, antisocial behavior, and heightened anger in the home. Research by Swick (1991) suggests that many parents are incapable of providing a child with positive life attitudes, let alone showing care or love or providing a healthy structure that a child needs if she or he is going to be successful. Generally termed at-risk, many parents do not understand how children develop and they lack knowledge of their parental roles. These parents may have little faith that they can make a difference in their child's life; therefore, they are not involved with their child's education, nor are they positively oriented in responding to their child's needs.

As a form of parent involvement, parent education reorients parents toward achievement in the broadest sense of the word. In order to insure a successfully oriented environment, children need to be able to trust that significant others will respond consistently and lovingly, rather than abusively. However, the parents must first learn to care about themselves (Hamby, 1992). Thus, parent education aims to address self-esteem forming support groups, learning to access whatever resources are necessary for the family, conflict resolution, perspective-taking, child-development classes, team work, impulse control, creative self-expression, and responsive and reciprocal listening (Hamby, 1992). These skills can change the social behavior of the parents with their child and with others.
Essentially, the underlying principles of parent education are based on the parent gaining control over her or his life through positive means and gaining a healthy self-esteem. This sense of mastery may be as personal as impulse control or as complex as joining with others to create a school agenda that best serves the child's needs. This is how a child learns from the parent the skills associated with living a good life. According to Irene Ecksel, students who believe they have control over outcomes score better in tests, persist longer in the face of failure, and generally out perform those who believe they have little control over outcomes (Ecksel, 1992). By having parents not only communicate a positive and achievement-oriented stance toward life, they are more willing to get involved with their child's education, particularly through creating a partnership with the school and the teachers (Carlson, 1991).

School success is born when kindergarten children feel some sense of trust to connect positively with others during role-playing (Carey, 1988). Kindergarten curricula involves subtle and extensive processes of strengthening physical powers, deepening emotions, developing social warmth and sensitivity, and elevating intellectual achievement and competence. Five-year-old children pry, pursue, and probe everything. Parents and teachers must feed these intellectual yearnings by methods of challenge and stimulation. The
individual child follows his/her own specific interest for part of each day, he/she still learns, plays, and works with the group when not pursuing this interest (Berson, 1959).

**Partnership Between the School and the Parent**

The ultimate aim of parent involvement is to nurture the child’s ability to become a well-functioning, positively-contributing member of society.

There are several ways that parents can become involved in their child’s schooling. One is to choose the school the child goes to; another is to attend the class with the child one or more days a week and work with the children; a third is to make the teachers and school accountable; and a fourth is to become active in creating a school curriculum (policy-making).

Schools, on the other hand, must encourage the parents to participate: "A partnership model of parent involvement makes parents and school personnel part of the same enterprise—seeing that all children succeed (Redding, 1991). A kindergarten experience is a parent/child’s first step into participation with the structured learning environment. Kindergarten is a school of first discoveries, where children learn all forms of knowledge from reading readiness to science. This is a special time of awe and wonder for both parents and children.

The importance of relating to yourself in a positive way, that is, accepting yourself, is especially clear in the
writing of Erikson (1950). It is important that the child experiences a nurturing environment and that the child observes the mutual respect with which the parent and outside authority figures interact. This will also help the child respect the teacher, i.e., cut down on behavioral problems and increase academic achievement.

The conceptual foundation of a family-centered curriculum can also extend into the community. Sam Redding claims that, "children’s needs are best met by enhancing their sense of community" (p.8). A community is a relationship of individuals to create a culture inside a family or a group. "The more genuine the involvement, the more sincere and sustained the participation in analyzing and solving problems, the greater the release of everyone’s creativity" (Carlson, 1991, p. 11).

Summary

It is well accepted that parents are the first and primary teachers and that learning takes place before and after school. Children assimilate the social values, attitudes, personal beliefs, and behaviors which they in turn imitate. The ultimate aim in school is to raise children who become well-functioning, positive-contributing members of society. This requires that a child learn the values of society, which emphasizes the importance of community, or social relations and responsibilities, in conjunction with academic skills.
Parent education teaches the necessary skills associated with the self and the family. Schools who encourage partnership between the school and the parents ultimately serve the needs of the community by educating the parents, teachers, and school personnel in problem-solving from the most mundane (providing school lunches) to the more abstract (creating a creative, autonomous-supportive academic education).

Research has shown that children whose parents get involved in their children's educational process will be more motivated, have greater academic achievements, feel competent, and, in general, have the right attitude toward succeeding in life because children imitate the attitudes and behavior of their parents (Ecksel, 1992, p. 87).
SCHOOL SETTING FOR WHICH THE HANDBOOK IS DESIGNED

Palmetto Elementary School is located in Southern California. It serves pupils in kindergarten through grade five. The school opened for the first time on September 15, 1958. It has a staff of teachers for grades kindergarten through fifth, six kindergarten teachers, an assistant principal and a principal.

Palmetto has a tradition of excellence that is upheld by an experienced and competent staff. The educational requirements that children face are increasing due to the demands of a rapidly changing world. The Palmetto staff strives to improve instruction to meet this challenge and prepare them for their future. All Palmetto staff members accept the idea that every child will learn, and all students will experience success. The parents are invited to participate in their child's education by working with the staff to guarantee the years spent at Palmetto will be memorable and exciting.

Tenets

1. **All Students Can Learn** -- Every student of Palmetto School will learn. The staff strives to insure that all students achieve at grade level or above by the time they leave school.

2. **Success Leads to More Success** -- Students who experience success in an academic or social areas are willing to take intellectual risks which leads to success in
other areas. Success is contagious, the teachers hope the students "catch it."

3. The Teachers Control the Conditions of Success --
Parents and teachers, working together, create the environment in which children will flourish. The staff understands this concept and invites parents to join the staff to create a successful school climate.

The staff believes that the educational program at Palmetto Elementary School should be developed around three central emphases. These three goals should be affected by an integrated approach in which each area is part of education experiences designed to help students fulfill their maximum potential as future students and citizens.

1. The educational program is one means of helping students to develop as responsible citizens. The program should stress effort, respect, citizenship, creativity, and responsibility. The single most important aspect of this goal is the encouragement of students to put their best efforts into their daily experiences.

2. The educational program must have a strong academic focus including such applied learning approaches as phonics in reading and writing. Students need to master the skills of problem-solving and critical thinking so that they can become increasingly independent in real life learning situations. Technology should play an integral role in this process.
3. The education program should foster a love of learning through the use of content areas (music, science, social sciences, arts, etc.) So that students develop a desire to pursue learning in a broad variety of areas. One means of insuring that students have stimulating learning experiences is providing an opportunity for teachers to develop individual learning experiences unique to each classroom which take advantage of the creativity and interests of each teacher.

The staff express their vision for the Palmetto Elementary School program with the following abbreviated mission statement:

Striving for knowledge . . . From Our Heritage, For Our Future

Palmetto Elementary School is located near the center of Fontana, California. Palmetto educates approximately 1,000 students a year from preschool through fifth grade. A day care facility is located on campus and a "Parent-As-Teacher" aide visits homes of children ages zero to five years.

The school is a "year-round school" so the school year begins in July and continues for the entire year. Children are assigned to one to four tracks. They attend 45 days and are on vacation 15 days, four times a year. There are more than 35 educational staff members who teach all grades and provide many special programs.
Nutritious meals including breakfast, brunch, and lunch are available to all students with breakfast service beginning at 8:00 a.m. Several after-school programs are provided by the City of Fontina. These include dance, karate, cheerleading, and gymnastics.

