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UNIT IN PARENT EDUCATION

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Most parents want their children to grow into independent adults, able to make decisions with which they can live, and able to cope with the pressures and problems of a world different from that which the parents have known.

Parents are teachers of their children and as such they need to search out and identify those things they want for their child. When a child is able to make decisions and choose goals for himself, he will be influenced by attitudes and behaviors taught to him during early developmental years.

Though each child and each parent is unique, parents who have a general knowledge of the growth and development patterns of children stand a better chance of fulfilling the child's needs. As parents are faced with the numerous facets of the parental role, many realize their limitations. Many parents look for interpretations of child

behavior and development that will be meaningful to them.

The purpose of this study was to develop a self-instruction unit in child development. The content of the lessons was directed to parents of children one to three years old.

Child development concepts in line with parent concerns were identified prior to lesson development. The extension family life specialist worked very closely with the writer in developing lesson content. Copies of completed lessons were submitted to both the extension family life specialist and head of the family life department for approval.

Parents of toddlers in seven Oregon counties or county units were subjects of the study. The self-instruction unit was administered through the already established system of the extension organization. Because it was a research project, all registrants were sent a fact sheet, which provided information about family, education, vocation and age. This was returned with the pre-test before the parent received the first lesson.

The method of disseminating the information was by correspondence. The self-instruction unit was divided into four lessons. Lessons were mailed to the registrants, one at a time with a mini-evaluation attached. When the students completed the lesson and the mini-evaluation, they returned the mini-evaluation to the state extension office which indicated they were ready for the next lesson. This

procedure was applied through the completion of the self-instruction unit.

The results of the study showed that an increase of the cognitive level of knowledge of child development concepts could be attained through a self-instruction unit. However the closeness of scoring on the objective part of the pre- and post test would indicate a need for expansion of the testing device. The results of the mini-evaluations indicated that the lesson form and the method of correspondence were acceptable.

Many parents added comments on the mini-evaluation stating that the lessons provided a review of concepts learned at a time when they had no children. Being reminded of this knowledge at a time they could apply it was helpful.

Developing and Testing a Self-Instruction
Unit in Parent Education

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DEVELOPING AND TESTING A SELF-INSTRUCTION UNIT IN PARENT EDUCATION

I. INTRODUCTION

During the past 50 years there has been an increased focus on parent education. This interest is triggered by several things. The most dominant are the rapid and significant changes in our society and parent awareness of research in the area of child growth and development.

Most parents want to be "good" parents and are concerned about making decisions that lead to the well-being of their children. Mothers seem to be more vocal, but when encouraged, fathers express their concerns as well.

In the past parents relied on traditional values and methods to guide them through child rearing years. Many parents reared their children in the same setting in which they grew up. There existed a strong family structure composed of aunts, uncles, cousins and grandparents. This extended family contributed advice and assistance in rearing the children (Bronfenbrenner, 1970).

Today family mobility is much greater and many parents raise their children in an entirely different setting than that in which they grew up. Today's families are frequently isolated from relatives and are considered a "nuclear" family consisting of father, mother, and

children. If relatives do live near, their advice is usually considered outdated (Bronfenbrenner, 1970).

In addition to mobility and the changed family structure, the role of women in our society has been drastically altered. Almost 40 percent of the women in the United States are now employed. Sixty-three percent of these women are married. As a result, woman's self-image has been notably transformed. Her aspirations are very different. In the past, society reinforced woman's role as wife and mother, but today she is involved in expectations and frustrations beyond the arena of homemaking.

Not to be overlooked are other factors affecting the deliberate effort by many parents for a better understanding of the parental role. Most people have little or no experience with children before they become parents. They do not realize what they are getting into until they are already involved in the process of child rearing. No mantle of knowledge and self assurance suddenly settles over new parents to equip them to function in this new role. As the child bearing and child rearing years of the family life cycle are entered, many parents become aware of the numerous facets of the parental role.

Becoming a parent is like reaching the point of no return. As one author points out, in our society it is possible to honorably withdraw from marriage. There is little social stigma attached to dissolution of marriage or divorce, but there is no way a parent can withdraw

from parenthood. Parents must simply make the best of the situation.

What does it mean to become a parent? Do parents think of this as a temporary, nurturing role? Research tells us that the most important learning for the child comes from within the framework of parents and family. There are a limited number of years to teach values and attitudes that parents think are important. If parents wait until the child reaches puberty to identify values and develop attitudes, it is too late.

Most professionals recognize that little is done to prepare young people for a role that most will acquire, that of parenthood. This does not appear to change our educational requirements. There is no massive trend toward teaching for parenthood. Indeed, there is little to be found in present curriculum. Classes in child behavior and development are offered in high schools but these are usually through the home economics program with mostly girl enrollment. The co-educational classes, recently adopted by some schools, usually deal with other aspects of homemaking. Even the small percentage of parents who have had some classes in child care and development are not parents at that time. The most positive learning takes place when the student is able to apply the acquired knowledge. Consequently, when the student becomes a parent a review of earlier learning is helpful (Brim, 1959).

Children need parents who can thoughtfully deal with the

confusion and pressure of this changing world. If parents sincerely want to help their child they need to understand the world of the child. Parents who know the general pattern of growth and development of children are in a better position to help their child become independent and able to make decisions for the future with which the child can live. Many parents look for interpretations that will help them with their particular uncertainties and problems.

Statement of the Problem

The central problem of the study was to develop a series of self-instruction lessons for parents of children one to three years old. The problem involved three major dimensions:

1. Identify areas of growth and development that are of primary concern to parents of children one to three years of age and construct lessons that present basic concepts applicable to these concerns.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of parent education through the use of a self-instruction unit administered through correspondence.
3. Evaluate the acceptability of independent study by correspondence as a method of parent education.

Assumptions and Limitations

A parent education program is based on the assumption that by increasing knowledge of child development and growth stages the parent will gain more self-confidence for the job ahead. This knowledge and understanding will contribute to a feeling of adequacy and competency in the parental role.

Another assumption is that parents learn best when they are interested in the subject content and have an opportunity to apply the acquired information. It is understood that there are individual differences in the amount of learning acquired and the amount of actual application, depending on the intellectual ability of the student and the student's own attitude and personality.

One of the major weaknesses of a parent education program is that frequently only mothers participate. In a self-instruction unit of learning, both parents can be involved.

Even though parents may be knowledgeable of child development and intellectually accepting, this enlightenment does not promise a change in parent behavior.

Definition of Terms

"Parent education" refers to an activity using instructional methods to strengthen the parental role. It does not strive for any

single objective or terminal behavior but recognizes that child rearing is an evolving or continuing process.

"Parent effectiveness" recognizes the pervasive role the parent has in the learning process of the child. The parent's behavior and attitudes can influence the child in growth and development toward autonomy and a positive self-image. As a child acquires a feeling of autonomy and positive feelings about himself, he is able to deal with life's situations and problems effectively.

Throughout this study, "toddler" refers to the child one to three years old. General characteristics of the toddler include learning to walk, talk, and use the toilet. He is in the beginning of the "no" stage when he begins to move toward independence. During the toddler stage he learns by touching, feeling, and putting things in his mouth. He is learning to feed himself, first using fingers, and then learning to use a spoon. Mealtime is usually messy. A toddler does not know how to play cooperatively, but he likes to be around other children.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The first and major responsibility for the welfare of children remains with the parents. Most parents recognize their role in the development of their children as an essential one. Parents have always had concerns about child rearing. . . "tasks related to providing for the physical needs of children as well as the dissemination of moral and ethical values have been described and discussed in literature for centuries" (Auerbach, 1968 p. xi).

Emphasis has been greater in recent years on the development of self-concept and self-actualization (Rogers, 1962; Maslow, 1962). A child builds his self-image through the attitude and behavior of those around him. He sees himself as he thinks others see him. A child builds a positive self-concept if those who are important in his life value him. McCandless (1967) cites two studies that support the hypothesis that a child's self-concept develops according to the rewards and reinforcement given by parents. If positive personality characteristics are to develop satisfactorily, adults close to the child need to recognize what kinds of behavior exhibited by the child will indicate that the child's needs are being met in this regard.

Elkind (1970) discusses the development of children in a society where rapid advances are made in technology. This rapid growth of technology tends to accelerate mental growth, and children are

becoming more intellectually sophisticated. As Elkind points out, heightened mental growth appears to have a negative effect on children's emotional growth. Because of increasing automation and pressures on parents, anxiety and fear are passed on to the children.

Need for Parent Education

In the past parents depended on traditional values and methods to guide them in their task of child rearing. With the severe upheaval in our family structure and the changing role of the family unit, parents find it difficult to use traditional values as a guide. Bronfenbrenner (1970) views with concern such changes as working mothers, mobility of families, urbanization, and the nuclear family with only two adults instead of the extended family with grandparents, aunts and uncles in the vicinity. Mead (1970) concurs in identifying social changes as she points out the conflict that results when old child rearing practices do not prove adequate to prepare the young for a changing society.

Boulding (1965) discusses changes taking place in family structure, religion and aesthetic values and expresses concern over the prevailing attitude of grudging acceptance. He feels there is hope for future generations only if these transitions are positively approached.

LeMaster's (1970) book, Parents in Modern America, examines the role of the parent and lends support to the thought that parents are under great pressure through changes in social structure, which weaken the parents' feeling of adequacy in the parental role. In addition to social changes listed by Bronfenbrenner, LeMasters discusses

marital instability, much advice from child experts, and women's liberation--all tending to weaken parents' position.

Probably the most important task that parent education can accomplish is to strengthen the attitudes and convictions of parents so they can deal with problems in child rearing with greater confidence and understanding. Statements by several professionals in parent education for child rearing would seem to support this. Kavin (1963, p. 7) says, "A parent education program is based on the assumption that by acquiring increased knowledge and understanding of the task he is undertaking, a person gains self-confidence and feels more adequate to perform the task satisfactorily."

Auerbach (1963, p. 3) explains parent education as a term used to cover a wide range of educational programs to help parents increase their competence and develop effective methods of child care. Auerbach further discusses parent education in terms of "primary prevention" since parents are "key figures in developing their children's personalities."

Brim (1959) says, "A particular parent, in response to some concern which has unpredictably arisen in his child-rearing tasks, is ready for information relevant to his question... at this moment relevant information can produce an increment in his knowledge, a change in his point of view, a shift in his attitude, so that his child rearing henceforth is altered." Brim points out some limiting factors

in parent education and says that education for child rearing cannot by itself bring about changes in behavior and feelings on which satisfying and constructive adult decisions can be made. He says that many parent education programs are naive and even though a parent possesses the knowledge and may be intellectually convinced, he may not alter his behavior in dealing with problems in child-parent relationships. All parents to some degree, are influenced by unconscious factors. Recognition of contributing causes of parent behavior directs attention to the content of parent education programs. The value is to avoid educational efforts that hold little or no chance of success.

Pickarts and Fargo (1971) sees parent education as a means of parental competence. Parents are described as prime teachers of their children, and as such, need to know how children develop intellectually. Parents are the key figures in meaningful learning experiences. Picart also discusses the need for parents to appraise their own values and attitudes. Children need to know what it is their parents find meaningful and significant. Parents should thoughtfully and consciously define values for their children. Verbalized values and daily behavior are frequently in conflict. "Do what I say and not what I do, " is an old worn out phrase which unfortunately is still operationally in use. Children learn through imitation and from actions around them and it is the parental behavior rather than parental admonitions that do the greater job of teaching.

Picarts and Fargo point out that most people live with a dual set of values--those we cherish and believe in and those that cause behavioral response to a situation. An awareness of this duality and an effort to bring action and belief into harmony brings reality and meaning into our lives. According to Picarts and Fargo parental competence is a base for parent education programs. Competence as a parent is outlined as a measure of conscious awareness and acceptance of the teaching role in children's lives and an increased skill in guiding the child's life.

One reason parents are more "aware" of the responsibility of child rearing than ever before results from studies and research in child development related to psychology, education, sociology, and other related fields. Mass media expose all areas of child development and child rearing.

"Breakdown in tradition forces the modern parent into greater consciousness of his child-rearing practices and demands that he develop many aspects of his role as parent" (Brim, 1959, p. 18). Brim states this as one cause for the growing movement for parent education but points out a second cause, that is, "the growing belief on the part of many persons that there existed better ways of rearing children than those prescribed by tradition."

Brim lists many forms of parent education--group discussions, individual discussions with trained counselors, individual reading of

books, pamphlets and periodicals, and television and radio programs. National, state, and local agencies have developed and maintained programs in parent education.

Close (1971, p. 42) reports, "The need for comprehensive family oriented child development programs including health services, day care and early childhood education topped the list of sixteen 'over-riding concerns' identified at the 1970 White House Conference on Children."

Stern's (1960) survey of parent education discusses methods and points out that strong emphasis is laid on group methods and group discussion. In response to many requests, Auerbach presents a book on parent group education which she suggests be used as a guide for discussion groups. Holtzman (1963) points out that much has been written and said about parent group education but little has taken place to determine the effectiveness of this method. Herford's (1963) book, Changing Parental Attitudes Through Group Discussion, discusses the purpose of the program, the group discussion method and possible problems encountered using it in a community, and the research technique and evaluation of the education program. The conclusion of the research showed, "the group discussion method is a powerful education technique for the changing of attitude and behavior" (p. 137).

From the results of a study done in Maryland (Mannino, 1969) on dropouts from parent education groups, the observation is made that

a segment of parents is neglected by the group discussion method. In interviews with the parent education dropouts the most frequently stated reasons for discontinuing were difficulty in securing baby sitters, transportation problems, fathers unable to participate because of jobs, and the discussions were not applicable to the place of the family in the family life cycle.

A commentary by Berger (1969, p. 59) on this study suggested, "one possible and likely reason for dropping out is feeling threatened by the discussion." Berger states this as speculative since no respondent gave it as a reason, but experience suggests reasons may be superficial. She further comments that underlying reasons are almost impossible to elicit in one interview.

