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THE FIRST GRADE PROGRAM

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A child's early years are his most important ones. It is then that his attitudes and habits are formed which influence him through life. So it is all important as to what type of program is planned for him his first year at school.

The first grade child or "six year old", comes to school with these habits, attitudes and emotions, anticipating a brand new world that has been pictured to him for some time. It then becomes the task of the first grade teacher to cultivate, nurture or modify the characteristics this first grader brings to school.

Through a well-planned Readiness program for several weeks, the process of orientation is accomplished and formal work is begun gradually for those who are mentally mature or ready for the activities. All children do not mature at the same rate and time and care is exercised to study and adapt the program for individual differences.

Below will be given the several phases of a developmental program in which effort is made to provide a balance of activity, work and play, indoors and out; reading, science, mathematics, music and art, physical education, study, observation, experimentation and exploration.

The philosophy of education as we see it today emphasizes the development of the whole child to his maximum capacity, mentally, physically, morally, and spiritually. This may be termed an overall general objective.

Specific objectives of the first grade program will include:

1. Cultivation of good listening habits.
2. Cultivation of ability to get along with others in group activities.
3. Development of concepts and understandings.
4. Development of keen observation and alertness to child's environment.
5. Bridging the gap between home and school.
6. Development of habits, skills, and attitudes that will contribute to a well-rounded personality.

In curriculum development, reading is considered most basic. Most first graders will master 250 basic words or more and have a reading knowledge of many more. Along with this word recognition by sight, phonetic skills of word attack are taught, for example, initial consonant sounds, vowels and several blends. Reading for pleasure and information are stressed equally.

The number program includes basic concepts and understandings in the addition and subtraction facts not greater than ten, plus problem solving through the use of these skills. Concrete experiences are very necessary.

Manuscript writing is another formal skill practiced in Grade One, emphasizing the functional aspect of letters to make meaningful experiences in word building.

Art and music are used to develop creativeness in the child as well as self-expression for pure enjoyment.

Science is taught by training the child in observation and study of his environment which may include pets, insects, birds and plants, not excluding health and foods.

Plays and games play an important part in developing coordination of the physical, mental and social aspect of the young child. Such skills as jumping rope and ball playing are excellent media for this program

Through a well planned program, several desirable outcomes may be accomplished:

1. The child becomes a happy participant of a social group.
2. He will be better able to express himself in all phases of behavior.
3. He will have developed independence and initiative in performing tasks and assuming responsibilities.
4. Listening habits will be improved.