Attendance is a strength at Palmetto School. It often leads the district in this area. Parents of students who are absent must notify the office. Excused absences will be approved only if the student is ill, if there is a death in the family, a doctor's appointment, or if the child is ordered to appear in court. All other absences are unexcused.

Support Programs

Pre-School -- Palmetto is fortunate to have a State preschool staffed by an excellent teacher. This program is designed for children who might not have an opportunity to attend preschool. This helps all the students at Palmetto because these children enter school socially adjusted and prepared to master the kindergarten curriculum.

Day Care -- Palmetto School also has an excellent day care facility. It opens at 6:30 a.m. and closes at 6:30 p.m. It is available to all Palmetto students who must come early, stay late, or need day care during "off track" periods.

Reading Resource -- The Fontana Unified School District committed substantial resources to the elementary school to
insure that all students will read at grade level. The staff is taking advantage of this program by hiring a teacher as a full-time reading specialist. This teacher will work with students in small groups, one-on-one, and in classroom groups to assist teachers in their reading programs.

**Reading Recovery** -- Reading Recovery is a program designed in New Zealand and is widely valued in the United States because of its proven effectiveness. The reading teacher is a trained Reading Recovery teacher. Palmetto is fortunate because we have the Reading Recovery training center on our school grounds.

**Rene Herman Reading** -- Rene Herman Reading is a specialized reading program that emphasizes word recognition skills and phonics. Students in the third and fourth grades participate in this program.

**Counseling** -- Palmetto has a part-time counselor who works with students, parents, staff, and administrators. The counseling program includes lessons in all classrooms -- preschool through fifth grade. Students learn about friendship skills, problem-solving, decision-making, setting goals, manners, drug education, and about feelings of self and others.

Some students work with the counselor in small self-help groups to understand and improve behavior. The counselor helps individual students when there are signs of
family changes such as death, divorce, or serious illness.

Parent education meetings are offered and provided information in the areas of parenting skills, parent-child communication, self-esteem, and child growth and development. Numerous books in the area of parenting are available for parents to borrow.

The counselor is a member of the Student Study Team and the Special Education Referral Team. These teams discuss educational strategies that enable students to be successful in the learning process. The school counselor coordinates the Parent-Help Program, meets with the playground supervision staff, and has involvement with the Palmetto P.T.A. Parents with concerns about their child are encouraged to contact the school counselors for consultation and support.

Special Education Programs

Palmetto has several special education programs. They are a Special Day Class, the Resource Program, the Speech and Language Program, and Adaptive Physical Education Program.

Special Day Class -- This is a self-contained class made up of approximately 10-15 students ranging in grades K-3, a teacher and a full-time aide. This class serves students who need specialized help in all academic areas. Each child has a program specifically written for her/him that will meet individual needs. Main streaming is an integral part of this program. It allows the special education
students to participate in regular education classes.

**Resource Program**-- This is a pull-out program that services the students who exhibit a learning disability. The students work on specific academic areas in small groups. The Resource Specialist also utilizes the "in-class" model to promote carry-overs in the classroom.

**Speech and Language Program** -- This is a pull-out program for students in grades preschool through fifth. The speech therapist works on areas of stuttering, articulation, voice problems, hearing deficiencies, and expressive/receptive language difficulties. The students are scheduled in small groups and the specific areas are targeted for remediation. The collaborative-consultative model is a valuable part of the speech and language program. The idea is to develop a common goal between the speech therapist, teacher, and parent to insure a carry-over of techniques to the classroom and home.

**Adaptive Physical Education Program** -- This program is for children who are orthopedically and/or physically disabled. This is a pull-out program that targets specific physical educational areas. The area focuses on gross motor functions such as balance and eye-hand coordination.

These specialized programs at Palmetto help meet the needs of the students so that they are able to achieve academic success and to build their self-esteem.
Activities

Students -- Palmetto School is proud of the accomplishments of our students. Student accomplishments are recognized each week with a flag ceremony and awards assembly where "Eye of the Tiger," "Tiger Pride," and "Student of the Month" certificates are presented. At the end of each school year parents are invited to special recognition events, such as a Kindergarten Tea and the Special Awards Ceremony. Kindergarten students are recognized for completing their first year of school and teachers in other grades celebrate the accomplishments of the older students during these events.

Music -- Palmetto students have the opportunity to participate in many special activities. Instrumental music is taught and students have the opportunity to qualify for the district Honor Band. Vocal music is also taught and many students join the chorus and some qualify for the district Honor Chorus.

Field Trips -- The Palmetto P.T.A. is very active and supports the school by providing funds for field trips and special assemblies.

Fifth Grade Activities -- Fifth grade students participate in several special activities. Throughout the year they work at special projects and fund raising activities to earn money to go to camp. The camp is located in Crest line, and students spend a week experiencing science, math,
social studies, and language activities in an outdoor setting.

Several other special activities are available to our fifth grade student. They have year-end activities, such as a skating party and a yearbook signing party. They also participate in a year-end series of athletic tournaments.

Parents

Parents are encouraged to visit Palmetto School and be involved in our educational program. They are invited to attend staff development activities whenever possible. Parents have a voice in the management of the school by participating in the School Site Council and the Bilingual Advisory Council. These groups meet regularly to discuss and vote on financial and program issues.

Parents are invited to meet with teachers, and we encourage their attendance at "Open House" and at scheduled parent-teacher conference opportunities. We do not want them to restrict their school contact to these scheduled activities. Teachers and administrators are always glad to arrange other meetings.

Parent Volunteer Program

Palmetto school welcomes parent involvement, and parents are encouraged to be a part of the Parent Helper Program. This program provides individual and small group help for students who need extra time and attention with academic skills. Parents work in classrooms and help students review
concepts that have been taught by the teacher.

Parents meet with the counselor for information about the program and ideas for working successfully with children. Teachers appreciate the help that parents give to students.

Parents as Teachers

Palmetto Elementary School now offers parents in their area support for families with children ages birth to five years old through the Parents-as-Teacher program. This program is based on the philosophy that experiences in the beginning years of a child’s life are critical in laying the foundation for school and life successes. This program believes that parents are their child’s first and most influential teachers. Our goal is to provide parents with information and support they will need to give their children the best start in life. The Parents-as-Teacher program is free and is on a first come, first served basis.

PTA — Parent Teacher Association

Palmetto School has an active PTA. Together we can do many things to strengthen the teaching team of home and school. The PTA is an organization concerned about children and youth. From its beginning in 1897 it has helped parents and teachers work more effectively for the well-being of young people. It is worthwhile to become a member of the board or a volunteer who helps when they can.

Board members meet on a monthly basis to discuss and
plan events. For example, last year the PTA provided the school with computers for the mobile lab. The PTA also sponsors field trips and special events for each classroom.

One of the events each year is the Halloween Carnival that involves many hours of planning and work. We are always in need of volunteers for such events. It is one of the best investments of time people can ever make.

The present population in the Palmetto attendance area has a low income. The average incomes of these families range from $10,000 to $25,000 dollars per year. Most of the families range from one to five children. The majority have two to three children. Most of the parents in this area have at least an eighth-grade education.

February 20, 1996, a census of the different races was made by the principal and teachers of Palmetto School. The school has a mixture of Caucasian, Mexican-American, and Black. All the races of the children are included in the study.