For many people formal education stops when they complete high school. For reasons of their own they cannot or do not want to pursue further education, at least, not at that time. But people are motivated by needs and this is frequently how it is with parent education. LeMasters (1970) says that if any preparation takes place for parenthood it is mostly information on how to care for the physical needs of the baby. Most parents do little beyond that to prepare themselves for the problems ahead. Many parents do not even realize what kinds of problems they will have until they are facing them.

For many, the need for parent education arises at a time when it is most difficult for parents to satisfy it. Young families may be on

limited budgets that do not include the extra cost of a babysitter and they may find it difficult to attend a meeting away from home at a set time.

An agency in Oregon that has the responsibility for providing information to families on all areas of family concerns is the Extension Service of Oregon State University. The extension service brings practical and theoretical considerations into useful, acceptable relationships. The resources of the university are extended geographically beyond the confines of the campus.

Shannon (1965) describes the function of co-operative extension service by the following, "University extension leaders seek to identify public problems and public needs, to interpret these concerns to the university, to focus university skills and resources upon them, and thence to translate university insights into educational activities throughout a state or region." In short, the extension mission is to bring campus and community together for mutual benefit.

In a recent paper, Cofer (1972) suggests that interdependence of research, teaching and extension in home economics needs to be strengthened.

One can envision the flow of new knowledge from the researcher by way of the resident teacher and the extension agent to the consumer. But interdependence means a reciprocal dependence rather than a mere linking together. Thus, the resident teacher and the extension agent are expected to give something to the researcher as well as receive new knowledge from research.

Applied research has great benefits to both university and community. Cofer also points out that there are excellent research data going to waste in extension because no one has organized or funded the projects for use. Extension personnel are channels for generating ideas and expediting programs.

Through the home economics extension agents in some Oregon counties, parents have indicated a need for additional information in child growth and development. Many methods have been implemented in the past to provide families with educational materials. A recent innovation used by the Oregon State University Extension Service to supply homemakers with information has been correspondence instruction. Velma Seat, Food Marketing Specialist, and Alberta Johnston, Family Finance Specialist, have used this method effectively.

The Food Marketing Specialist stated during an interview that 50 to 80 percent of the registrants completed correspondence courses in the area of foods and marketing. She suggested the high percentage of completions may be due to feedback to the participants. The extension agents in the participating counties were involved in the correspondence courses. Assignment sheets were included in the lesson packet. These completed assignments were sent to the extension agent in participating counties. Appropriate corrections or comments were made and the assignment sheet then returned to the participant.

Correspondence instruction had its origin in the United States

during the latter half of the nineteenth century when "the American educational system experienced a critical period of growth and development" (MacKenzie, 1968, p. 2). The Society to Encourage Students at Home was organized in 1873 and is considered the earliest effort toward independent study through correspondence.

MacKenzie states that to provide equal educational opportunity for all created some problems that seemed beyond the capabilities of the existing systems. Correspondence instruction was implemented to bridge gaps in existing systems and satisfy individual needs. He explains correspondence instruction as a method of instruction in which correspondence is the means of communication between student and teacher.

Correspondence instruction is adaptable to parent education. With those students in mind who find it difficult or impossible to attend meetings, others who may be uncomfortable or threatened by group discussions and those who prefer studying at their own pace by themselves, parent education through a self-instruction unit has merit. Extension agents in Oregon report a high level of interest in correspondence courses. During home calls by an extension aide in one county, homemakers stated they were more interested in correspondence courses than anything else (Appendix F).

No matter what resources or methods are employed to help parents in their task of child rearing, the ultimate goal is the same.

Parents have a temporary, nurturing role when they need to give thoughtful, realistic guidance to children to help them develop into useful, self-actualized individuals for the child's sake as well as the sake of future generations.

Child Development

The volume of written word on child development is almost overwhelming. Clearly, one must choose some means of narrowing it to specific objectives. A college course in theories of child development was helpful to the writer in focusing on current thinking in this area.

Reading selections for child development were organized into three parts. The first section includes a limited look at child development theories, the methodology in studying behavior, and some interpretations of these findings. As one begins to look at research in this area, it becomes immediately obvious that attention must be directed to the work of Jean Piaget. There are countless references to Piaget's work and he is a prolific writer. Two interpretations were used to gain some understanding of his theories because as Piaget says, "I am not an easy author" (Flavell, 1963). Flavell's book provides a biographical sketch followed by a discussion of Piaget's methodology. There are many criticisms of Piaget's work as well as support and interpretations of his theories (Lickona, 1969). A knowledge of his methods is helpful in comprehending what is being said. Ginsberg

and Oppen (1969) state a readable and understandable introduction to Piagetian theory. The content of this interpretation considers Piaget's major theories of intellectual development in children. Piaget is more interested in studying the process underlying a child's thoughts rather than the content of a child's thinking. It also presents research on which the theories are based and the rationale that led to the research.

Another psychologist who has had great impact on current thinking in areas of human development is Erik Erikson. He discusses the human life cycle in terms of eight stages of man. Erikson states that there are certain stages of development that take place within each organism at various levels of his life and though man progresses to the next stage of development he still continues to develop in the preceding stages. The epigenetic point of view is prevalent in current theories of human development. Erikson says that nations use child training to the end of gaining their particular form of mature human identity.

A third behaviorist and a controversial figure in the science of human behavior is B. F. Skinner. Skinner lacks enthusiasm for being cast in the role of a theorist but most research scholars agree that he does have a theory and that it is deceptively simple. Skinner's theory is referred to as operant reinforcement theory. McCandless summarizes it as, "an organism arrives at any given type of behavior through a series of progressive approximations that work." Skinner

uses precise experiments and rejects any method of inquiry that is not based on observable behavior. He opposes any attempt to fill in gaps with hypothesized variables and because of this he is frequently labeled a purist. However, he and his students have dealt with a wide range of practical problems including educational technology, drugs and child development. Skinner's position is primarily concerned with behavior modification and learning. He believes that behavior is shaped from without, not within; that our environment controls our actions.

The second area of reading for child development includes three textbooks. Childhood and Adolescence (Stone, 1968) is a college level text covering birth through adolescence. This book provides a very complete reference on developmental stages of children.

Another textbook that would be as useful to parents as well as teachers and students is These Are Young Children (Jenkins, Shacter, and Bauer, 1966). Based on current and classic research, the authors outline the sequential growth and basic needs of children but also emphasize the infinite variations on the basic similarity of all children. The authors examine some of the unique and challenging problems facing today's children. The summary of normal development and charts found in the back section are helpful in the study of child development.

The last text reviewed for child development is a book written for high school students, but again, an equally useful book for parents.

Understanding and Guiding Young Children (Baker and Fane, 1971)

focuses on learning about the development and growth of children rather than the care of children.

Both Piaget and Erikson stress the importance of play to the child's developmental processes. Thinking is Children's Play (Sharp, 1969) is a thoughtful book on play with an overview, discussing how children learn to think, based on Piagetian theory. The book includes a section suggesting games and the use of ordinary household materials for play that will help children expand their thinking processes.

The third area of reading for the review of literature in child development was current books written for parents about child rearing. Ginott (1965) emphasizes familiar but frequently forgotten principles in child-parent relationships in his book Between Parent and Child. His approach is to present "right" and "wrong" answers to parents and suggests that if parents come up with the "right" answer at the appropriate time the problem will go away. How to Parent by Dodson (1970) is another recent publication that deals with child rearing practices. Dodson's approach is to supply parents with knowledge of child behavior at developmental stages on the premise that parents will be able to choose the most effective way to deal with behaviors that occur with each successive stage. Dodson includes the developmental tasks of pre-school years. His advice to parents is rather specific with suggestions of parental behavior that he thinks

will be most successful.

Adult Education

Adult education has many dimensions. A Red Cross class on first-aid, a tennis class in the summer recreation program, or a study group on urban renewal may all be considered adult education. Verner (1964, p. 2) sums it up by saying, "Whatever the form, content, duration, physical setting, or sponsorship an activity is identified as adult education when it is part of a systematic planned, instructional program for adults."

A sound approach to designing an adult education program is to first examine the characteristics of the student. What is the mature adult like? Bischoff (1969) offers insights through a thoughtful analysis of adulthood. In addition to the overview which identifies and describes the adult, the reader encounters a look at adult tasks. Bischoff discusses marriage, parenthood, work, leisure, social and civic relationships and other problems and pleasures that make up the warp and woof of adult living.

Adult education differs greatly from previous school experiences. Learning ventures are initiated for highly practical reasons. Adults usually have something specific in mind that they want to learn. Adult education may be motivated by some task related to one's job, family, home, or hobby.

Tough (1971, p. 17) cites a survey to determine how common and how important learning projects are to adults. "The median is eight learning projects a year, involving eight distinct areas of knowledge and skill." He defines a learning project as a major, highly deliberate effort to gain certain knowledge and skill or to change in some way. He suggests that adult learning is motivated by curiosity, interest and enjoyment. People learn best when certain points of maturation, interest, and need are reached.

A recurrent question in considering adult education is how to best teach adults. Many processes are employed to achieve educational objectives, but some basic factors must be considered no matter what the method.

Adult education is a part-time project for most and whatever studying or preparation that needs to take place must fit into a family schedule. The adult student may be a homemaker. In addition to caring for a family she may have an outside job. Or the student may be the father who is involved in earning a living for his family. The learning situation must be flexible to accommodate to many kinds of living patterns.

Adults with families are faced with crises every day--sometimes large, sometimes small. Because of family demands and job and community commitments each educational activity must carry to completion some useful learning. The student may plan to put the acquired

information or skill to work immediately while others may derive pleasure and increase their self-esteem from learning activities (Tough, 1971). Whatever the reason, the student needs to feel his effort was worthwhile and the time well spent. Individual abilities and objectives vary greatly, so success is evaluated by each student in personal terms.

III. METHOD OF PROCEDURE

Identification of Parent Concerns

The subjects of this study were parents of children one to three years old. Parents from seven counties or county units participated in the self-instruction course of study. Concerns of parents were identified to determine the content to be included in the self-instruction lessons. Two methods of identifying concerns were used.

Interviews with Parents

Twenty-eight parents with children in this age group were interviewed. Some of the parents were acquaintances of the author and others were parents suggested by colleagues of the author.

A guide sheet (Appendix A) was developed to be used during the interviews to insure uniformity in the areas discussed. A review of literature and discussions with the extension family life specialist and head of the family life department at Oregon State University provided the basis for the guide sheet questions.

The interviews were an informal exchange rather than question-answer. Questions were used to encourage the flow of conversation. Parents could and did introduce other problems and observations and

these were noted for consideration. Fathers and mothers were interviewed separately. Of the 28 interviewed, 18 were mothers and 10 were fathers.

Interviews with Professionals

A second means of identifying parent concerns for child rearing was interviews with persons working in areas of child development, parent education and counseling.

Conferences were scheduled with three clergymen who had primary responsibility for parent-child relationships. One taught parent education classes, another worked with family counseling and the third was a juvenile officer in addition to church responsibilities. The interviews included conversation about parent-child problems and programs and help available to parents. Observations of the clergymen as they viewed parent-child relationships were also discussed.

Other professionals contacted to further identify areas of concern to parents included two university family life staff members, an extension family life specialist, an instructor of parent education at a community college, a university adult education staff member and two directors of day care centers.

Media for Parent Education

After parent concerns were identified, the next consideration was to find an appropriate pattern for the lessons and to determine

what procedure to use to disseminate the information.

Two specialists on the extension staff have developed and administered independent study courses by correspondence in other subject areas, so instruction by correspondence is not new in Oregon. Because of limitations on time and funds these were not developed through research projects, but rather teaching methods. Visits with these specialists resulted in ideas and suggestions for designing and administering a similar type course in child development.

Several correspondence courses from other states were reviewed for ideas. These courses were not limited to family life subject area.

An agreement was made with the extension service to develop and test a self-instruction unit by correspondence within the framework of the existing extension organization. The author worked very closely with the extension family life specialist so the content of the lessons remained within the boundaries of the extension philosophy.

Writing the Self-Instruction Unit

Certain points must be observed in developing lessons for self-instruction. The material must be readable and easily understood. Guidelines used for the development of the four lessons were suitability of subject matter, needs of parents for information, and the anticipated reading level and comprehension of the student. The

average adult has about an eighth or ninth grade level of reading (Dale and Chall, 1948). Vocabulary and concepts were held within this range.

Findings from the interviews were organized into similar subject areas. Brim's (1959) discussion on content of educational programs was helpful in outlining objectives for the lessons. Information assembled from the interviews, a review of literature and the writer's background in child development were combined for developing the lessons for the self-instruction unit.

An outline of the subject matter to be included was completed and discussed with the extension family life specialist and the head of the family life department at Oregon State University. Both responded with specific suggestions. Subsequent consultations were scheduled with the extension family life specialist during the writing of the lessons. Copies of the completed lessons (Appendix G) were submitted to both the extension family life specialist and head of the family life department for approval.

Development of a Testing Device and a Fact Sheet

One of the objectives of the study was to determine the effectiveness of a self-instruction unit at a cognitive level. A pre and post-test (Appendix B) were designed with this objective in mind. True-false and completion questions were included for a measurement of knowledge. Discussion questions were used for an attitude measurement.

Because the participants in the study were parents of toddlers, which implies some time limitations, and because they received the testing instrument by mail, the tests were designed for easy understanding and a minimum of completion time.

A span of not less than six weeks elapsed between the administration of the pre- and post test. The same instrument was used for both measurements.

A mini-evaluation was included with each of the four lessons. This mini-evaluation provided information on the acceptability of subject matter included in the lesson and the method used.

A fact sheet (Appendix B) was sent with the pre-test to gain information about participants in the study. The main areas covered in this fact sheet included age of participants and family members, size of family, education and occupation of both parents. The first two questions on the fact sheet were included for the benefit of the extension service (Appendix B).

Distribution of Self-Instruction Unit

Oregon extension agents were notified that an independent study in child development would soon be available. The self-instruction unit was administered within the framework of the already established extension organization. Each extension specialist sends a list of programs available for the coming years to the extension agents in the

counties. The program planning committee in the county and the extension agent review possible programs using expressed interest or needs of homemakers in the county as a guide in determining what will be included on the program schedule for the coming year.

Extension agents in seven counties or county units indicated interest in participating in the child development course of study. Using the program planning process already established within the organizational framework of the extension service it was necessary to use the counties who indicated a desire to participate. An analysis of the counties that responded showed a variety of geographical locations.

A news release was sent to each participating county. Agents were asked to adjust the release to suit their county situation. Publicity included information on the content of the lessons, qualifications of the participants, when, where and how to register. (See examples in Appendix C.)

A list of registrants was forwarded from the participating counties to the state extension office. From that point all materials concerning the self-instruction study were handled from the state office.

A cover letter, fact sheet and pre-test were mailed to each participant (Appendix B). When the pre-test was returned to the state extension office the first lesson was mailed to the student. A mini-evaluation, included with the first lesson, was completed and returned

by the student which indicated readiness for the second lesson. This procedure was applied through the completion of four lessons and the post test. If a mini-evaluation was not returned no further lessons were sent. No time limit was set for completion of the lessons.

Occasionally a student would call or send a note to the county agent or the secretary at the state office, stating that the mini-evaluation had been returned or sometimes lost, but the student wanted to continue with the next lesson. The next lesson was then mailed to the student.

Through oversight, a space for name and address was omitted on the pre-test. Consequently some were returned with no return address. The secretary was able to match some of those returned, but some were not identified. A follow-up card was mailed to registrants who had not returned the pre-test or who could not be identified as responding (Appendix B). The card sought to determine why people had not participated in the study beyond the registration stage. The first lesson was mailed to those indicating they had returned the pre-test. At the time of writing the research there were 26 enrolled in the course who had returned the pre-test but had not received the first lesson. They are not included in the results of the study.

IV. DATA, RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participation in the Self-Instruction Unit

Of the 524 individuals who registered for the self-instruction course, 140 (26.7%) completed the pre-test, fact sheet, four lessons with attached mini-evaluations and the post test. Table 1, below, shows a breakdown of participation during the study. (See Appendix for listing by counties.)

Table 1. Record of Participants

	Pre-test	Lesson				Post test
		1	2	3	4	
sent:	524	406	289	237	203	195
ret'd:	394	288	235	203	185	145

The total number of participants returning all parts of the self-instruction unit and research related information numbered 145, however 5 participants omitted answers to the completion questions. In some instances a participant contacted the extension office stating she had lost or mailed the mini-evaluation but had not received the next lesson. The lesson requested was then mailed to the participant. This accounts for differences between those returned for one lesson and the number sent for the next lesson.

Follow-up

In an effort to learn why registrants did not continue with the study course after receiving the pre-test and fact sheet, a follow-up card was mailed (Appendix B). A few pre-tests and fact sheets were returned marked "address unknown." Sixty of the 127 cards mailed were returned. Table 2 shows the responses of these 60.

Table 2. Response to Follow-up Card

too busy	14
forgot	1
not what registrant wanted	5
returned pre-test, no address not enrolled in course	26
other	<u>9</u>
TOTAL RETURNED	60

Some of the reasons given for the "other" category were: moved and lost papers, family crises, knowledge of subject exceeded that in the lessons.

No follow-up was made of those individuals who did not continue during the span of the course. One hundred eight-five individuals (35.3%) who registered for the course completed Lesson 4 and returned the mini-evaluation. Some participants added notes on the fourth mini-evaluation extending a thank you for the opportunity to participate in the self-instruction course, apparently forgetting the post test. This

could account for some of the decrease in post tests completed because if the mini-evaluation from Lesson 4 was returned unidentified, the participant did not receive the post test. Some attempts were made to match mini-evaluations with participants, but with no return address it was not certain that the post test was mailed to everyone who returned the fourth mini-evaluation.

The Sample

Participants enrolled in the self-instruction unit were all mothers, ranging in age from under 20 years to 45 years. The largest grouping of ages of participants was 20 to 30 years old.

Of the 145 mothers enrolled throughout the course of study, 56 had a high school education plus some additional classes, 26 had completed four years of college, and an additional 23 mothers had obtained a baccalaureate degree plus some additional classes. Appendix D shows a complete report of the education of participants and their spouses.

Ten mothers reported full time employment outside the home and an additional 16 indicated they were employed part time. Further information on occupations is listed in Appendix D.

Two age categories with the greatest number of children reported by participants were children less than one year old (40 children reported) and children one to three years old (116 children

reported). A total of 198 children were reported for the 145 participating mothers. A complete list of children's ages can be found in Appendix D.

Results of Testing

One of the major objectives of the study was to determine the effectiveness of a self-instruction course. The pre- and post test were used for this assessment. Section A included 15 true and false statements and 11 completion statements. Only one answer was considered correct. Section B contained four discussion type problems. Because there was the possibility of more than one correct answer a point system was used to evaluate this section (Appendix E). Concepts and terminology directly related to the lesson content were rated highest while splinter concepts received fewer points.

Table 3 shows the mean and inclusive range of scores on both sections of the testing device.

Table 3. Mean and Range of Pre- and Post Test for 140 Participants

	<u>Section A</u>		<u>Section B</u>	
	Mean	Range	Mean	Range
Pre-test	22.69	12	18.84	19
Post test	24.02	9	21.85	12

Findings also showed improvement by 84.28 percent of the participants. Table 4 shows the number and percentage of the participants that improved, those that tested the same, and those who dropped on their post test score.

Table 4. Scoring on Testing Device for 140 Participants

	Improved	Dropped	Same
Number	118	9	13
Percentage	84.28	6.43	9.29

The figures in Tables 3 and 4 are based on participants who completed all sections of the test. Five participants omitted the completion questions.

Another objective of the study was to determine whether the content of the self-instruction unit was acceptable. The questions used in the mini-evaluation to help identify content acceptability were:

Did you understand everything presented in this lesson?

Was the information new to you or something you already knew?

The questions were included in three of the four lessons. Ninety-three percent replied they understood all that was included in the lessons. Some questions were clarified by direct correspondence to the participant from the extension family life specialist. An example of

this correspondence is included in Appendix F. Five letters went out in response to direct questions concerning some area of the lessons.

In response to the question concerning whether the information in the lessons was new or something they already knew, the participants added a third category on the mini-evaluation which they listed as review. The term "review" could be interpreted as something they already knew, but the students made a finer distinction by saying that the lesson content triggered their memory and they recognized the information as something with which they had been in contact at a previous time and had forgotten, or that they recalled learning the material at some time in the past but realized it had been presented in a different manner. Because of this distinction, it seemed appropriate to add "review" as a third category. Table 5 shows the response to this question included on three mini-evaluations and divided into the three categories.

Table 5. Response to Question Concerning
Information Included in Lessons

new information	21.54%
already knew concepts included in lessons	16.31%
review	62.05%

Another effort to determine the effectiveness of the study was a question posed in three of the mini-evaluations asking whether the

participant had ordered or read any of the suggested readings or other publications on child development or child rearing. Table 6 shows a breakdown of the response to this question.

Table 6. Response to Question Concerning Further Reading

yes	77.9%
no	19.3%
planned to	2.8%

A third objective of the study was to determine the acceptability of the method of correspondence. Two questions were included in the mini-evaluations for this purpose. The participants were asked whether they liked this method of learning and to judge the length of the lessons. The results of these two inquiries can be seen in Table 7.

Table 7. Response to Acceptability of Lesson Form and Method of Correspondence

liked this method of learning:	
yes	92.0%
no	4.0%
no answer	4.0%
lessons were	
too long	8.1%
too short	7.1%
just right	84.8%

Discussion

In a comparison of the pre- and post test scores as shown in Table 3, improvement can be seen on the post test. Looking at the mean of Section A of the pre- and post test, only 1.57 points difference exists. If the testing device had been more difficult greater improvement might have been noted.

One of the references discussing adult education (Verner, 1964) suggested that any testing device be kept simple so as not to discourage the adult student. It appears this suggestion may have influenced the decision of what kinds of test question to include in the testing device.

The range and mean are more widely separated in Section B of the pre- and post test. This would seem to indicate concepts were learned from studying the lessons and the student was able to apply concepts to a described situation or problem.

Based on data listed in Tables 3 and 4, it would appear that concepts of child development and child rearing can be learned through a self-instruction unit by correspondence. It is important to remember that the students understanding of the concepts were tested in the cognitive domain. Whether this instruction changed behavior or attitudes of the parent is conjecture and not part of this study.

From the response to the two questions included concerning the

acceptability of the content it would appear that the content was acceptable. Though the information was not new to 83 percent of the respondents who completed the study, 62 percent felt that it served as a review for them. One parent said, "Much of the lesson content I already knew, but the lesson made me stop, think and evaluate the relationship between my child and self. It's interesting and helpful." Another comment, "I have several books on child development and read often. However, observing my child with a specific intent means much more. The lessons remind me of things I'd forgotten." There were many more comments in the same vein. Though the information was not new to them, it would appear that the student felt a value in reviewing the material.

The third objective included in the study was to determine the acceptability of the lesson form and the method of correspondence. From the response listed in Table 7, it appears that the form used was a desirable method of disseminating information. Ninety-two percent responded positively. Four percent did not like the method, and the remaining four percent did not respond. Of those who did not like the method, two respondents wrote comments. They stated they did not like the format--the student was asked during the lesson to stop, turn to the worksheet, complete a designated part, then return to the lesson content. As one respondent stated, "It was a lot of hopping around."

Statements made by the food marketing specialist and references to correspondence from an extension agent included in the review of literature, would indicate that experiences with correspondence courses were successful. The response of participants in this study support the conclusion that the method of correspondence is an acceptable means of disseminating information.

Recommendations

Based on the data from the pre- and post test and mini-evaluations, self-instruction by correspondence is an acceptable method of learning. From the points included in the discussion recommendations are listed below. The recommendations are divided into two parts. One part is directed to the extension service for further use of the self-instruction unit. The second part is directed toward further study and research of self-instruction by correspondence.

For the Extension Service

1. Include a question on the mini-evaluation to solicit response to whether the students like to stop mid-way to work on the worksheet, or would rather complete all of the lesson content, then turn to the worksheet.
2. Feedback to participants may encourage continued participation. Extension agents may need to attend a training session

in child development to review concepts included in the lessons.

3. Due to questions posed concerning content in lessons 1 and 2, lessons should be critically reviewed, and possibly revised, before implementing the study course.

For Further Research and Study

1. Conduct a continuing assessment in counties to determine how students achieve.
2. Expand the testing device in an effort to obtain a wider range of student scoring, still keeping in mind that too difficult a testing device may discourage participation in the study.
3. Retain contact with the participants in this study who completed the unit, to gain further reactions to the value of the course.
4. Keep records in the counties to determine the percent of completion in the self-instruction unit.
5. Conduct a follow-up of registrants who returned the pre-test and received one or more lessons, but didn't complete the total series.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Questions for discussion-interview with parents

1. What are the most satisfying things about being a parent?
(What do you enjoy most?)

What pleasures do you have as a parent that someone with no children could not enjoy?
2. What are the biggest worries about being a parent?
3. Have you taken any classes in child development or child care?
If so, where?
4. As a parent, you have to draw a line for your child--do you feel you are strict, lenient, or flexible?
5. Sometimes you may feel it is necessary to punish your child--what method do you use?
6. What kinds of behavior do you feel it is necessary to punish?
Do you feel you punish often? Seldom?
7. Describe the characteristics you would most like your child to have.
8. What characteristics do you think are important for a parent to have?

APPENDIX B. DATA COLLECTION

PRE-TEST

Section A

True or False

Put T or F in the space.

1. ☐ All children can talk by 18 months of age.
2. ☐ Showing interest in your child will help build his self-confidence.
3. ☐ Parallel play means playing with two toys at the same time.
4. ☐ Children are only rewarded for desirable behavior.
5. ☐ When a child begins to say "no" to you, it is the beginning of a negative step in his development.
6. ☐ Child development experts think of discipline as teaching a child how to behave.
7. ☐ A child growing up in a home with lots of tension may find it difficult to show love for others when he grows up.
8. ☐ Being self-centered and selfish is normal behavior for a toddler.
9. ☐ A good way to check to see if your child is developing at a normal pace is to compare your friend's child with your own.
10. ☐ After you've told your toddler "no" and given him a reason for not doing something, he is being naughty when he does it anyway.
11. ☐ A two year old should have learned how to share.
12. ☐ Praise and encouragement for certain behavior will increase the possibility that it will be repeated.
13. ☐ Children in the same family have exactly the same environment.
14. ☐ Two children at the same age should be able to learn at the same rate.
15. ☐ Learning about children helps us understand human behavior.

Pre-test
Page 2

Completion

Choose a word or words to best complete the following sentences. Put the correct number in the space provided.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. developmental tasks | 10. environment |
| 2. punishment | 11. siblings |
| 3. today | 12. self-image |
| 4. when he starts school | 13. children |
| 5. independence | 14. discipline |
| 6. reinforcement | 15. ability |
| 7. heredity | 16. maturation |
| 8. rewards | 17. trust |
| 9. self-portrait | 18. parents |

- a. The time to think about values and goals you want for your child is ____.
- b. The mental picture one builds of himself is called ____.
- c. Another word for brothers and sisters is ____.
- d. Rewarding your child with a smile or a word of encouragement to strengthen certain behavior is called ____.
- e. Two things contribute to individual uniqueness. They are ____ and ____.
- f. Scolding and isolation are forms of ____.
- g. Readiness to learn is called ____.
- h. The first step in your child's development should be to establish ____.
- i. Learning to walk, to feed himself and toilet training are all ____.
- j. A basic important part of a child's environment are his ____.

Pre-test
Page 3

What basic concept are you using in teaching your child when you say:

"You are really a help to me, Bobby. You washed your hands all by yourself, and you did a very good job. "

Your answer:

What concept of teaching are you violating when you say:

"You are a naughty girl, Susie. I've told you before not to hit your sister. "

Your answer:

What's a better approach to the following situation?

Mrs. Jones is visiting a friend, but it is nearing five o'clock and time to go home to prepare dinner. She says to her small son, "Don't you want to go home now, Johnny? "

Your answer:

List three ways play can contribute to a child's learning and identify a toy or plaything (homemade or purchased) that will provide this learning experience.