The occupations of the fathers were indicated as retail workers, plumbers, electricians, and Kaiser Hospital workers. In this area there are mothers who also work at Kaiser Hospital in Fontana, California. Secretarial and cafe personnel make up the remainder of the careers. In addition, there are mothers who are preparing themselves for careers by attending local colleges.
INTRODUCTION TO PARENT HANDBOOK

First Contact with School

The first contact with the parents and children set the tone for the entire year. A letter is mailed in June introducing the teacher, describing what will happen on orientation day when they come to school together, and explaining some of the routine procedures (such as snack policy and bus notes) that are important to parents and children on the first day.

During the third week in July, parents are invited to an evening meeting at school to visit their child’s classroom and meet the teacher. This is an opportunity to discuss goals for the year by describing a typical day, answering questions, and especially making certain that each parent is met. The room will look as it does every day when the children arrive. This is an opportunity to inform parents about the philosophy of kindergarten and curriculum. Therefore, many of the big books, grade books, charts with favorite poems and songs, art materials, and math manipulatives that we will be using throughout the year are displayed. Sand and water tables, blocks and trucks, and dramatic play areas are set up. The room immerses the parents in children’s work. At the orientation meeting the Friday before school starts, each parent is given A Happy Year Ahead handbook, and it is shared with the parents in an open dialogue setting.
CONFERENCE TIMES

Most convenient time: ____________________________________________

Least convenient time: __________________________________________

NAME _________________________________________________________

TELEPHONE NUMBER ____________________________________________

BIRTH DATE _____________________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
<th>Parent Goals Kindergarten</th>
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</table>

Intellectual

Social

This form gives parents the opportunity to share about their child and helps to get to know them both at the beginning of the year. It provides space for the parents to write what they believe are their child’s intellectual and social strengths and some areas where growth is needed, as well as their goals for their children while they are in kindergarten. It also asks for the most convenient times for a parent conference. It lets parents know that they are important, that the teacher is willing to listen, and that the teacher is sensitive to their work schedules. This form is used for preparing parent conferences in the fall and as a guide to summarizing each child’s progress at the end of
the year.

A list of suggestions provides parents with ways they can help in the classroom or at home. For example, they can plan an activity for a small group of children, follow an activity that is planned for them, act as scribes for class books, read with children, and/or share their jobs or hobbies. A sign-up sheet is available for them to schedule a day to visit the class. Parents who find it difficult to help in school can bake for class parties, arrange for field trips, and help make books for children's published stories.

A list of things we need in the classroom are items that parents and children can bring from home, such as recycled materials, dress-up clothes, and large appliance boxes.

A lending library of professional books is categorized under the following topics: learning theory, early literacy, reading and writing, parenting, and social issues. At parents' night the Bibliography of Professional Books for Parents with a little explanation of the procedure and the books is sent home for parent use throughout the year.

Communication With Parents

There are many avenues of communication with parents during the year. Some of these are initiated at the orientation meeting and some are initiated at the school open house. A monthly checklist is made noting the personal contact with each parent. For example, on a Class Checklist
a record is made with parents when they come to help, when they stop by to deliver food for a class party, when communication is through home/school journals, and when a conversation is shared on the telephone. At the end of the month the list is reviewed and a positive note about their child is written to any parents with whom the teacher has not communicated.

On the days parents are scheduled to help in the class, the parents are encouraged to arrive with their child so they can see how the day begins and participate in shared reading. During "choice" time they can facilitate a project they have planned with their child, help with an activity the teacher has planned, or read with the children. It is asked that younger siblings not come for this special time between parent and child. Later in the year the younger brothers and sisters will be invited to visit our special celebrations or to participate in a sing-a-long.

A weekly newsletter is one of the most successful ways of keeping parents informed about what is happening. The "Kindergarten News," with the children's help, is written about what we did during each day. For example, the teacher records something that was done in shared reading (the children acted out "Hairy Bear"), the books read, the leader of the day, an exciting happening, and special choice time activities.

A second section for notices tells about upcoming
events (e.g., field trips, when school pictures will be taken), makes special requests (e.g., we need more recycled materials for the art area or a parent to help the children make a sleeping bag for a stuffed animal), and explains in detail the daily activities (e.g., the importance of rereading favorite stories).

A parent’s personal home/school journal is introduced as a way for parents and teacher to maintain a dialogue about their child. In a seven by eight and one-half school composition notebook, addressed to each parent, a brief note is written indicating something positive about their child. It might be written that Billy seems to enjoy painting and puts pretty colors in his pictures.

The teacher encourages parents to share things that the children have done at home and to have the children and other family members write in them, too.

The writing journals also offer an opportunity for parents to ask the teacher questions about their children and about the program. It has been found that the expressed concern of one parent is often the unexpressed concern of other parents. Parents can use the journals to request a conference, ask if they can come in and help, set up a time to bring grandparents to the class. These journals do not take a lot of time to answer. The teacher usually finds time to reply with a short note some time during the school day.
At Palmetto we are required to have two formal parent conferences a year, one in August and another in April. Since the teacher has kept the parents informed about classroom curriculums, the conferences focus primarily on the social and intellectual growth and development of the children. The conference is started by giving positive examples of the child's social and intellectual development. As the child's folder is shared with the parent, positive comments are made as often as possible. The parent is encouraged to tell what they have noticed and what is important to them.

On the day before the last day of school, the children and teacher give a party for parents, younger siblings, and relatives to celebrate the completion of the year together. The class presents a shared reading program of some of the songs and poems that we have enjoyed. Each of us tells something important we remember about the year. The party includes refreshments and provides the teacher with the opportunity to say goodbye, personally, to the parents.
This is a guide for sharing the information necessary to make kindergarten a happy time for your child. Based on research there are specific behaviors that will help children make a stress-free adjustment to kindergarten. These skills are indicators of readiness and prospect for academic success.

A word of caution -- these skills are not intended to be taught at a specific age. A child cannot learn a skill until he or she is ready physically, mentally, and socially. Children differ in their physical, mental, and social growth. When you sense that there is readiness, provide many opportunities for your child to learn skills in the happy, natural way you taught talking, playing, and eating.

Please be a kind, loving, and patient teacher. When entering kindergarten, your child need not master every skill. Remember, every bit of unstressful practice is a step toward mastery. How children behave is a good clue to how they feel about themselves. Your child’s self-image has much to do with how well he or she will succeed in kindergarten. There are eight important elements to follow to help bring out the best in your child. You might like to copy each of them on a sticky note and attach them to your refrigerator as a reminder.

(1) Make unconditional love the top priority.

You can’t tell your child too often that you love them
or that you think they are wonderful. How do the love and hugs relate to kindergarten? Children who feel loved feel good about themselves. When children have a good self-image, they approach learning with more confidence. "Love," quoting the old English proverb, "makes the world go round."

(2) Kind words build self-confidence.

It is amazing to see how positively children in the classroom responded to kindness. Kind words work wonders! Parents should use them on every possible occasion. You are teaching your child to like him or herself.

(3) Not too hard or too early -- patience.

Complete mastery of every skill by a child is a rarity. Children are all different, with different personalities, different strengths, and different weaknesses. Introduce new skills when you observe physical and mental growth that shows your child is ready.

(4) Win/Win

Rewards are for behavior we want to encourage. A reward reinforces the desired behavior. Remember that one of the best rewards is a smile, a hug, or encouraging words from you.

(5) Doing is the way we learn.

Aristotle, long ago, said, "For the things we have to learn, we learn by doing them." You need to go through the process or procedure yourself. Your young child is the same way. Hands and mind on a task teaches.
(6) Learning is a joy.