Return this test in the enclosed envelope. No postage is required.

Roberta C. Frasier
Extension Family Life Specialist

POST TEST

Section A

True or False

Put T or F in the space.

1. _____ All children can talk by 18 months of age.
2. _____ Showing interest in your child will help build his self-confidence.
3. _____ Parallel play means playing with two toys at the same time.
4. _____ Children are only rewarded for desirable behavior.
5. _____ When a child begins to say "no" to you, it is the beginning of a negative step in his development.
6. _____ Child development experts think of discipline as teaching a child how to behave.
7. _____ A child growing up in a home with lots of tension may find it difficult to show love for others when he grows up.
8. _____ Being self-centered and selfish is normal behavior for a toddler.
9. _____ A good way to check to see if your child is developing at a normal pace is to compare your friend's child with your own.
10. _____ After you've told your toddler "no" and given him a reason for not doing something, he is being naughty when he does it anyway.
11. _____ A two year old should have learned how to share.
12. _____ Praise and encouragement for certain behavior will increase the possibility that it will be repeated.
13. _____ Children in the same family have exactly the same environment.
14. _____ Two children at the same age should be able to learn at the same rate.
15. _____ Learning about children helps us understand human behavior.

Post test
Page 2

Completion

Choose a word or words to best complete the following sentences. Put the correct number in the space provided.

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. developmental tasks | 10. environment |
| 2. punishment | 11. siblings |
| 3. today | 12. self-image |
| 4. when he starts school | 13. children |
| 5. independence | 14. discipline |
| 6. reinforcement | 15. ability |
| 7. heredity | 16. maturation |
| 8. rewards | 17. trust |
| 9. self-portrait | 18. parents |

- a. The time to think about values and goals you want for your child is ____.
- b. The mental picture one builds of himself is called ____.
- c. Another word for brothers and sisters is ____.
- d. Rewarding your child with a smile or a word of encouragement to strengthen certain behavior is called ____.
- e. Two things contribute to individual uniqueness. They are ____ and ____.
- f. Scolding and isolation are forms of ____.
- g. Readiness to learn is called ____.
- h. The first step in your child's development should be to establish ____.
- i. Learning to walk, to feed himself and toilet training are all ____.
- j. A basic important part of a child's environment are his ____.

Post test
Page 3

What basic concept are you using in teaching your child when you say:

"You are really a help to me, Bobby. You washed your hands all by yourself, and you did a very good job."

Your answer:

What concept of teaching are you violating when you say:

"You are a naughty girl, Susie. I've told you before not to hit your sister."

Your answer:

What's a better approach to the following situation?

Mrs. Jones is visiting a friend, but it is nearing five o'clock and time to go home to prepare dinner. She says to her small son, "Don't you want to go home now, Johnny?"

Your answer:

List three ways play can contribute to a child's learning and identify a toy or plaything (homemade or purchased) that will provide this learning experience.

Return this test in the enclosed envelope. No postage is required.

Roberta Frasier
Extension Family Life Specialist

FACT SHEET

1. Is this your first experience with the Cooperative Extension Service? Yes ____ No ____
2. Where did you learn about this course? _____
3. Have you ever taken a course or classes in Child Development before this one? Yes ____ No ____
4. How much education have you completed?

<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
_____ less than high school graduation	_____
_____ completed high school	_____
_____ high school and some additional classes	_____
_____ completed four years of college	_____
_____ baccalaureate degree plus	_____
5. Father's employment _____
 Mother's employment _____
 If mother is employed outside the home is it full time? ____ part time? ____
6. How many persons in your family? ____ living at home? ____ number of other persons
 living in your house? ____
7. Is this a one parent family? Yes ____ No ____
8. Check the age bracket:

<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
_____ under 20	_____	_____ 36 to 40	_____
_____ 20 to 25	_____	_____ 41 to 45	_____
_____ 26 to 30	_____	_____ over 45	_____
_____ 31 to 35	_____		
9. Total number of children in the family? ____ living at home? ____
10. Children's ages:

_____ less than one year old
_____ 1 to 3 years old
_____ 4 to 6 years old
_____ 7 to 10 years old
_____ over 10 years old
11. Do you live:

_____ in a town or city
_____ in the suburbs
_____ on a farm or ranch
_____ in a rural area, non-farm

 What is the population? _____
12. How are the care and guidance responsibilities of children divided?

<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
_____ less than half	_____
_____ half	_____
_____ over half	_____

Please return this sheet and the mini-evaluation in the enclosed envelope.

Roberta C. Frasier
 Extension Family Life Specialist

CC 4-1 #12

Dear Parents of Toddlers:

We have had a number of requests the past few years for a correspondence course for parents of young children. Mrs. Leona C. Winters, a homemaker and mother of two children has designed this course of four lessons for you as a part of her program for a Master's Degree in Home Economics Education at Oregon State University.

Since this is a part of a graduate study program we need to have your cooperation in a pre-test and a post test and in a mini-evaluation of each lesson. Your frank and honest response will help us in the design of future correspondence courses.

Mrs. Winters has been an extension home economist in Oregon and a homemaking teacher in high school. We think you will find that she has a sound and practical approach to the guidance of toddlers.

Please complete the fact sheet and pre-test and return to me. We will then send you lesson number one.

We will send you the next lesson each time after we receive your mini-evaluation.

We hope this series of four lessons will add to your understanding and enjoyment of your toddler.

Sincerely,

Roberta C. Frasier
Extension Family Life Specialist

dva

Enclosure

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
Oregon State University and U. S. Department of Agriculture Cooperating

Please check the statement that most nearly explains the reason you didn't return the pre-test.

- _____ 1. It was too complicated.
- _____ 2. I didn't know how to answer the questions
- _____ 3. I didn't want to be a part of a research project.
- _____ 4. I was too busy to do it.
- _____ 5. I decided the course wasn't going to be what I wanted.
- _____ 6. The fact sheet was too personal.
- _____ 7. My children were beyond the toddler stage.
- _____ 8. Other (Explain) _____

Thank you for taking your time to answer these questions.

Name

Roberta Frasier Anderson
Extension Family Life Specialist

County

November 30, 1971

MEMO TO: Miriam Carlson Helen McDowell Judith Burrige
 Ermina Fisher Billie Le Sueur Jane Schroeder

FROM: Roberta C. Frasier, Family Life Specialist

RE: Correspondence course for parents of young children

Lee Winters and I have conferred again regarding the correspondence course and I want to share with you where we are in our thinking. We will welcome your reactions.

The course is developed for Parents of Toddlers and enrollment should be limited to parents with a child under three years of age. I would hope that our prime audience would be those parents with a child between one and two years of age.

There will be four lessons. Each lesson will have a worksheet, but these will not be returned for grading or comment. The worksheet is designed to help the enrollee think through the main points of the lesson. Each person will complete a brief questionnaire and return it prior to receiving the second lesson. The questionnaire does not have to be graded and returned.

Our current target date is to have everything printed by March 1 and ready to go. Because this is a graduate project several approval steps along the way slow us down somewhat.

Our goal is to have promotional material for news releases, radio spots, etc., in your hands by February 1.

You may conduct the correspondence course in your county at a time to meet your needs, but we hope all courses can be completed in the spring.

PLAN FOR ACTION

- . Newspaper and radio publicity.
- . Enrollment completed within two weeks
- . Select 50 enrollees at random and send names and addresses to me. These will constitute the research group and will be handled from this office. You will have no additional responsibility for this research group.

RESEARCH GROUP

A letter will be sent with the first lesson to each enrollee explaining that they have been selected for the project, something about the research, how to return forms, etc. Each will be given a pre- and post test.

ADDITIONAL ENROLLEES

You may establish a quota for your county. Lesson for those not in the research group need to be sent out from your office. Since there are no papers to grade, a secretary can take care of the routine and send the succeeding lesson as soon as the form is received. However, we would like these forms kept and a record of the number taking each lesson kept to compare with the attrition of the research group.

I suggest that you limit the number of enrollees until we have an opportunity to evaluate the course. Since the course is geared for a very specific audience, the number likely to be interested will be limited.

We need your reactions and an estimate of where you would like to set your enrollment for your county. We realize that you may get more or fewer enrollees than you anticipate. If you get more, you can put their names on a waiting list. But, we need an estimate to know how many copies to request from publications.

NEWS RELEASE
(sent to each county)

Home Study Course for Parents of Toddlers

Parents of toddlers who find that a baby offers new challenges as soon as he is able to get around on his own two feet have an opportunity to enroll in a home study course offered through the _____ County extension office, reports _____.

Parents who have a child under three years of age may enroll. There will be four lessons in the course.

The first session is called What are Toddlers Like. Personality development, independence and the building of self-confidence are stressed.

Parents are Teachers is the theme of the second lesson which includes some helpful hints on guidance.

The third lesson, Play Is What It's All About, takes a look at the role of play in a child's development and the development of sharing skills.

Living With Your Child is the theme of the fourth lesson. Each lesson has a worksheet to fill out to help parents apply some of the ideas. It will be necessary to return an evaluation form in order to get the next lesson in the series.

The study course has been developed by Mrs. Leona Winters, mother of two and a former extension agent and homemaking teacher. She has a practical approach to young children which will prove helpful to parents.

This course is offered for the first time on an experimental basis. Only _____ families can enroll for this series.

If you wish to enroll, send your name and address to _____

Only parents of toddlers--children between 1 and 3--are eligible.

News From: Oregon State University Extension Service
 Clackamas County Extension Office
 256 Warner-Milne Road, Oregon City, OR 97045

By: Mrs. Helen McDowall, Extension Agent, Home
 Economics Phone 655-3311, Extension 357

February 17, 1972

HOME STUDY COURSE FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS

Parents with children under three years of age have the opportunity to enroll in a four-lesson, home-study course designed to help them in the guidance of the toddler. This course will begin about March 1, and there is no charge, reports Mrs. Helen McDowall, Clackamas County Extension Agent.

Some of the topics covered will be personality development of the young child, building independence and self-confidence, and how play contributes to the child's development. Techniques for parents to use in teaching children will also be included.

This course is offered for the first time by the Oregon State University Extension Service and the enrollment is limited. To enroll - call the Clackamas County Extension Office, 655-3311, Extension 357 or send your request to enroll to Mrs. Helen McDowall, County Extension Agent, 256 Warner-Milne Road, Oregon City, OR 97045.

- 30 -

- - - - -

REGISTRATION FOR CORRESPONDENCE COURSE regardless of which county you live in -- return it to Marion County Extension Service, P.O. Box 948, Salem, Oregon 97308. Return it immediately because it is on a first come, first served basis.

I have a child between 1 & 3 and would like to participate.

NAME _____ Telephone No. _____

ADDRESS _____ Zip _____

Appendix Table 1. Record Sheet of Participants

Counties	Pre-test		Lesson 1		Lesson 2		Lesson 3		Lesson 4		Post test	
	Sent	Ret.	Sent	Ret.	Sent	Ret.	Sent	Ret.	Sent	Ret.	Sent	Ret.
Clackamas	118	90	90	68	68	57	57	49	49	47	50	36
Crook, Descutes and Jefferson	41	22	22	12	12	7	9	7	7	7	8	6
Hood River	15	11	12	9	9	7	7	6	6	5	5	4
Klamath	66	41	41	32	32	23	23	19	19	18	17	15
Linn-Benton	138	116	124	88	88	70	70	65	65	56	59	44
Malheur	21	17	17	11	12	10	10	8	8	6	8	5
Polk, Yamhill and Marion	<u>125</u>	<u>97</u>	<u>100</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>68</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>35</u>
TOTAL	524	394	406	288	289	235	237	203	203	186	195	145

Appendix Table 2. Distribution of Parents According to Age

	Mothers							Fathers						
	Cl	Cr	HR	K	LB	M	P	Cl	Cr	HR	K	LB	M	P
under 20	1	1		1	1			1						1
20 thru 25	12	1	2	8	16	2	11	3	1	1	5	8	1	4
26 thru 30	12	4	2	5	18	2	16	16	4	2	6	18	3	17
31 thru 35	11				8		7	9	1		3	14		8
36 thru 40					1		1	3		1		2		2
41 thru 45				1		1		2						1
over 45								1					1	
	Total Mothers: 145							Total Fathers: 139						

Abbreviations of counties:

Cl - Clackamas
 Cr - Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson
 HR - Hood River
 K - Klamath
 LB - Linn-Benton
 M - Malheur
 P - Polk, Yamhill and Marion

Appendix Table 3. Education Completed by Participants and Spouse

	Mothers							Fathers						
	Cl	Cr	HR	K	LB	M	P	Cl	Cr	HR	K	LB	M	P
less than high school graduation		1		2		1		1			2	1	1	2
completed high school	8	1		3	2		10	2	2		6	3		11
high school and some additional classes	13	1	3	6	19	2	14	11		2	2	10	2	12
completed 4 years of college	6	1		1	12	1	5	7	2	1	3	3	1	1
baccalaureate degree plus	<u>9</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>7</u>
Total	36	6	4	15	44	5	35	35	6	4	14	42	5	33

Abbreviations of counties:

Cl - Clackamas
 Cr - Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson
 HR - Hood River
 K - Klamath
 LB - Linn-Benton
 M - Malheur
 P - Polk, Yamhill, and Marion

Note: The differences in the totals for mothers and fathers is accounted for in question 7 of the fact sheet: Is this a one parent family? There were six "yes" responses.

Appendix Table 4. Classification of Occupation of Participant's Spouse

Outdoor-physical	16
Social-personal	16
Business contact	25
Administration control	8
Math-physical sciences	16
Biological sciences	26
Humanistic	31
Arts	<u>4</u>
TOTAL (fathers)	142

Source of classifying occupations by Level, Field, and Enterprise from Super (1957).