Learning is best when it is coupled with love, kind words, hugs, and smiles. That is how learning should be -- so much fun that it encourages the learner to want to learn more. It opens us to the fullness of life.

(7) Asking questions is important.

The great inventions in history occurred because people asked questions. Why? When your child asks a question, give praise for asking. Your child will learn thinking is good. It is okay to ask questions when you want to know something.

(8) Freedom to be.

One of the best gifts parents can give to the next generation is accepting your young person for the great person she or he has become. Freedom to be with unconditional love builds lives of happiness.
Philosophy of Education

The following philosophy was developed and adapted by the Palmetto staff.

Schools have one common goal: to create an environment in which children can grow mentally and intellectually, physically, socially, and emotionally.

If there is an opportunity for humans, it must be in how we prepare our young for life. At present we often leave the emotional education of our children to chance, with ever disastrous results. One solution is a new vision of schools to educate the whole student, bringing together mind and heart in the classroom.

It would be ideal to develop innovative classes that aim to give children a grounding in the basics of educational intelligence. It is hoped that a day will come when education will include essential human competencies such as self-awareness, self-control and empathy, and the high arts of listening, resolving conflicts, and cooperation.

Kindergarten Philosophy

We believe that all kindergarten children should be provided a positive, nurturing, child-centered learning environment which promotes a successful school experience.

We further believe that this environment fosters self-esteem and a strong desire to learn. The program should be developmentally appropriate and experiential in nature.
emphasizing language acquisition in all content areas.

Historical Background of Kindergarten

Kindergarten is largely a 19th century invention, but the Greek philosopher, Plato, pointed out the importance of the early years of childhood and the responsibility of the community for educating its young. The French philosopher, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in the 1700s was a pioneer for the rights of children. Rousseau recognized individual differences and insisted that at each age man has distinguishable characteristics and needs. Johann Pestalozzi in the early 1800s put into practice Rousseau's theories of studying children.

Friedrich Froebel, 1782-1852 (Foster, 1948) is known as the "Father of Kindergarten." He spent several years as a teacher at Pestalozzi's Institute where he was the first to formulate a comprehensive theory of early childhood education and a method for carrying it out. He was impressed with the value of music and play in the education of young children. Froebel started his own school where the emphasis for teaching young children was on play, games, and songs and in 1840 Froebel invented the name kindergarten (children's garden) (Leeb-Lundberg, 1977).

More recently, Dr. Maria Montessori, 1870-1952, (Lambert, 1958), contributed her beliefs on the adaptation of school work to the individual child. She also believed the child and the teacher should be free, neither dominating the
other. The teacher’s role was that of guide and observer and Montessori designed materials for instruction that enabled children to find and correct their own mistakes. The Montessori method also emphasizes training the senses to increase intelligence. One area that she ignored in her endeavors was that of play.

John Dewey, 1859-1952, is the symbol of modern education in the United States (Lambert, 1958). Dewey’s philosophy of education involves not merely learning but also play, construction, use of tools, contact with nature, expression and activity; school should also be a place where children can work rather than listen, and learn life by living life.

As the result of advances in scientific knowledge, educators realized that action rather than abstract thinking was the predominant behavior trait of young children. The keynote of behavior in early childhood is motor activity. The child learns through experiencing. Play is one of the child’s most effective means of education.

In 1855 in Watertown, Wisconsin, Mrs. Carl Schurz founded the first kindergarten which was supported by private funds. In 1873 in St. Louis, Missouri, the kindergarten was incorporated into the public school system. By the end of the 19th century, about 300 kindergartens and ten training schools for kindergarten teachers had been established in thirty states (Ross, 1876).

A kindergarten is a child’s first step into participa-
tion in the world. Kindergarten is a school of general education where children learn all forms of human knowledge, but they learn in a setting and in a way that they are moved toward those qualities of the human on which life depends (National Education Association of the United States, 1968).

The goals of kindergarten education include teaching children to live with more joy, more meaning, more purpose, and more satisfaction. Children are taught to function with more freedom and ease. The sense of fulfillment that kindergarten brings to the child is the basic standard by which to judge a kindergarten program. Children form peer relationships and learn responsibility.

The objectives for the kindergarten class are the results the teacher wishes to accomplish in a definite amount of time. Some of the areas covered:

1. Kindergarten planned so that each child gains a positive concept of him/herself as a learner.
3. Social responsibility; ability to play and work with groups.
5. Reasoning and identification.
6. Problems and questions.
7. Creative expression.
8. Experience and activity.
9. Use and care of property.
WHAT WE DO IN KINDERGARTEN

Our developmental/experiential kindergarten program is based upon age appropriate activities that are meaningful and child-centered. The program focuses on hands-on experiences through the use of concrete materials. It is a literature rich program, and it stresses oral language development.

Children are taught to think, solve problems and share ideas through a curriculum that builds on a child’s own interests and real life. The curriculum is designed to promote successful experiences that enhance a child’s self-concept and to foster and "I can" attitude toward school and learning.

The kindergarten student learns through a variety of methods that include large group instruction, small group activities, individual experimentation and cooperative learning grouping. Play is also considered a method of instruction. Serious play (such as painting, building with blocks or manipulating modeling clay) is child-directed learning and is a valuable method of instruction. Pencil and paper activities (such as worksheets and workbooks) are not central to the experimental program and are rarely used as an instructional method.

The curriculum includes language arts, math, social studies, science, art, music, and physical education. Skills overlap subject areas and are reinforced throughout
the curriculum. The subject areas are integrated and are taught through unifying terms.

We work and play happily together.
We share our ideas and materials.
We plan our work and see our growth.
We learn to listen and follow directions.
We learn about the world around us.
We learn health and safety habits.
We learn to think.
CHARACTERISTICS OF A FIVE-YEAR-OLD CHILD

What can you as a parent expect of your five-year-old boy or girl? Most resources feel that it is a pleasure to tell you that with most five-year-old children some very good times are ahead. Five wants to be good, means to be good, and more often than not, succeeds in being good. Perhaps most delightful of all his characteristics is that he enjoys life so much and looks so consistently on its sunny side.

The child is continually questioning and exploring.

The child wants to try and do everything he sees adults doing.

The child is able to begin to learn self-control at this time.

The child is concerned with himself and his family.

The child is interested in things around him.

The child wants to please and likes praise.

The child is imitative in play, and it is based on his home life.

The child does many things merely for the satisfaction of doing them.

The child is an active, vigorous person.

The child is not often still and then only for short periods of time.

The child skips and dances skillfully.

The child is developing large muscles slowly.
The child usually has determined hand preference by this time.

The child can see better at a distance than "close-up."
The child is intensely curious and eager to learn.
The child is developing a span of voluntary attention.
The child has a feeling rather than thinking attention.
The child is growing in language development.
The child is developing language sense.
The child likes chants, rhymes, and repetition.
The child tends to be reliable.
The child is calm and friendly.
The child is inclined to try only that which he can accomplish.
LANGUAGE ARTS

Language arts is an encompassing term that includes the skills of listening, oral language (speaking), reading, and writing. These skills are integrated with one another and are interwoven throughout the curriculum.

Solid reading, writing and spelling skills grow from a strong foundation of language development. Receptive language is what a child takes in through listening activities and later through reading. It is developed through activities such as listening to stories and listening to classmates share their ideas and discoveries. Expressive language is what a child can produce through speaking later through writing. This expressive language is enhanced through successful experiences that encourage a child to share his ideas and discoveries both orally and in written form.

Our kindergartners use the Silver Burdett & Ginn language arts program Hickory Dickory Village. It is an experientially designed, whole language program that encourages oral language development and is based upon good literature. The program features big shared books, read aloud selections, taped stories, songs, and movement activities. It includes activities to integrate math, science, social studies, art, music, and physical education with the language arts program.

Phonics is a component of the language arts program and
is taught as a skill that is learned through writing and reading activities.
Included in our kindergarten language arts curriculum is a core literature program. The primary goal of the core literature program is to teach children the world of pleasure and knowledge that fine literature offers. It also encourages children to become lifelong readers of literature.

The core literature units integrate the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing as well as incorporate other subject areas.

The following is a list of the literature units taught in kindergarten:

Brown Bear, Brown Bear by Bill Martin, Jr.
There's a Nightmare in My Closet by Mercer Mayer
The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle
Caps for Sale by Esphyr Slobodkina
Corduroy by Don Freeman
Little Rabbit's Loose Tooth by Lucy Bate
The Little Engine That Could by Watty Piper
Brian Wildsmith's ABC by Brian Wildsmith
"The Three Billy Goats Gruff"
"The Gingerbread Boy"
"The Three Bears"
"The Little Red Hen"
"Humpty Dumpty"
"Jack and Jill"
"Little Miss Muffet"
"Hickory Dickory Dock"
"Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"
"The Three Little Pigs"
EMERGENT READING

Children learn to walk and talk at different rates. So it is with reading. When a child is developmentally ready, he will read.

Most young children are interested in reading and are eager to read on their own level. In fact, they can already "read" all kinds of things such as facial expressions, colors, shapes, commercial signs (McDonalds, Jack in the Box), and pictures. To continue the process of emergent reading the children will:

1. Be read to frequently from a variety of literary genres.
2. Have personal contact with books and practice reading-like behavior.
3. Dictate and read their own stories.
4. Tell stories about pictures.
5. Make correlations between the spoken word and the written word and between letters and sounds.
6. Develop recognition of word patterns and language structures in stories, nursery rhymes, and songs.
7. Practice comprehending story sequencing, character development, main idea, cause and effect, and story details.
EMERGENT WRITING

Children usually have already begun to experiment with writing by the time they enter kindergarten. "Writing" at this early stage might be in the form of a picture, scribbling, writing first names, or other known names such as "mom" and "dad."

Children also use invented spellings in the early stages of learning to write. These invented spellings are meaningful print to a child. They are a child's way of putting his thoughts into written form before conventional spellings are learned.

To continue the process of emergent writing the kindergarten children will:

1. Be praised for all attempts at writing.
2. Be exposed to all kinds of print in the classroom.
3. Dictate their own stories and watch as they are being put into written form.
4. Use their writing for a variety of purposes (stories, letter writing, lists, journals).
5. Be encouraged to participate in daily writing activities utilizing their own system of writing (drawing, scribbling, invented spelling, and conventional spelling).
Science in kindergarten provides children with experiences in hypothesizing and predicting, posing questions, observing, imagining, investigating, and inventing. These processes are utilized in hands-on experiments and activities that are often integrated with language arts and math lessons. Some topics taught in the kindergarten science program include plants and seeds, the five senses, weather, animals, and nutrition.
SOCIAL STUDIES

The social studies program focuses on learning about ourselves, our families, and our communities. Holidays and seasonal activities are also studied. Social studies is usually integrated with other curricular areas, especially language arts.
MATHEMATICS

The Math 2000 program provides the basis of our math curriculum. Math 2000 emphasizes the teaching of concepts through a variety of activities. These activities are designed to help children develop understanding of mathematical patterns and relationships through the use of concrete materials. The manipulative materials used include pattern blocks, unifix cubes, geoboards, wooden cubes, counting jewels, and teacher-made and collected materials.

In using these materials the child is immersed in number concepts and works at three levels of understanding. The first level is the Concept Level and is the beginning of learning number quantities through the exploration of materials. The second level involves connecting mathematical symbols to the number concept and is known as the Connecting Level. The Symbolic Level is the third level of understanding and is the process of using symbols to record events and discoveries made.

The Math 2000 program also provides activities that include patterning, sorting and classifying, counting, graphing, making comparisons and place value.
ART

Kindergarten children are encouraged to express themselves and record their ideas through art activities. Materials used for art include paint, crayons, scissors, paste, paper, markers, clay, and watercolors. The children are also exposed to find art through posters and books and are encouraged to use descriptive words to respond to art.
MUSIC

Kindergarten children are exposed to a variety of musical forms and are encouraged to participate in musical activities including singing, dance, and movement.
PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Kindergarten children are actively engaged in activities that strengthen the large muscle groups in the physical education program. Skills practiced in kindergarten include hopping, running, jumping, balancing, bouncing balls, catching and throwing balls and bean bags, and other forms of movement.
WE DO ACTIVITIES

Palmetto School agrees with the philosophy, embraced by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) that the curriculum must be adapted to the developmental needs of children entering kindergarten. In practice, it provides appropriate activities to nurture their social, emotional, cognitive, affective and physical development. Children are accepted wherever they are in their development and taken as far in that development as they are able to go in the kindergarten year.

We work with many art materials.
We use scissors, crayons, and clay.
We help on group art projects.
We follow directions.
We participate in rhythm activities.
We play rhythm instruments.
We sit quietly and enjoy stories.
We listen to and enjoy stories.
We listen to and learn short poems.
We identify likeness and differences in the sound of words.
We observe someone writing words and stories.
We learn poems and songs about numbers.
We discover by counting "how many."
We use a variety of measures which we use in every day experiences.
We recognize basic shapes.
We participate in number line activities.
We use words as few, many, large, small, tall, short, number, and set with understanding.
We share ideas and experiences in conversations and in discussions.
We recite, individually, or in a group, short poems, riddles, and rhymes.
We ask questions related to stories, experiences, and events.
We dramatize stories and experiences.
We become familiar with a variety of books, stories, and poems.
We listen and recall information, make inferences, and draw conclusions.
We participate in the development of story and experience charts.
We dramatize family life in the housekeeping "corner."
We participate in a variety of work/play activities.
We make our own choice of activity in the work/play period.
We respond to directions and live up to the rules of the group.
We learn about community helpers.
We explore many things.
We observe many things.
WHEN WE RESPOND

All things considered, the age of five, for most children, can truthfully be called a golden age.

Children learn best by talking and doing in a social context. Vygotsky (1986) makes a strong case for the importance of social interaction in learning. Yetla Goodman (1985) suggests that our best assessment of what children are learning is by watching and listening to this in a social context.

We are being creative.
We are developing small muscles needed for later work.
We are learning to cooperate.
We are forming good work habits.
We are participating in group singing.
We are playing rhythm instruments.
We are sitting quietly and enjoying good music.
We are listening to and enjoying stories.
We are listening to and learning short poems.
We are identifying likeness and differences in the sound of words.

We are recalling in proper order the parts of a story, events, and experiences.

We are observing someone writing words and stories.
We are lengthening our attention spans and learning that the printed page "tells" something.

We are developing auditory discrimination and the
ability to listen.

We are developing visual discrimination.

We are learning to follow the sequence of ideas in listening and speaking.

We are discovering that printed words have meaning.

We are learning the names of numbers.

We are learning to "read" numerals.

We are developing a concept of numbers.

We are finding out the usefulness that numbers have in daily life.

We are learning to distinguish familiar shapes.

We are discovering other functions of numbers.

We are discovering the vocabulary words of mathematics.