Appendix Table 5. Ages of Children in Participating Families

less than 1 year	40
1 - 3 years	116
4 - 6 years	26
7 - 10 years	7
over 10 years	<u>9</u>
TOTAL	198

Appendix Table 6. Distribution of Respondents According to Their First Experience With Extension Service

Counties	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Clackamas	22	61	14	39
Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson	2	33	4	67
Hood River	2	50	2	50
Klamath	6	40	9	60
Linn-Benton	17	39	27	61
Malheur	2	40	3	60
Polk, Yamhill and Marion	<u>13</u>	37	<u>22</u>	63
TOTAL	64		81	

Appendix Table 7. Distribution of Respondents According to Where They Learned About the Course

Counties	Direct mail	Extension office	Newspaper	Radio	Other
Clackamas	13	2	14		7
Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson	2	1	1		2
Hood River	1	2	1		
Klamath	2	2	2	5	4
Linn-Benton	29	3	10	1	1
Malheur	2		2		1
Polk, Yamhill and Marion	<u>28</u>	<u>5</u>	—	—	<u>2</u>
TOTAL	77	15	30	6	17

Appendix Table 8. Distribution of Respondents According to Having Taken a Course in Child Development Previously

Counties	Yes		No	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Clackamas	16	45	20	55
Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson	3	50	3	50
Hood River	1	25	3	75
Klamath	3	20	12	80
Linn- Benton	21	48	23	52
Malheur	2	40	3	60
Polk, Yamhill and Marion	16	46	19	54

APPENDIX E. EVALUATION MEASURING DEVICE

Measuring Device Used for Evaluating Discussion Sheet of Pre- and Post Test

(The highest number of points is given to the answer first listed, with points decreasing thereafter.)

Question 1 (5 points) The basic concept of teaching a child in the example given in the pre- and post test is:

- (a) building a positive self-image (or self concept) by using positive reinforcement.
- (b) encouraging desirable behavior through praise and encouragement or positive reinforcement.
- (c) building good feelings toward self and others by parents using a positive approach.
- (d) teaching self-confidence and self reliance through praise and encouragement.
- (e) other related answers.

Question 2 (5 points) The concept violated is:

- (a) building a feeling of self worth or positive self-image by reinforcing desirable behavior and ignoring undesirable behavior or if necessary treating the behavior in a calm and consistent way.
- (b) instead of building a positive self-image, the parent tears at it, by labeling the child "naughty. "
- (c) instead of identifying the undesired behavior and adjusting the environment to change it, the parent calls the child a naughty girl.
- (d) other answers - these were judged worth either one or two points .

Question 3 (3 points) A better approach to the situation is:

the mother states pleasantly but firmly that it is time to leave, and then put on coats and go.
She may want to add something to the effect that "they need to go home and start daddy's dinner because he will be home soon. "

It's time to go home now, Johnny, I'll help you with your coat. "

Some answers included remarks about not giving a choice when there really isn't one.

Question 4 (12 points)

One point was given for each toy and two points for learning experience identified. An additional two points was included if the toys allowed for creativity and imagination.

APPENDIX F
CORRESPONDENCE

April 11, 1972

Mrs. Robert George
4724 S.E. Johnson Cr. Boulevard
Portland, Oregon 97206

Dear Mrs. George:

You asked two very good questions on your mini-evaluation of Lesson II of the correspondence course. They are good questions but difficult ones to answer. You asked "How do you distinguish between a growth stage and what may be signs of an undesirable trait?" It seems to me that the value of knowing about the growth stages is in knowing that behavior that your child is exhibiting is not necessarily unusual behavior nor is it the kind he is going to continue forever. However, knowing that behavior is a part of a certain growth stage does not mean accepting that behavior. For example, the eighteen-month-old loves to climb. You know that this is normal, that he is going to want to climb and you provide him as many climbing experiences as you can, but at the same time you do not let him climb on things he should not climb on. For example, you may not want him to climb on your davenport or on some other piece of furniture. You limit him in doing this, but knowing his growth stage you do not think of this as being perverseness but rather that this is a need he has at this stage of his development, --"I can't let him climb here, but I can make some provisions for him to climb and have this experience." Then I think you also need to think about "undesirable traits." Are they undesirable for the child or for the mother? Behavior which may be perfectly natural as a part of growth may be totally unacceptable within a family setting.

You also ask "What do you do when following rules or punishment seems to bring no results?" It seems to me in a situation such as this you may have to look back at how you might prevent the behavior. Sometimes you can change the environment so that you don't set the stage for undesirable behavior. You may look at your rules and see if they are so in contradiction to normal growth that you cannot expect them to be followed. If the punishment you use does not bring results, there is little value in repeating it. Instead, you need to look more at preventing the behavior or using some alternate method to guide the child.

Sometimes it helps to sit back and observe the situation and see how you would respond if this were someone else's child, and what other kinds of things you might try. With the toddler, distraction is an excellent device to use because most children of this age have a relatively short attention span.

I hope these reactions will be of some help as you ponder these questions further.

Sincerely,

Roberta Frasier Anderson
Extension Family Life Specialist

dva

cc: Helen McDowall

Cooperative Extension Service
Oregon State University
P. O. Box B
Post Office Building
Corvallis, Oregon 97330
November 11, 1971

Mrs. Roberta Frasier
Extension Family Life Specialist
Home Economics 161
Oregon State University
Corvallis, Oregon 97331

Dear Roberta:

Regarding your letter of November 8, I am wondering if it would be possible for Linn and Benton counties to have more than 50 copies each of the correspondence course as this may be the only way that we reach many of our young homemakers.

Perhaps if Lee wants to limit the amount of correspondees for her research, we could give you 50 names for each county and additional clients could be serviced from the Benton County office.

The seafood correspondence course had 390 enrollees with 71% completing the second lesson. The last (third lesson) return dropped to 52%.

June Daley, our aide, reports that homemakers that she calls on are interested in the correspondence courses more than anything else.

Hope something can be worked out.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Judy Burridge
Extension Agent
Home Economics

JB/lr

APPENDIX G. LESSONS

HOME STUDY COURSE FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS

Lesson 1 - What are Toddlers Like?

Introduction

Many parents begin thinking about what their children are like from the wrong end of their lives. When children reach their teen years and show attitudes or behavior that is not compatible with their parents' views, mother and dad look at the child and say, "Now why did he turn out like this?" or "This is not what we wanted for her."

The time to think about the values and behaviors you want your child to develop is now. What are your goals for your child? What do you want for him? How will you achieve these goals? Do you know how your child learns?

These are some of the questions we will explore during this study. The goals you want for your child will differ from other parents' goals because each of us is influenced by our past and this affects what we think is important.

STOP HERE! Turn to page 6 and complete the first question.

Understanding Personality Development

Personality develops as a child meets the problems of every day living. These problems and influences are part of his environment. He is constantly building a picture of himself. This picture affects his attitudes toward others. In fact, it affects how he meets life in general. Certain kinds of experiences are especially important to your child.

First, a baby needs to build a sense of trust. He needs to feel that the world is a good place to be--one that he can explore, where he can learn, a place where there are people who can be trusted. How does he learn this sense of trust?

First of all, through his parents. When an infant cries, his mother feeds him, bathes him and takes care of him so he is warm and comfortable. While she cares for him, she talks to him, and she cuddles him. She is gentle and loving. Father, too, holds him, talks to him and takes care of him . . . here are two people in this baby's world that can be trusted.

A great deal has been said about children's need for love but it's important to think about how love is bestowed. We need to think about the feeling your child gains in the process.

How do you show love for your child? Do you . . .

- . show love with a hug, a kiss, a pat?
- . tell your child with words?
- . help him when he needs it?
- . show interest in what he is doing?
- . spend time with him?
- . answer his questions?
- . teach her new things?
- . show understanding for your child?

STOP! Turn to page 6. Complete number 2.

Some people are unable to show love in a demonstrative way. But a feeling of love can be transmitted through what we do for each other and how we act toward each other.

If a parent takes care of a child's needs with warmth or a comfortable feeling, a sense of love and comfort is transmitted to the child.

If, on the other hand, a parent always feels resentful and annoyed and if her manner is brusque and impatient the child senses that he is in the way, that he is a nuisance. He grows up feeling unwanted, unloved.

If a child grows up feeling loved for what he is and the way he is, he will have a good picture of himself. He will feel worthwhile. He will value himself because his parents value him. The picture he has of himself is positive. We say he has a positive self-image.

Because you give your child attention when he needs it and show interest in him, he experiences good feelings toward you, toward himself and toward other people. Your child's trust in you will help him become a friendly, capable, happy, self-reliant individual.

On the other hand, a child can develop in just the opposite way. He may grow up feeling the world is an unhappy, difficult place to be. People are not to be trusted. If he explores, he gets into trouble. If he tries something new, it will fail . . . so why try? He has developed a negative self-image.

This need for love and a sense of trust in himself as well as in others continues all through life, but it is very important that your child get off to a good start.

Parents as Examples to Their Children

Children growing up in an atmosphere of love and affection can bestow love upon others more easily than children who are deprived of it. Do you teach your child thoughtfulness for others? It's easy to say, "Pick up your toys, please" instead of "Pick up your toys right now." Your tone of voice and the way you talk and treat other people will shape many of your child's attitudes as he grows up and will teach him a way to approach or respond to others.

Independence Comes by Spurts

If your child can get about by himself, either by crawling or walking, you know how interested he is in everything he can reach. He explores with zest and is constantly testing himself to see what he can do. Knowing a few words gives him so much more power than having to cry for what he wants. When your child learns to climb, his world is even bigger. The key word in his life is "go."

Once he knows that people and things can be trusted, he begins to discover himself. He wants to try himself out. He has a strong urge to be independent. He is beginning to make choices. He may go in the opposite direction when you want him to go with you, or he may push food away when it is offered. He says "no" when his mother wants him to do something. If he wants something from a shelf, he'll pull a chair over, climb up and get it. If you have a two year old, how many a times a day are you put off with "me do"?

Is Self-Confidence a Goal for Your Child?

Sometimes he takes on more than he can handle, but often he succeeds well enough to satisfy himself. Through his self-satisfaction he gains a feeling of self-confidence. When his parents show approval of his accomplishments, it strengthens his feeling of self-confidence.

At this point in his life, that is, during his second year of life when he begins to strive for independence, parents need to think about what things they will let him try on his own, and when they will accept "no" from him.

Obviously, there are times when he must do as you want whether he likes it or not. A gentle but firm manner by you will be the most successful in the long run.

A Difficult Year for Parents

It seems almost automatic for most parents to give their baby protective, loving care, but when a child begins to develop independence it takes patience and understanding on the parents' part. Sometimes this is labeled as a stage of negative behavior, but it is really not. If your child did not go through this stage of seeming rebellion and trying to find himself he would be at a standstill in his growth. He would remain a baby. This is a very positive step in his development.

Sometimes he does what you've told him not to do because he is still curious and he wants to try it out again. It is not the beginning of bad behavior, but just that he's learned that he can run away from you or he can refuse things. He's learning to choose for himself. He is just practicing his independence.

How Can Parents Help a Child Develop Self-Confidence?

Understanding your child is the first step to help him gain self-confidence. What is he really like at this age? What can he do? One way to learn about your child is to watch him and listen to him. Now many of you will say, "That's what I do all day long!", but this time do it with a notebook and pencil in hand.

Before observing your child, look at the guidelines on page 8. These are descriptions of general characteristics of children one to three years of age. By knowing the usual rate of development for children at a certain age level, you will have a better idea of what to expect of your child. Your child will not fit the descriptions in every way. These are general and your child is an individual with his own pace of growth. He will develop faster in some ways and slower in others.

Try for at least three observations of not less than five minutes at a time for this lesson. Use the observations sheet on page 9 as a guide. Each time you observe, record what your child did, what he said, and how he acted.

After your observations are completed, complete the worksheet on pages 6 and 7.

How to Build Self-Reliance

Another way to help him become self-reliant and build self-confidence is to let him do things for himself. His first tries at feeding himself will be messy and he will spill food. He may button himself wrong, but he needs the opportunity to learn. If a two or three year old has a step-stool or box at the sink, he can wash his hands before mealtime. Approval from his parents gives him a good feeling about himself.

He needs parents who will let him try things when he has a reasonable chance for success. They will encourage him to become independent, but will also set limits. For example, he can pull on his socks and perhaps his pants, but he'll need help with boots or fastenings on heavier jackets.

Use a Light Touch

If too much is expected of a young child or he is frequently scolded, he begins to doubt his abilities. His feelings about himself are shaken and he becomes timid and afraid. Instead of reaching out to explore the world, he holds back--it is safer to remain a baby.

These are days when parents will find that a light touch succeeds. A child comes in from play much more willingly with a ride on the shoulders or a "race" to the door than if he's just told to come for dinner. Learning can be fun and a game is an effective way of teaching.

You know from your own experience that learning is a lot easier and stays with you if your experience has been pleasant. Sometimes we hear the argument that there are things to be learned that are not going to be fun and that children will have to learn that sooner or later life is not going to be all

fun and games . . . so as much as possible, let it be later.

There are some experiences that must be faced. If a child is cross or tired and refuses to do something, parents are wise to go ahead firmly and as quietly as possible with whatever has to be done. Reasoning has little effect at this age.

If your child starts out in a happy, pleasant home life where he feels secure, he'll be able to cope with the inevitable, unpleasant experiences that he will encounter as he grows up.

* * *

Lesson II -- Parents Are Teachers

This lesson discusses how your child learns from you--not only from what you say, but also from what you do.

It gives you some help on how you can teach your child some of the things you think are important.

LESSON I -- WORKSHEET

This worksheet is planned to help you:

- . work through the lesson in a systematic way.
- . to write your thoughts so you have definite ideas in mind.
- . to give you a record to refer to as your child grows and develops.

1. List 5 goals that you have for your child.

STOP HERE! Go back to page 1.

2. List the ways you show love for your child. You may list any that are included in your lesson--but add any others that you are aware of in your relationship with your child.

STOP HERE! Go back to page 2.

3. In a couple of paragraphs tell me about your child. What are his strong points? his weaknesses? What is his temperament? Is he placid? vigorous, energetic and always on the go? Describe him as accurately as you can.
4. After observing your child, tell of one experience he had that failed or that frustrated him. How can you change this into a successful experience for him, but at the same time allow your child a feeling of independence?
5. List at least one thing your child learned today.

Did he learn this by himself? _____ from your help? _____ from someone else's help? _____
(Check one)

A SUMMARY OF NORMAL DEVELOPMENT

Every child is unique because of inherited and environmental differences, but these are some general characteristics.

The Toddler (one to two years old) . . .

- . learns to walk, awkward and may fall easily--learns to run
- . tries to feed himself, will be messy, finger feeds much of the time, though he tries to use a spoon and cup.

- . learns by touching, feeling, putting things in his mouth.
- . is on the "go"--explores everything he can reach.
- . has a short attention span.
- . has beginning vocabulary.
- . plays by himself, but likes company of other people.
- . likes to be near his mother--enjoys father and siblings but most often asks his mother to do things.
- . develops likes and dislikes, may develop fears.
- . likes simple stories, picture books, rhymes, jingles.
- . is not responsible for himself, needs a safe environment.

* * * *

The Two Year Old

- . plays beside another child happily, but does not want any interference from the other child.
- . walks more easily, runs a great deal, and climbs.
- . has rapidly increasing vocabulary.
- . has lengthening attention span.
- . shows independence--wants to do things for himself.
- . wants to do things that he feels are important.
- . is establishing toilet habits.
- . imitates language, manners of grown-ups around him.
- . attaches increasing importance to father.
- . has an active interest in books and songs.
- . is able to control hand movements better--can fit two pieces of a toy together (if it is chosen for his age level).

* * * *

Jenkins, Schacter and Bauer, These are Your Children, Scott Foresman, 1966, p. 356

Your Child From One to Six, Pub. No. 30, U.S. Children's Bureau, Washington, D. C.

Lesson I

How to Observe Your Child

One way to learn about children is to watch them and listen to them. You'll see that children are individuals. To understand a child we must look closely and with care at his behavior.

There are many things to look for in an observation, but for this lesson the concern is with what your child does, what he says, and how well he succeeds in what he's doing.

Choose a time of day when your child is busy with an activity and you can sit by with no interference or distraction. Write a running account of what happens in a notebook. Put the date, what time of day and how long you observed at the top of the page.

In writing your observation use words that describe. Tell how he holds a toy--does he pick up something by palming it or wrapping his fingers around it? Are his movements awkward? Does he look happy, tired, puzzled, angry? How does he show happiness or anger or other emotions? Children tell us a great deal by their behavior, their movements, how they hold their bodies.

An example of an observation might be: Johnny enjoyed the noise, etc.

Use your observations to answer number 4 on the worksheet.

Observations help you:

- . understand your child
- . know what you can expect
- . set goals that your child can reach
- . set limits that are realistic for his age and development

ON YOUR OWN

Check your library for books on child development. Suggested books are:

Between Parent and Child by Dr. Haim G. Ginott

The Magic Years by Selma Fraiberg

Pamphlets and bulletins:

Child Guidance Techniques, PNW 64 by Mrs. Roberta Frasier, Family Life Specialist,
Cooperative Extension Service, Oregon State University. May be obtained from your
county agent's office.

Enjoy Your Child--Ages 1, 2, and 3 by James Hymes, Public Affairs Pamphlets, 22 East
36th Street, New York, 25¢.

Your Child's Emotional Health by Anna Wolf, Public Affairs Pamphlets, 22 East 36th
Street, New York, 25¢.

Your Child from One to Six, Publication no. 30, U. S. Children's Bureau, Washington,
D. C., 20¢.

MINI EVALUATION - Lesson I

1. About how long did it take you to complete Lesson I--include your observation time.
2. Did you think the lesson was too long? ____ too short? ____ just right? ____
3. Did you understand everything presented in the lesson? Yes ____ No ____
If not, what didn't you understand?
4. Do you like this method of learning? Yes ____ No ____
5. Was there anything new to you or is this all old stuff put in another way?

NAME _____ COUNTY _____

Please return this sheet in the enclosed envelope. No postage is needed. Your next lesson will be mailed to you.

Roberta C. Frasier
Extension Family Life Specialist

HOME STUDY COURSE FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS

Lesson II - Parents Are Teachers

In the first lesson of this series you were asked to think about what kind of a person you wanted your child to be. What goals or aims do you have as you help your child develop his personality? Your feelings and actions toward your child will greatly influence his personality development.

Parents As Teachers

When you married and decided to have a family you were not thinking about a career of teaching. And yet, you are your child's first teacher. You are also your child's most important teacher. The lessons you are teaching your child during his first years of life are the most important lessons that he will learn. This is not said to panic you, but merely to emphasize the importance of your job as a parent. No book, no expert in child development can give you all the "correct" answers in rearing your child. Your baby is unique--by knowing the developmental stages in the growth and development of children in general and using some guidelines in handling behavior, you will be able to find your own answers in raising your child.

There are many times during the day when you are teaching your child and you may not realize it. Parents are examples to their children and what you do has a great deal more effect on your child than what you say.

Mini-Drama

Three year old John hits his two year old sister Mary with a block. Father grabs the block from John, smacks him on the bottom and says, "I told you before, we don't hit." What do you think John eventually learns from this kind of experience?

STOP! Turn to the worksheet on page 8. Complete number 1.

Your Child's First Classroom

Consider for a moment that you are standing in a classroom of your nearest school. There are interesting books on the bookshelves, there's a rock collection on the table, a display of sea shells of many types on another table. Children come into the room and begin to examine these exhibits. The teacher says, "Don't touch the shells," "Put that book back" "Leave those things alone"... What do you think about this teacher?

Your home is your child's first classroom. Before your baby learned to walk he was pretty well limited in what he could reach or what he could get into, but now that he has acquired mobility he has become an explorer. Is your house ready for this?

There are two things to keep in mind to make your child's environment psychologically healthy. First, look at your house critically from the safety point of view. Are medicines, cleaning agents, and other harmful materials out of reach? Waste baskets and garbage pails are especially bad, because we discard broken or useless objects which we mean to be thrown out, but may be potentially harmful to a small child. Flush old or left over medicines down the toilet. Electrical outlets should have a safety cap on them or be blocked by a piece of furniture. Turn handles of your pots and pans to the back of the range.

These are only a few of the things to look for in safe proofing your house. There are many more that can be added--most parents train themselves to be eagle-eyed for possible dangers to their toddler.

The second point to be taken into consideration to make life easier for your little one is to remove those things of value such as vases, figurines, and other bric-a-brac. These things only add complexities to your child's life when he's at an age when he doesn't comprehend the cost of a vase or how much you treasure an old bowl that belonged to your great-grandmother.

STOP! Turn to the worksheet on page 8. Complete number 2.

This does not mean that your child should never be denied whatever he sees or wants or that he should never be frustrated. There are things around every house that children are not allowed to play with and that cannot be easily be put out of their reach. During the second year of life a child learns to conform to some of the expectations of his parents and to learn some of the limits set on his freedom. These come in small doses so he can cope with them.

Also during your child's second year of life there are many new behaviors to be learned. He encounters many things that he cannot taste, touch, or take apart. He must learn to feed himself. There are places he is not allowed to go. He must learn to use the toilet. It's the beginning of getting along with other children and the adults around him . . . these tasks are not easy for the child but they are essential if he is to grow into an independent, self-reliant individual.

At this point when a child begins to gain some measure of independence and move about on his own, many parents feel the time has come to "discipline " their child before he gets out of hand. Parents become concerned that unless they set rules for the child to follow, he is headed for trouble when he's older.

Learning Through Discipline

Confusion about discipline may arise because it means different things to different people. Some people think of discipline as a stern face and punishment. Others interpret discipline as a fixed set of rules to follow whenever a crisis arises. But most child development experts speak of discipline in terms of teaching your child how to behave.

Where to Start

Parents want their children to think and act for themselves, to be able to meet life's situations honestly and wisely, to be cooperative, and to respect the rights of others.

Such goals seem far removed from these toddler days he is living now but you began discipline with your baby the day you adjusted his daily routine to fit the family schedule. Discipline is there when you teach him to take hold of your hand before crossing the street or to keep his wagon out of the driveway.

Not too long ago parents brought their children up to do as they were told, to obey unquestioningly. Then parents rejected this method of child rearing and many eliminated rules and discipline entirely. But research findings show that your child wants and needs to know where he stands. He wants you to tell him what is expected of him and to tell him in simple words so he knows just what you mean.

Good discipline teaches reason as well as rules. You are giving a reason when you say, "Boots today, it's raining" as you help your toddler get ready to go outdoors.

STOP! Turn to page 8. Complete number 3.

Through everyday routines of dressing, eating, playing and toilet training you give your child his first lessons in how to behave. To teach your child effectively, you need to know just what and how much you can expect of him. By four years old, it's fair enough to expect him to not bang the table with a toy, but at eighteen months he really doesn't know any better.

Comparing "your child and mine" can be interesting but it is important to keep in mind that every child develops in his own way and at his own pace.

Included in lesson I was a list of general characteristics of children at early age levels. Observe your child with others at the same age. Your knowledge and understanding of your child will help you decide what you can expect from your child and what limits you can set.

Be Prepared

There's no doubt that typical behavior of a child can be irritating to grownups. A small child in a doctor's waiting room is a difficult situation. A two year old wants to taste, touch and explore, he'll probably make loud, sudden noises.

Your efforts to get him to sit quietly in a chair beside you are unsuccessful. Your patience is getting thin--but hold on! To punish him for behavior that is normal for him is to punish him for being a child. Look at a magazine with him, perhaps make up a story about a picture. Another help is to keep a few small toys or gadgets in your purse for just such an occasion.

STOP! Complete number 4 on the worksheet, page 9.

A Short Course in Teaching Children

Use positive suggestions when telling a child what to do rather than telling him what not to do. It is easier for a child to follow your directions if they focus on what he should be doing. He's usually less likely to resist your suggestions. Use direct, simple sentences like, "Keep the sand in the sand-box" rather than giving him a scolding for throwing sand at other children or say, "Blocks are for building, not for hitting."

Build confidence with the words you choose. What a parent means to tell a child is that he does not like the child's behavior. Sometimes a parent will attempt to get this idea across by saying "You are a bad boy because you hit your sister." Labeling a child "bad" weakens his self-image and makes him lose confidence in himself. If this is done often enough, he begins to think of himself as "bad" and ultimately chooses behavior to fit his picture of being a bad boy. You are on the right track if your words tell him that you do not like what he did, but you still like him.

Most parents shout at their children at one time or another. No doubt every parent feels they have good reason and it may be a big release, but as a usual method of dealing with children it is not very effective. Let your voice help you with your job. Children are much more apt to respond to a firm, quiet voice. What's your reaction when someone hollers at you? or speaks to you angrily? You are apt to resist, to refuse to do what they demand. Children are likely to respond in much the same way.

Speaking quietly is not only a more effective way of handling a situation with your child, but also may help you to remain calm. You are more likely to come out of the situation feeling like you've accomplished something constructive with your child instead of feeling that you have just been through an emotional wringer.

Offer your child a choice only when you really mean it. If you are planning that your child play outdoors for awhile it is better to say, "Let's go outdoors to play" rather than "Would you like to go outdoors?" Decide in your own mind before you say anything whether you are really offering him a choice or whether you have a definite thing in mind that you want him to do.

Show approval for behavior you like. When he picks up his toys and puts them in the toy box or on the shelf tell him how helpful he is. Your strongest ally in teaching him behavior is your child himself . . . he wants to please you very much. By rewarding him with approving words you strengthen the likelihood that this behavior will be repeated. Other ways of rewarding your child for his behavior are: smiling at him, noticing him, commenting about what he does and giving him help. Behavior that is rewarded is called "reinforced behavior."

Sometimes parents pay little attention to a child as long as he is "behaving himself." They are pre-occupied and do not respond to a child when he speaks in a normal tone of voice. The child raises his voice or begins whining, then the parent notices him. The parent is actually reinforcing behavior he does not want. If this happens often enough, the child will holler or whine whenever he wants attention from his parents.

This means that parents not only reward behavior they like with a smile or a word of encouragement, but also, unintentionally, they reward behavior they do not like by noticing their child only when he makes a fuss.

Be consistent. Ordinarily, Bobby is not allowed to play with his toy trucks on the stairs, but mother has to meet a deadline and have some sewing completed for the church bazaar. "Well, he's playing so quietly and not pestering me, I'll just let him play on the lower steps today." The next day, Bobby takes his trucks in on the stairs. Mother sees him, and angrily says, "I told you, you are not allowed to play there."

Inconsistent discipline is practically no discipline at all. Bobby lives by his mother's moods. What's right one day, is not all right the next. But how is he to know? Soon he'll begin to try out anything that occurs to him. Sometimes he gets by with it, sometimes he doesn't. He lives in a state of confusion because he doesn't really know what's expected of him or why.

STOP! Turn to page 9. Complete numbers 5 and 6.

Sometimes Punishment Seems to be the Only Way

No matter how well you've thought through the methods and problems of teaching your child acceptable behavior, something happens and it just doesn't work. You decide there is no other way but punishment.

Punishment can be many things--spanking, slapping, isolation (sending him to his room), taking away something. . . a privilege or a belonging.

It helps if you consider what you are aiming at when you punish. Sometimes parents are angry and they want to "get even" or "show him who's boss in this house." Or sometimes punishment is used to show the child that he must abide by certain rules. Hopefully, it is the latter reason.

He Gets in Trouble

Suppose you've given your three year old crayons. You give him some paper and seat him at his little table. He enjoys this new activity and is very busy for a few days. Then one day he branches out and colors on the wall. So again you tell him that the paper is to color on and he is to remain at the table with crayons and paper. The next day, he colors busily at the table for a while. When you're busy, he leaves the table and colors in one of your books.

What You Do

There's no reason to let this go on. What should you do? Giving him a spanking for not minding and sending him back to his table is one way of handling the situation. Or you could take his colors and paper away from him and tell him firmly that he can have them back when he remembers that he can use them only at the table. By this method he knows the rules, and he knows that you mean what you say. Of course, a week from now he may forget the whole episode and again color on the wall. But then you react in the same way, and take the colors and paper away for a while.

If you do take something away from him, do it for a reasonable length of time. Fifteen minutes can seem a long time to a child of two.