We are learning to express ideas in complete sentences and to listen to the ideas of others.

We are learning to speak distinctly and increasing our vocabulary.

We are learning to use language as a tool for "discovery."

We are developing skills in "creative" expression and feelings for the proper sequence of expression.

We are developing a desire to read.

We are developing listening skills and a sense of the purpose for listening.

We are developing the concept that writing is another way of "telling."
We are establishing social relationships and learning to cooperate with others.

We are learning to practice self-control and to respect the rights of others.

We are developing independence and the ability to make decisions.

We are learning desirable habits expected of democratic citizens.

We are building an understanding of and a respect for other people.

We are learning to see things around us.

We are learning new things through feeling.

We are learning to clean up after ourselves.
WILL YOU, AS A PARENT, PLEASE HELP?

Researches show that the parents' way of explaining the world, of seeing the world ... of interpreting it, needs to be optimistic. Optimism is having the attitude that your child can do it. New discoveries about the brain show us the critical importance of giving children a good start in life. Parents' involvement can make all the difference in their child's learning (Stoddard, 1997).

By providing a variety of art materials and a place to use them.

By showing interest and praising his efforts.

By giving simple instructions and helping him/her learn to follow them.

By providing an opportunity to listen to good music with your child.

By building a good record library.

By listening when he/she sings the songs he/she has learned.

By reading stories and poems to him/her frequently.

By showing interest when he/she notices familiar letters and sounds in stories, signs, etc.

By listening attentively as he/she relates some stories or events.

By marking the holidays on the calendar and helping him/her count the days.

By using appropriate vocabulary when making compari-
sons.

By giving him/her opportunity to count many things.
By listening to him/her when he/she talks about numbers
and correcting him/her when necessary.
By observing with him/her the hands and numbers of the
clock.
By providing many books for his/her enjoyment.
By enjoying stories with him/her.
By encouraging him/her to tell events and things he/she
has seen.
By taking him/her to many interesting places.
By letting him/her assume responsibility.
By helping him/her with his/her playmates at home and
in the neighborhood.
By giving him/her the change to make small but import-
ant decisions.
By insisting on consistent behavior at home.
By answering his/her questions and encouraging his/her
interest in others.
KINDERGARTEN ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS

2. Physical Examination Report signed by a doctor.
3. Immunization Records (up-to-date).
4. Address Verification (rent receipt, escrow papers, current utility bill, etc.).
5. Language Testing (if necessary).
HELPFUL HINTS

1. Write name in child's sweaters, coats, and other belongings.

2. Have children wear name tags for the first week, so we can learn their names faster.

3. Encourage your child to assume responsibility for his personal property.

4. Send an old shirt for painting, clay, and all messy activities.

5. Dress children appropriately. They will be doing a variety of activities.

6. Put name of child in books, records, or anything the child wants to share. Please no army toys or glass items. Don't let children bring something that cannot be replaced. Sometimes things do get broken or lost. Share Day is usually Monday.

7. Please send a note to the teacher if regular schedule is changed such as walking home with someone else, riding the bus today instead of walking, or different directions to a new babysitter, etc.

8. Leave your children at school if you walk them, even if they do cry. The teacher will help.

9. Wait until after the first four weeks before visiting. The children and teacher have had time to adjust in class. Visitations are encouraged after the first four weeks. Please notify the teacher and office of your
planned visit.

10. There will be two parent conferences with your child's teacher this year, and you will be notified by your child's teacher. There will be more conferences if you or the teacher feel it is needed.

11. The schedule for the kindergarten class is 7:30 a.m. to 11:40 a.m. for the morning session and 10:50 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for the afternoon session.

12. Please keep children at home when they are ill. Send a note to school when children are ill.

13. Children should not arrive before 7:15 a.m. because teachers are not on duty til then.

14. Transportation information can be obtained at the school office or the Transportation Department (909-357-5210).

15. We encourage birthday parties in kindergarten because this is part of the social living — a very important part of kindergarten life. Please contact the teacher ahead of time.

16. Kindergarten teachers will be calling on mothers often to help on field trips and help in many ways. If you are interested, please call the room mother. We are looking forward to a year of learning and personal growth for your child. We are here to be of help to you and your child.
PARENTS AS HELPERS

In class

• Plan a project (art, science, math, language) and work with small groups of children.
• Help with a teacher-planned project.
• Cooking. We have some utensils, large cookie sheets, school ovens, and a hot plate. We would appreciate it if you would bring the ingredients and the recipe written on a large piece of paper.
• Read with children.
• Act as a scribe for class books.
• Take pictures of class events and activities.
• Share a hobby or tell about your job.
• Other

At home

• Bake for class celebrations.
• Use your computer to type "About the Author" bibliographies that the children have dictated in class. I will print multiple copies for each child.
• Copy "About the Author" bibliographies on chart paper.
• Other
CONTRIBUTIONS FROM HOME

Throughout the year we can use the following items:

• Recycled materials for the art area
• Yogurt containers for paint
• Writing supplies -- envelopes, paper, wallpaper, left-over note cards
• Paper -- a variety of sizes, color, and textures (including computer paper)
• Fabric, yarn, felt, large needles for sewing
• Dress-up clothes
• Appliance boxes
• Cardboard boxes
• Games and puzzles
• Other. Use your imagination.
• Suggestions for local field trips (perhaps where you have a personal connection or interest).
Dear Parents,

Parents often ask me to suggest books which address various aspects of child growth and development. In order to respond to this need, I have set up a classroom lending library.

The "Bibliography of Books for Parents" describes the books I have available to lend. Please look it over and send me a note requesting the book/s you would like to borrow. Also, as the year goes on, please let me know if there are other books you would like to read.

Please try to return the books within two weeks, so they can circulate among the families represented in the two kindergarten classes.

Sincerely,

Kerma J. Isaacson
SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS FOR THE CLASSROOM

This section lists most of the supplies and materials that are referred to in this book. A list of professional resources for ordering materials follows. Please keep in mind that I don’t put all the materials out at once, but add supplies and artifacts as the children express an interest or need. I also encourage the children to contribute to the classroom environment. For example, they are encouraged to lend games, books, and props for the dramatic play environments, and to bring in recycled materials for the area.

Reading Area

The reading area is a very important place in the kindergarten room. Aside from shared and independent reading, it is the place where we gather together as a classroom community to share what is important in our lives, to plan for choice time, to share what we have done during the day, and to get ready for cleanup. Therefore, I have listed in this section the supplies that go along with all the activities that take place in the reading area (reading, calendar, I CARE board, cleanup chart, and sharing table).

Especially for Shared Reading and Writing

Teaching easel (Woodlite)

Box to hold big books

Chalkboard, chalk, and eraser

Pocket Chart (The Wright Group)

Cardboard masks of various sizes
Pointers -- I use rhythm sticks, chopsticks, dowels, etc., and have them available for the children to use during choice time. During shared reading I use a metal pointer that folds up into the size of a pen. Various chart paper (with and without lines): one of my favorites is 24" x 36" tagboard (Hammetts No. 7476-0).

Post-its, markers, pencils, highlighter tape.
Musical instruments (drums, sticks, tambourines, bells)
Puppets
Big and small books
Charts
Tape recorder and song tapes
Overhead and screen

My Ten Favorite Big Books

Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? Bill Martin, Jr. and John Auchambalt (Holt)

The Enormous Watermelon. Brenda Parks and Judith Smith (Rigby)

Freedom's Child. Bill Martin, Jr. (DLM)

Greedy Cat. Joy Cowley (Richard C. Owen)

Hairy Bear. Joy Cowley (Wright Group)

I Like the Rain. Claude Belanger (Rigby)

In a Dark Dark Wood. Joy Cowley (Wright Group)

The Little Red Hen. (Scholastic)

Mrs. Wishy-washy. Joy Cowley (Wright Group)
Who's in the Shed? Brenda Parks (Rigby)

Other Favorites of Mine and the Children

The Circus Is In Town. Claude Belanger (Rigby)
Farm Concert. Joy Cowley (Wright Group)
Fire, Fire Said Mrs. McGuire! Bill Martin, Jr. (Holt)
I Was Walking Down the Road. Sarah E. Barchas (Scholastic)

The Little Yellow Chicken. Joy Cowley (Wright Group)
Monday, Monday, I Like Monday. Bill Martin, Jr. (Holt)
Number One. Joy Cowley (Richard C. Owen)
One Cold Wet Night. Joy Cowley (Wright Group)
Teddy Bear. Nellie Edge (Nellie Edge)
What Shall I Do? (DLM)

Furniture and Storage

Display shelf for books
Book shelves
Rocking chair
Comfortable pillows
Author's chair
Sharing table
Containers for storing books (e.g., plastic dishpans, files, crates, cardboard boxes) according to author, genre, subject, etc.

Reading Materials

Fiction and nonfiction that follow one or a combination of the following literacy patterns as described by Cochrane,
Cochrane, Scalena, and Buchanan, et. al., in Reading, Writing, and Caring (pp. 182-184).

1. Repetitive pattern (*The Three Billy Goats Gruff*)
2. Cumulative pattern (*The Fat Cat*)
3. Interlocking pattern (*Each Peach Pear Plum*)
4. Chronological pattern (*Yonder, A Chick Hatches*)
5. Familiar cultural pattern (*the Maple Farm, Anno's Counting Book, Guinea Pig ABC*)
6. Problem-solving pattern (*The Ghost-Eye Tree*)
7. Rhyme-rhythm (*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*)
8. Main character (*Charlie Brown*)

Readers with supportive texts for emergent and initial readers

- Literacy 2,000 (Rigby)
- The Story Box (Wright Group)
- Sunshine Series (Wright Group)
- Twig Books (Wright Group)

Texts from the following genre:

- ABC books
- Almanacs
- Atlases
- Counting books
- Dictionaries
- Fables
- Fairy tales
- Newspapers
Magazines
Multiple languages
Plays
Poetry books
Song books
Science and social studies books

Listening Area
Table and chairs for three to six children
Tape recorder
Head phones
Story tapes and copies of the accompanying book (I store each tape and book in a zip-lock bag)
Song tapes and copies of the songs
Storage box

Favorite Tapes

The Color Song, Paul Ippolito. (RFD 2, Box 128, North St., Chester, VT. 05143)

Family Tree, Tom chapin (Sundance Music, Inc., Distributed by A & M Records, Inc.)

Friendship Train, Jim Valley (Rainbow Planet, P.O. Box 735, Edmonds, WA 98020)

Kids Songs, Nancy and John Cassidy (Klutz Press, Palo Alto, CA)

Rise and Shine, Raffi (Troubadour Records)

Teaching Peace, Red and kathy Grammar (Smilin’ Atcha Music)
You’ll Sing A Song and I’ll sing a Song, Ella Jenkins, 1966 (Folkways Records, 632 Broadway, N.Y., N.Y. 10012)

Management Materials

**I CARE board area** — Mine is a 40’ x 60’ pegboard, which serves as the back of a shelf in the art area. On it I hang:

- I CARE board with name labels and a hook for each child
- About thirty-three each of white, green, yellow, red, blue, and orange I CARE circles, hanging from six pegboard pieces
- Index cards with each child’s name in alphabetical order indicating the leader of the day.
- Numbers of the days of the month for the calendar
- Calendar Chart indicating the number of days we have been in school
- Chart indicating who has lost a tooth
- Cleanup chart
- Alphabet chart
- Birthday chart
- Weather chart

**Writing Area**

**Furniture and Storage**

- Table and chairs
- Desk that we call "the quiet table" where a child can
work alone

Shelves for writing materials and paper
File box and folders for children to file their work
Upper- and lowercase alphabet at eye level for the children to see and touch on a bulletin board or cabinet
Bulletin board for children to display their work
Message board
Grocery boxes for individual post boxes

Paper

Many different sizes
Lined and unlined
Colored and white
Paper stapled together as books
Envelopes
Greeting cards and postcards
Notebooks
Memo pads
Post-its
Cancelled Stamps
Advertisement stamps and stickers
"Recycle" box

Writing Utensils

Pencils -- primary and standard size
Crayons -- primary and standard size
Markers -- I put these out for special occasions because I don't have a bit supply and they get used up quick-
ly. I also want the children to use crayons because I like the effect and control they provide.

- Ball point pens -- for special occasions
- Colored pencils

Other Supplies
- Date stamp
- Stamp pad
- Letter and number stamps
- Design stamps
- Scissors
- Rulers
- Stapler and staples

List of the children in the class. I hang one on the bulletin board and laminate several others so the children can use them when they are writing. The alphabet (uppercase and lowercase) on laminated cards for use at the table

Math Area

Furniture and Storage
- Table and chairs
- Floor space
- Shelves for math manipulatives and games
- Numerals 1 through 10 on a bulletin board at eye level for the children to see and touch

Paper and pencils
- Favorite Math Manipulatives (and accompanying activity cards)
Pattern blocks
Color cubes
Chip trading
Geoboards/rubber bands
Tangrams
Unifix Cubes
Teddy bear counters (Milton Bradley)
Recycled materials for sorting and patterning
Dice

Other Math Manipulatives
Pegboards/pegs
Beads/strings
Number puzzles
Board games (e.g., Connect Four, Tic Tac Toe, Checkers, Memory)
Dominoes
People pieces
Parquetry blocks
Puzzles

Unit Blocks
Storage shelf
Unit blocks for six children
People -- multi-cultural families, community workers, other occupations
Animals -- circus, jungle, farm, woodland
Vehicles -- air, cars, trucks, water
Books about building construction and transportation
(if the children start building farms, we add farm books)

Paper, pencils, crayons, etc., for making signs and
writing plans

Science Materials

Water Table

Can be filled with other materials such as styrofoam,
sand, artificial rice -- I try to use food only for eating,
not for playing -- tennis balls, you name it. See Sand and
Water, by Beaty and De Rusha, for an extensive list.