Actually this process of putting him back at the table with the crayons and paper will have to take place several times. This doesn't mean that you have to clean walls every other day, but it does mean you should set a time for this activity when you can keep an eye on him. If he still tends to get away with the crayon and do damage to walls and books, then perhaps it is too soon for him to have this kind of play. Wait a few weeks and present it to him again.

So You Blow Your Cool

Very few parents make it through child rearing days without spanking their children. It would be great if we could administer discipline in a calm and firm way at all times. Unfortunately, it doesn't work out this way.

Sometimes you feel completely beside yourself so you turn him around and give him a spank or two on the bottom. This isn't going to ruin your child. It doesn't make you a failure as a parent. If, on the whole, he feels you love and accept him as he is, he can take an occasional spanking in stride.

Research studies completed at Harvard University show that punishment of one kind or another, will stop misbehavior, but punishment will not teach a child desirable behavior. The undesirable behavior will return at a later time and punishment will have to be applied again or the child may grow into another stage of development and that particular undesirable act will disappear.

In Conclusion

The way you give guidance to your child has an important influence on his development. A small child's willingness to cooperate and his interest in learning are directly related to his relationship to his parents--if they are warm and loving toward him, learning acceptable behavior takes place with comparative ease because he wants to please. If he is met with a string of "no's," scoldings and slappings, he loses interest in trying and becomes difficult to teach. It may make him insecure and anxious and finally he may give up trying.

As you teach discipline through these everyday experiences with your child, you not only teach him how to behave but also he develops feelings and attitudes about himself and other people.

The purpose of discipline is to guide your child toward desirable behavior and to develop his self-control so that as he grows up he has self-discipline and no longer needs parental guidance. Everyone has to learn to live within some limits and feel comfortable while doing it.

* * * *

Next time: Play Is What It's All About.

This lesson discusses the meaning of play to your child and what you can help him learn through play activities.

It also suggests kinds of play materials for your child that you can provide that are inexpensive and safe.

* * * *

ON YOUR OWN

The Why and How of Discipline by Aline B. Auerbach.

(This may be ordered from the Child Study Association of America, 9 East 89 Street,
New York, New York, 10028, cost: 75¢.)

Prepared by Mrs. Leona C. Winters, graduate student, Oregon State University

LESSON II--WORKSHEET

This worksheet is designed to help you think through ideas and concepts in this lesson as they apply to your child. Talking about these points with your spouse or a friend is often helpful. Through discussion your own ideas may become clearer.

1. What do you think John learns from this kind of experience if it is repeated often?

STOP! Go back to page 1.

2. What changes did you feel were necessary in your house when your child began to get around on his own? List two that you feel were the most important.

STOP! Go back to page 2.

3. As a parent you need to draw the line for your child. Do you feel you are: strict? ____ lenient? ____ flexible? ____ On what do you base your answer? (You may use an example of some happening between you and your child or tell your philosophy of child rearing.)

STOP! Go back to page 3.

4. How old is your child? ____

List 6 behavioral characteristics he has now. (example: tries to use a spoon, frequently hits at people or objects when things don't go well, etc.)

STOP! Go back to page 4.

5. After observing your child for at least a five minute interval at two different times (keep notes, just as you did for Lesson I) what behaviors did you like? List two behaviors.

What behavior would you like to change or improve. List at least two. Briefly, give some idea of how you hope to help your child make this change.

6. What have you taught your child today?

STOP! Go back to page 5.

MINI EVALUATION - LESSON II

1. Did you understand everything included in the lesson? Yes ____ No ____ If not, what didn't you understand?
2. Was the lesson too long? ____ too short? ____ just right? ____
3. Were these ideas and concepts in child development mostly new to you in this lesson or was it material you already knew?
4. Have you ordered or read any of the materials suggested in Lesson I under "On Your Own?"

Name _____ County _____

Roberta C. Frasier
Extension Family Life Specialist

HOME STUDY COURSE FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS

Lesson III - Play Is What It's All About

Many people think play is something a child does until he is old enough to do something "worth-while." Sometimes parents treat play as though it is of little importance--"Run along and play" is a common suggestion given to children, particularly if a child is getting in the way.

The Meaning of Play

Play is as important to a child as business, sports or social events are to an adult. Play is a way of learning about all kinds of things in the world. It stretches your child's imagination and brings the make-believe world in touch with the real world.

In education circles today, there is a great deal being said about "discovery learning." Learning is more deeply set in a student's mind if he finds ideas for himself and discovers his own answers. This technique of learning is being used at all levels of education. It's a natural thing for a young child . . . so provide him with opportunities to find answers for himself. Unless your child is in danger of hurting himself let him work out his own answer. If he can't figure it out just a bit of help from you is probably all he needs. The results may not be perfect in your eyes, but they'll be satisfactory to your child. Some parents tend to supervise too much. Success to a child is quite a different thing than "success" viewed by an adult. This pattern of "discovery" learning will help your child all through life. He will develop initiative in finding solutions to his problems.

Play Helps Your Child Express His Feelings

Another reason play is so important to children is that it gives them an opportunity to express feelings. It is not easy for your child to give up his comfortable ways and learn to do things the way you want him to or to learn to share things with others. This is a time in his life when he is learning at a greater rate than any other time. He's bound to have frustrations. He needs a time when he can do things the way he wants to do them.

Active play helps your child develop his large muscles and gives his body exercise. It's also a way for him to "let off steam"--if he holds in all his energy he tends to become irritable and tense. He's harder to get along with under these conditions. Sometimes a child who is forced to hold in his energy will finally react by kicking, throwing toys or pounding things . . . sometimes pounding other children near him.

This behavior isn't tolerated by the adults around him. How much better it is for everyone if he has space to run and toys that give him the opportunity to work off his pent-up energy in a socially acceptable way.

During your baby's first year you are pretty much in control of the situation. You can put him in the playpen, the high chair or the crib so he is safe. If he cries you hold him, feed him, or divert him with some attention. During his second year, things change. He is in constant motion. What he wants to do most is explore his environment.

Because play is so important in the development of children, parents need to understand the different kinds of play and what children learn from each kind.

A Busy Year Ahead

During your child's second year his play will be of a wide variety. Activity is the word for your toddler now and he goes from one pastime to another. His attention span is short. He likes to pull out drawers and after he learns that they pull and push he'll explore the contents. The waste basket will be emptied on the floor and he'll rummage through the contents to see what there is of interest.

He's learning to climb--up he goes on to the couch and if you are not there he'll probably go off head first. It won't be long, though, and he'll learn to back to the edge and slide down.

You'll be on constant guard these days and even though you've removed as many of the dangers as possible there's still a need to be watchful. A toddler has no judgment in where he goes or what he does. He likes papers and magazines but will mostly tear them up. Often pieces will go into his mouth if you are not watching him. He's still exploring by tasting, touching and feeling things around him.

At this age his body contributes a great deal to his play activities. After a few practices, he will learn to step down from the patio onto the soft grass without falling. When little Susie, next door, was about 15 months old, her parents provided her with a step stool so that she could reach the sink to wash her hands. What really fascinated her with this new "toy" was that she learned to back up to the stool and sit on it. Then she would slide off, move it a little and repeat the whole performance. She did this over and over again. Through play, children practice skills.

STOP! Turn to the worksheet and complete numbers 1 and 2.

Limit His Toys

At this age toys can be few and simple. Lots of toys in a toy box contribute to a child's confusion. He'll up-end the whole box on the floor only to decide that something else is more interesting. Rotate his toys, giving him a few things to play with at a time. When he tires of these in a few days or a week, bring out something else that he hasn't seen for a while. But take something out of his box to be put away for another time. In a few weeks, these will be "new" and interesting again.

Make Life Easier

A low shelf or two is another good way of storing your child's toys. He can easily see and pick out what he wants to play with and having fewer toys makes an easier job of picking up for both your child and you.

If his play area looks like a disaster with all his toys and playthings strewn across the floor, the job of picking up is overwhelming. It is too much to expect him to clean this up by himself.

Encouragement and help from you or a game, "Who can pick up the fastest?" are effective ways of teaching your child what you expect of him. In this way you work with his development and make it easy for him to learn what behavior you want. He wants to be helpful and he likes to please you.

Toys Can Be Simple

Some of the playthings he'll enjoy the most are the things you can find around the house: a set of plastic measuring cups, a wooden spoon and a pie pan (if you can stand the noise), or your old cast-off purses with a large wooden spool, a small toy animal, or a small box stuffed inside. Empty oatmeal boxes with some odds and ends inside are very intriguing to a toddler.

Don't overlook the possibility of making simple toys for your child. Simple puzzles can be made out of corrugated cardboard. Empty spools tied together make a good pull toy. Make your own nesting toy by using cans of different sizes. Be sure all sharp edges are removed or pounded down. A few clothes pins to hold things together are fascinating for a toddler and they help him learn control of finger and hand muscles.

Toys Can Make Your Child's Developmental Stages Easier

At about one year old most children are learning to walk. They like something to push on wheels--something that will give them a little support . . . a doll carriage or a toy lawn mower. After

they've learned to walk fairly well their interest goes to another step and they like to pull things. This can be a wagon, a truck or most anything. Help your child use his imagination. A string attached to a shoe box can be lots of things.

When you give your child a new toy show him how it works. This takes patience on your part. If your child loses interest or wants to play with it in a different way, let him.

One example comes to mind of an educational toy for a toddler which was never played with in the way it was designed. It was a wooden shoe which laced up the front with long laces and it had round, square and triangular pegs with matching holes. The child was supposed to learn the different shapes by dropping the pegs through the matching hole into the shoe. Both parents made several efforts to teach him how the toy was to be used. The wooden shoe became a "choo-choo" train to this little boy. He dragged it behind him by the long laces. He never learned to put the pegs in the holes. Later, he learned shapes in another way.

The moral of this story is to provide your child with toys that will help him learn. Some he will play with in the way they were designed and some he will make into something else in his own imagination. Both ways of playing are important.

Muscle Control is Developing

As a child nears two years of age, his small muscle coordination is improving. He can put large pegs in holes, he can build a simple tower using four or five blocks. He likes to pound things and so it's wise to provide him with a wooden hammer and a place to use it. He can turn pages in a book if it's made of thick material. His small muscle control is still limited so he finds great enjoyment in pushing and pulling objects.

His interest span is still short, though play in water will keep him busy for surprisingly long periods of time. He also likes sand, mud, stones and just plain digging in the earth. Simple play routines entertain him and he will do the same thing over and over again.

He listens to sounds now and makes some himself. He's beginning to like music and he's especially interested if you'll play a rhythmic game or sing to him. Sometimes he may try to dance to a definite rhythm he hears, especially if an adult will dance with him.

STOP! Turn to the worksheet. Complete numbers 3 and 4.

Safety in Toys

Special care must be given in choosing playthings for your child. Toys or any object that he plays with need to be checked out for safety.

They should be large enough so he cannot put them in his mouth. Look for sharp edges. Can parts be easily be broken off? Does the paint chip? Some paints are poisonous if swallowed. Check tags and labels for those that tell you that the paint is safe.

Check the fuzz on stuffed toys--does it come off easily? Pull toys should be knotted at the end of the string rather than using the ball that is attached to some. Strings should be just long enough so he can comfortably pull the toy, but too long strings may be dangerous.

What To Choose For Your Child

Select toys that can be used in more than one way. Blocks are used for building but can also be loaded in a truck or used many other ways. Choose toys that he can manage on his own. Check to see if the construction is sturdy. Playthings are given tough wear--will they take it? It's better to have fewer sturdy, lasting playthings than several poorly made ones.

Observing your child at play and thinking about the purposes of play will help you to give your child the most from his play experiences.

Steps in Social Development

Two year olds are beginning to enjoy the company of other children.

A toddler still has many of his baby characteristics but he's reaching for independence. One way that he shows this is to reach toward other children. By the time your child is two years old, he'll enjoy the company of another child.

At this age he does not know how to play with another child, but two children will sit side by side, each playing with their own things. This is called parallel play. They enjoy each other's companionship, but when they have a chance they will snatch each other's toys. Children at this age treat another child like an object--pushing the other out of the way, hitting or even biting. They require adult supervision when playing together.

Your child goes through stages of social development--first, playing alone, then enjoying play in the company of another child or parallel play, and finally, after age three, he learns to play with another child.

STOP! Complete the worksheet.

Sharing Isn't Easy

He is still in the "mine" stage and is not willing to share. He still doesn't understand that there is something for him if he lets go of what he has or shares it. He doesn't know that his friend wants to take a turn using one of his toys.

At two his attention is still focused on his mother. You are the central figure in his life. This is a good time for his father to become more active in his life. Your child will enjoy rough housing, piggy back rides and other activities. If a father helps with feeding or bath time, and sometimes puts him to bed, the toddler gradually learns to leave his mother's side. He can tolerate longer times without her. By another year, the toddler gains a strong interest in other children and will be ready to learn to play and get along with other children, but right now his parents are his first interest.

* * * *

Next time: Living With Your Child

Your last lesson covers some of the learning tasks your child will achieve--talking, feeding himself, toilet training. These learning tasks are called developmental tasks.

* * * *

Prepared by Mrs. Leona C. Winters, graduate student, Oregon State University.

On Your Own

The following are some bulletins and booklets that give additional information on children's play.

Homemade Toys for Small Children by Roberta Frasier, available at no cost at
your County Extension Office.

Home Play and Play Equipment, No. 238 - 15¢

Your Child From 1 to 6, No. 30 - 20¢

These two can be ordered from:

Children's Bureau, Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office,
Washington, D. C. 20402

LESSON III -- WORKSHEET

1. What are two of your child's favorite toys? What things does he learn by playing with these toys?
2. What pastime or play activity have you noticed your child does that involves the use and control of his body? What skill is he/she practicing?
3. What "play" activities was your child engaged in that were a problem to you today?
Would you label them annoying behavior or "bad" behavior?
What did you do about them?
4. What is one new thing your child learned today?
5. Playing side by side with another child is called _____ play.
6. Name at least three points to keep in mind to check a toy for safety.
7. Play is important to the growth and development of a child because: (give at least 3 reasons)

MINI EVALUATION - LESSON III

1. The worksheet helped me identify the values of play. Yes _____ No _____
2. The lesson was too long? _____ too short? _____ just right? _____
3. The information in Lesson III was helpful and informative. _____
I already knew these things. _____
4. The most helpful information was on page _____ and concerned _____
5. Are you planning to or have you already acquired any of the booklets listed at the end of the lesson? Yes _____ No _____

Name _____ County _____

Please return this sheet in the envelope provided. No postage is needed.

Roberta C. Frasier
Extension Family Life Specialist

HOME STUDY COURSE FOR PARENTS OF TODDLERS

Lesson IV - Living With Your Child

During the toddler years your child is learning faster than at any other time in his life. During each growth period in his life he is confronted with certain learning tasks--attitudes, skills and understanding--which he needs in order to meet the expectations of the world around him.

These learning experiences are called developmental tasks. During his toddler years, some of his developmental tasks are learning to feed himself, learning to talk, and toilet training.

There's a Right Time For Learning

Maturation means "readiness to learn." Many times, as parents, we think a child should be able to learn a certain idea or concept. We are eager for him to learn and because of our enthusiasm, it's easy to try to teach him more than he is ready for or that he can even understand. He becomes frustrated when we try to force him. He will become angry as an outlet for this frustration. If your toddler becomes angry continuously as a response to activities, then you, his parents, are expecting too much too soon or you are trying to teach too much at one time.

Both physical and mental growth must take place before he has reached the "readiness to learn" a developmental task. No matter how hard you try or how much you want it, you cannot teach your eight months old child to talk. He is not ready for it physically or mentally--his tongue, the throat muscles and his brain are not yet developed for this learning step.

Why Are Children Different?

Some children use many words by the time they are 18 months old while others say only a few words at two and a half years. What causes this wide difference?

Differences in each of us come from inherited characteristics and environment. Heredity and environment are so entwined in the development of a child that they cannot be separated. Heredity determines the potential of the infant, environment determines how and even whether this potential is developed.

All normal children follow a similar sequence of growth as they develop physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially. Because there is a great variation in experiences in life and in their own inherited traits no two children pass through this sequence exactly the same way.

To understand and help children grow, we must understand and accept the fact that within the range called "normal" some children will develop more slowly than others and some will grow faster in some areas than others . . . this contributes to being an individual.

The child that doesn't talk at two and a half years may have siblings (another word for brothers and sisters) or parents who talk for him. He doesn't need to talk because they anticipate his needs. Some toddlers indicate a need for a drink of water by standing near the sink with hand outstretched and uttering a grunt. Parents will respond to this--they know what the toddler means. Parents and siblings are a very important part of the child's environment and contribute to his readiness to learn.

Another developmental task your child experiences is learning to feed himself.

Children will give indications that they are ready to learn. For example, your child may hold the spoon, and perhaps try to scoop up food. If you put bite size pieces of food on his tray, your child will put them in his mouth using his hands. These are the beginning steps in learning to eat.

Up until now your child has shown great curiosity for everything around him. He tastes about everything not planned for eating, but when it comes to mealtime, he suddenly loses his adventurous spirit and becomes very conservative.

During the first year of your child's life he tripled his weight, but this weight increase slows down greatly during the next years of his life. Unfortunately, parents do not often stop to consider that their child no longer has this single purpose and attitude in mind when mealtime comes. As an infant, he eagerly took food, but this delight in mealtime will not go on forever.

So much is said and written about balanced meals that parents sometimes become overly concerned that every meal be a balanced one. A balanced diet over a period of time is important, but each meal does not have to be a balanced one. If your child is eating meat, vegetables, fruit and milk through his daily routines he is probably getting a balanced diet.

Seconds, Please

Rather than loading his plate with what you think he needs, put only a small amount on his plate. Let him finish that first, then ask him if he wants more.

Make his foods attractive. Many young children do not like mixtures or creamed foods. . . they like their meat, potatoes and vegetables as separate foods. Highly seasoned foods or unusual ones should be omitted from your child's diet, but if he wants to taste something from your plate, let him.

Mealtimes should be pleasant family experiences. If there's anxious concern about what food is not eaten, or the mess that is made, your child will begin to sense this. Mealtime becomes an unpleasant time in his day. If there is always spilled milk, check to see if your child has a cup that he can manage. Is it one that will tip easily? A dish with a side is a help because he can scoop against it to get food on his spoon. A child's spoon, with a short handle, and a large bowl make it easier for him to get pieces of food onto it. Expect some messiness during the time he's learning. Actually this goes on for several years.

Learning To Talk

Somewhere around fifteen months, your child will begin to form words. At first, you'll be the only one to understand what he means. Before this time he has communicated with you by crying, by laughing and babbling or cooing. You have been able to tell when he's happy by the expression on his face and the noises he makes.

Interest and approval by parents help a child learn to talk. You teach him best by speaking to him clearly and simply. Baby talk or long, wordy sentences hold back his progress. Simple games like naming objects, chanting rhymes are a help in teaching your child to talk. Reading simple stories and talking about the pictures will help him gain word association.

Don't force your child to say a word in order to get something he wants. Tension between you and your child may block his speech development. What he needs most is encouragement and acceptance from you. There is a wide variation in the rate at which children learn to talk. Some children know a couple of hundred words by age two, yet others will be using only ten. Sometimes parents are unduly concerned because little Johnny, next door, can put several words together and talks much of the time while their child is still on one word sentences and then only seldom. But relax, enjoy your child. A happy, secure child will learn at his own pace.

True Or False? Children Should Be Seen But Not Heard

Once he has acquired the ability to talk your problem is different.

One of the questions your child will put to you over and over again is "Why?". Parents are sometimes convinced that the child just gets into the habit of saying why, but on the whole, most children really want to know the answer. They haven't learned to use words very well so they repeat the same old question instead of other words to make it sound different to their parent.

Asking questions is one of the major ways of learning about the world around him. If he is discouraged from asking questions even though they seem tiresome to the parent, one of these avenues of learning is closed. Asking questions and getting answers he can understand fosters curiosity in the child. The more curious your child is, the more aware of his surrounding he becomes, and the more he sees and learns. It's really a chain of learning for him. Experiences spur his curiosity. It is easy to understand that a child with wide experiences asks more questions, learns more, sees more and as a result continues to learn at a faster rate than a passive child that shows little curiosity for things around him.

Another Goal For Your Child

Because of the many and rapid changes in our society, most parents realize that the factual knowledge their child gains today may be outdated tomorrow. Parents today have no idea what the adult life of their children will be like. How can you prepare your child for a future you cannot predict? What does he need to know?

One of the things you do know about your child's future is that he will be living in a fast-changing world. His ability to cope with new situations will be very important.

Parents need to help their child learn to think for himself, to solve problems, and to ask the right kind of questions. Developing and encouraging natural curiosity is a big step toward equipping your child for an unknown future.

Toilet Training--Another Developmental Task

Another step toward independence that your child will take is learning to control elimination. There was a time years ago when "training" was encouraged at an early age, but studies show that toilet training should be started when the child can begin to understand what is happening.

Starting training too early is undesirable for several reasons. Mothers can't help but show approval if her child is successful, but also disappointment if he's not. This means she's setting a standard for him that he cannot possibly meet. If your child is successful, it's because you've caught him at the right moment, but it is not something that he is controlling.

Also, if he is forced to sit on a chair before he is ready or understands any part of it, it may make him angry. Then when he does begin to understand what is happening he may not cooperate with you at all.

Two things are necessary for successful toilet training--your child must be ready. He needs to be able to control his muscle coordination to hold and let go. Secondly, he needs to be willing to cooperate and be interested in what's happening. Most children are ready around 18 months, but again, there is a wide range of differences because each child is unique.

Bowel training can usually begin first, because there is a definite pressure when the stool is ready to leave the body and this often happens at regular times. Also, your child may give an outward sign, like getting red in the face or a look of deep concentration.

Wetting is affected by many things and may be harder to control. The amount of liquid your child drinks, his excitement or interest in what he's doing and the size of the bladder all affect his control over urination. When the intervals between wetting are getting longer, then it's an indication to you that he may be ready. Try, then if he doesn't seem to get the idea let it go and try again in another couple of weeks. Don't scold him or punish him for lack of success. Expect accidents. These may even come long after he is trained.

Once he's on the road to learning, take him out of diapers and use training pants. Make his clothes easy to get off--being able to help himself is another step toward independence. Pants with elastic in the waist are faster and easier for your child to manage.

STOP! Turn to the worksheet. Complete number 1.

Living With Your Small Child

A young mother schedules her day so that she could work on a sewing project during the time her small daughter was napping. But the little girl woke up right in the middle of the time her mother had allotted herself to sew. What did she do?

The mother scolded the little girl and tried to make her stay on her bed for a while--the child cried so grudgingly the mother put her sewing away. Her manner toward her daughter showed her strong displeasure because she would not nap longer.

Sometimes parents expect too much from a small child. This mother expected her little girl to sleep as long as it suited the mother's convenience. Sometimes parents expect too much of themselves. Mothers schedule a day's activities as though child care was not a part of their normal routine.

Most parents expect to take out time to feed, to bathe, and care for the physical needs of their child. Mothers know they have a certain amount of extra laundry and cleaning to do because of their children.

What most parents don't expect or plan for are interruptions from their children and yet, this is a normal part of any day.

Your day should be planned with leeway for interruptions. Parents will agree that it takes patience and planning in order to dovetail household chores with child care. Situations are apt to get hectic and out of hand unless you make some plans ahead of time to take care of all your child's needs as well as your household chores.

One young mother told of a morning's episode recently when she had put her small daughter of two in her bedroom to play while the mother straightened up the house. Some friends were coming for coffee at mid-morning so she wanted to get her house cleaning chores out of the way early. The doorbell rang. When the mother returned from the door she discovered Susie at the cluttered breakfast table happily "helping" get ready by mixing the milk in the sugar bowl.

She said, "Look, mommy, I'm making a cake for you." Susie was happy, but her mother wasn't; it's very hard to be calm and in control in the face of such situations.

One solution is to keep your child with you when you are doing household chores. Give her a dust cloth and let her "help." Or provide your child with a few play things that will hold his interest while you are busy. Little children cannot be left alone for any length of time. If they must be put in a separate room then put a gate or a chair across the doorway. This way they can see and hear you.

Some jobs, such as sewing or baking, are better done when your child is napping. Occasionally, mothers find they need to do one of these tasks when their child is still up. A couple of toys he hasn't seen for a while will help. Put him in the room next to you and a chair across the door. Even then, you still need to give him a friendly word, a smile so he won't feel left out.

Sometimes all these precautions and preparations do not help. Your child is old enough to understand that this is your day to bake and you have to produce something for the bake sale at the church or you must finish a sewing project because it's a birthday present for someone tomorrow. Sometimes we expect a small child to understand grown up concepts and they are not capable of this.

No matter how well we plan ahead, we all find that at some time we are in a bind for time. Sometimes our children take the brunt of this. Then, the best thing to do is take a look at the situation and ask yourself, "Is it really worth it to have a crisis with my child? Is there some other way I can solve this problem?"

Sometimes it means that you have to call someone and say "Happy birthday today and I'll stop by Sunday with your gift." Or maybe this time make a contribution to the bake sale instead of bringing

a cake.

STOP! Turn to the worksheet. Complete number 2.

No Infallible Rules Available

Even if you wanted a set of foolproof rules to guide you through the child rearing years, you would not find any. Each family solves its own problems because each family is unique. Human beings differ in every possible way including the way they bring up their children.

Some families' style of living allows children to bounce on the sofa, play catch in the living room, or have a game of tag in the house. If you are that kind of a parent, that's fine. But some parents object to such vigorous activities in the house and tell their children to find something else to do.

Your Role As A Parent

Some parents become very tense about their role as a parent. Then try to decide what to do about child rearing from what they think the "experts" are saying. By all means, read and listen about child growth and development, but use this information to fit your own life style.

Parents have their own set of values and goals that they want to pass on to their children. When parents try to conform to something that they do not really feel is right they lose confidence and feel unnatural. By knowing what the sequence of growth your child will go through, by recognizing individual differences, by fulfilling his need to be loved, and creating an environment for learning you can help your child modify this behavior so it is in line with your standards.

Contrary to some popular myths, parenthood is not all fun. But you will experience some joys that you could not have any other way.

Complete the worksheet.

* * * *

Bulletins: "Food For the Family With Young Children"
Home and Garden Bulletin Number 5
(this may be obtained at your local county extension office)

Pocket-book (look for this on book stands)
Dodson, Fitzhugh, How To Parent, Signet Pocketbook, New American Library, Inc.,
New York, 1970. cost: \$1.25

Check your library for:

Hymes, James L., Jr., The Child Under Six, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1963.

* * * *

Answers to True and False, page 9:

1. F 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. F

Prepared by Mrs. Leona C. Winters, graduate student, Oregon State University

LESSON IV--WORKSHEET

1. Identify two clues your child has given you to show he is ready to learn.
2. Identify a recent upset you've had with your toddler because he did not fit into your housekeeping plan or because of an interruption in your schedule.

How could you have handled it better?

3. Most parents do an excellent job of teaching their children to talk. They show pleasure and encourage him when he tries words and are relaxed about the mistakes he makes.

In a brief paragraph, tell how you could apply the same teaching pattern in toilet training.

What benefits could be gained from this method?

True or False

- _____ 1. Children in the same family have exactly the same environment.
- _____ 2. Learning about children helps us understand human behavior.
- _____ 3. The influence of genes stops as soon as a child is born.
- _____ 4. All children follow a similar sequence of growth.
- _____ 5. A good way to encourage your child to talk is by making him say the name of what he wants.

Check your answers on page 7.

* * * *

MINI EVALUATION

1. Did you understand everything included in this lesson? Yes ____ No ____
2. Was the lesson too long? ____ too short ____ just right ____
3. Were these concepts of child growth and development new to you or did you already know much of the material?
4. Have you obtained any of the materials suggested under "On Your Own" in any of the four lessons? Yes ____ No ____

If so, how many? ____

Have you read them or used them for reference? Yes ____ No ____

Have you read any material related to this home study course?

books _____	extension bulletins _____
magazine articles _____	other _____
pamphlets _____	

Please return this evaluation form in the envelope provided. No postage is necessary.

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