Plastic transparent water tub that fits on a table
Larger water table on legs with drain
Variety of materials (found around the room) for "sink
and float"

Graduated Cylinders, measuring cups, buckets, pitchers
Siphons, tubing, water pumps
Soap for bubbles
Boats
Books about water, water life, shells, and boats
Sand and water wheel
Paper, pencils, crayons, etc., for writing signs and
recording experiments

Sand Table

I keep mine filled with sand all year because it is
hard to clean out, and I want to have the sand table avail-
able at all times. See Sand and Water by Beaty and De

91
Rusha, for an extensive list.

Graduated cylinders, measuring cups, buckets, and pitchers

Sifters and funnels
Scoops, shovels, molds
Small plastic animals
Books about the beach and ocean
Paper, pencils, crayons, etc., for writing signs and recording experiments

Other Science Supplies
Books and magazines
Bug boxes
Containers
Cooking utensils
Empty glass dish tank for terrarium, temporary home for crickets, etc., filled with soil, sticks, leaves
Food coloring
Magnets
Magnifying glasses
Rocks
Rulers, yardsticks, and measuring tapes
Microscopes
Prisms
Scales and balances
Seeds, pots, and soil
Thermometers
Things from nature that the children and I bring in (e.g., nests, shells, leaves, snake skins)

Art

Furniture and Storage

Table and chairs
Two easels, preferably side by side
Tray to hold paint containers
Shelf to hold art supplies and recycled materials

Paint

Tempera paint and brushes
Watercolors and brushes
Finger paint

Paper

Construction paper
Finger paint paper
White and manilla
Tissue
Crepe
Celophane
Tagboard
Foil
Mylar

Other

Cray-Pas
Crayons
Plasticine
Playdough
Rulers
Scissors
Stencils
Stamps and Stamp pads

Recycled Materials
Metal
Plastic
Wood
From nature
Paper
Styrofoam
Fabric
Yarn
Buttons

Dramatic Play Environments

Most of the equipment for dramatic play environments is already available in the classroom, or can be found at home or made from recycled materials at school. For example, when we set up the veterinarian's office, children brought in stuffed animals, old sheets for bandages, and collars from home. They made an X-ray machine and a thermometer in the art area. I also keep in mind possible themes as I order kindergarten supplies, attend yard sales, and find things around the house.

Big Blocks and Trucks
Hollow blocks
Large Trucks that the children can sit on and ride
Housekeeping (materials to reflect many cultures)
   Furniture
   Kitchen utensils
   Dolls -- multi-cultural
   Telephone and telephone book
   Dress-up clothes
   Reading and writing materials (newspaper, coupons, writing paper)
Outside Play
Large Equipment
   Cart -- holds two children
   Wagon -- holds three children
   Riding trucks
Small Equipment
   Balls, jump ropes, and sand toys
MY FAVORITE CHILDREN'S BOOKS


Bourgeois, Paulette. Franklin in the Dark. New York:
Scholastic, 1986.


DeRegniers, B.S. Sing a Song of Popcorn. New York:
Scholastic, 1988.


_. *Quick as a Cricket.* Rochester Hills, MI: Child's Play, 1982.


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<td>1996</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Horn Book Magazine</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Instructor</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of Reading</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journal of Research in Childhood Education</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<tr>
<td>Journal of Young Services in Libraries</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kappan (Phi Delta)</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Resources &amp; Technical Services</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media and Methods</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft Excel</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Present</td>
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<tr>
<td>PC World</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Research Quarterly</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Teacher</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tech Trends for Leaders in Education and Training</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological Horizons in Education</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1993, 1995</td>
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<td>Technology and Learning</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrust for Educational Leadership</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Present</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Present</td>
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</table>
PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

Books and Resources for Teachers and Children

Childcraft
20 Kilmer Road
Edison, NJ 08818

Richard C. Owen Publishers, Inc.
135 Katonah Avenue
Katonah, NY 10536

Delmar publishers, Inc.
2 Computer Drive West
Box 15015
Albany, NY 12212

Rigby
P.O. Box 797
Crystal Lake, IL 60014

DLM
P.O. Box 4000
One DLM Park
Allen, TX 75002

Scholastic, Inc.
730 Broadway
New York, NY 10003

The Trumpet Club (Book club for Children)
666 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10103

Hammetts
Box 545 Hammett Place
Braintree, MA 02184

Woodlite
1920 Donmair Drive
Crest Hill, IL 60435

Heinemann Educational Books, Inc.
P.O. Box 7081
Portsmouth, NH 03802

The Wright Group
10904 Technology Place
San Diego, CA 92127

Holt, Rinehart, and Winston
383 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10011

Nellie Edge
Resources for Creative Thinking
P.O. Box 12399
Salem, OR 97309

Gentry, Richard, Spel . . . Is A Four-Letter Word


Strickland, Dorothy, and Morrow, Lesley, ed. Emerging Literacy: Young Children Learn Read and Write.

Sowers, Susan. "Six Questions Teachers Ask About Invented Spelling."

Parenting


Marzollo, Jean, & Lloyd, Janice. *Learning through Play.*

Social Issues

Coles, Robert. *The Call of Stories.*


Dear Parents:

On the next page is a copy of the report card for the kindergarten year. It is hoped that it will be a tool for you to use to understand some of the material which will be expected.
Fontana Unified School District

Kindergarten First Quarter Progress Report

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Principal</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>School Year</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| □ | □ |

| □ | □ |

C = Consistently

N = Needs Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Takes care of personal needs</th>
<th>Uses school materials appropriately</th>
<th>Pays attention and follows directions</th>
<th>Follows school rules and procedures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plays actively outside</th>
<th>Shares and plays cooperatively</th>
<th>Works independently</th>
<th>Displays positive behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Is interested in stories and books</th>
<th>Participates easily in group activities</th>
<th>Shows security and confidence</th>
<th>Sings familiar songs and rhymes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shows gross motor coordination</th>
<th>Exhibits self-discipline</th>
<th>Colors with control</th>
<th>Cuts with ease</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holds a pencil or crayon correctly</th>
<th>Writes name legibly</th>
<th>Communicates appropriately for school</th>
<th>Sorts objects and makes patterns</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
<td>□</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parents as Partners

Here are some ideas for home support. Please give the items with a special attention.

- Read to your child daily
- Develop responsibility at home
- Monitor sleep, hygiene, nutrition
- Reduce absences and tardies
- Promote polite and cooperative behavior
- Strengthen writing and cutting skills
- Make learning part of everyday life

Parents' signature: ___________________________

Date: ___________________________

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SAMPLE OF LETTERS

PALMETTO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Dear Parents:

This handbook has been prepared to give you information about your child’s kindergarten year. The kindergarten staff want the best academic and social experience for your child.

If there are any questions which remain unanswered, please feel free to call upon our principal, assistant principal, or kindergarten teacher.

Sincerely,

Michael F. Martin, Principal

Kerma J. Isaacson, Kindergarten Teacher
Dear Boys and Girls:

I am so glad you are coming to our kindergarten. We will work and play together and learn many things. You will make many new friends at school.

I am looking forward to a happy year in kindergarten with all of you.

Your new friend,

Your Kindergarten Teacher
A personal postcard will be sent to each child’s home a few days before they begin school. This postcard will be addressed with the child’s name on it. Bright colored stickers will be attached next to the child’s name.

The postcard will read as follows:

Dear (Child’s Name):

I am so glad you are coming to our kindergarten class. We work and play together and learn many new things. You will make many new friends at your new school. I am looking forward to seeing you.

Your New Kindergarten Teacher
Dear Parents:

I am working on a practicum for my Master's degree and need your help. If you don't mind, I would certainly appreciate your answering the following questions. You do not need to sign your name unless you want to. Of course, this is strictly on my own as I need the information for my practicum. Thank you very much.

1. Was this handbook a valuable tool in helping your child get ready for school? How? Please explain.

2. What part helped you the most? Why?

3. What was the least helpful? Why?

4. What additional information would you add?

Thank you again for your time and effort. I really appreciate you and your child.

Sincerely,

Kerma J. Isaacson
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This handbook is important to parents who have kindergarten children at Palmetto Elementary School since many of them do not understand the kindergarten program. Its chief function is to convey information about the kindergarten in action. The handbook is based on a local situation, but most of the information would apply to other kindergartens.
REFERENCES


Ross, Elizabeth Dale. The Kindergarten Crusade: The Estab-


