

1990

4-H 327 4-H Child Development Projects : Leaders Guide for the Preschooler and Middle Childhood Units

Connie M. Francis

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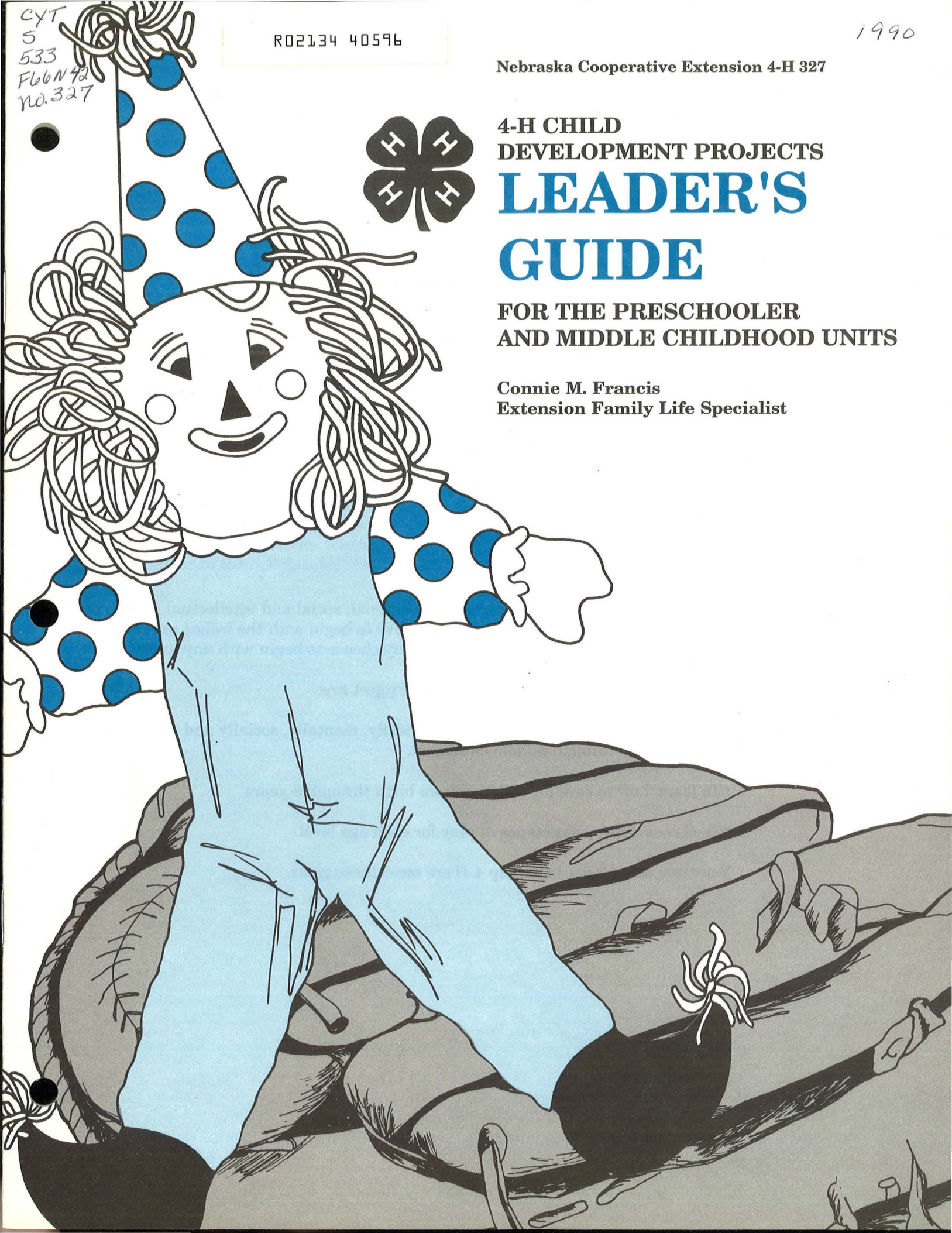
Nebraska Cooperative Extension 4-H 327



4-H CHILD
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
**LEADER'S
GUIDE**

FOR THE PRESCHOOLER
AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD UNITS

Connie M. Francis
Extension Family Life Specialist



4-H CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS LEADER'S GUIDE for the PRESCHOOLER AND MIDDLE CHILDHOOD UNITS

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INTRODUCTION

The 4-H Child Development project is written as four separate units:

The Infant (birth to 18 months)

The Toddler (18 months to 3 years)

The Preschooler (3 to 6 years)

Middle Childhood (6 to 8 years)

Each unit teaches about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual growth of a particular age group. Four-H'ers do not have to begin with the infant unit and proceed through the units in order. They may choose to begin with any unit they wish.

The goals of the 4-H Child Development Project are:

- To understand how children grow physically, mentally, socially and emotionally from infancy through middle childhood.
- To learn how to care for children from birth through 8 years.
- To choose appropriate types of play for each age level.

Your role as a leader is to help 4-H'ers meet these goals.

This Leader's Guide is designed as a tool for you. It will help you plan learning experiences for 4-H'ers studying "The Preschooler" (3 to 6 years) or "Middle Childhood" (6 to 8 years) in the 4-H Child Development Project.

As you read the member's manual, you will get ideas for learning activities and experiences that will help 4-H'ers gain an understanding of the developmental levels through which children grow. One of the best learning experiences a 4-H'er can have in this project is to observe more than one child of similar ages. This helps the 4-H'er realize that, although there are levels through which all children progress, each is unique and each proceeds at his or her own individual rate. Children who are mentally, emotionally or physically handicapped will progress at a slower rate in some areas.

Encourage 4-H'ers to discuss project plans with their parents and involve them in the project. You, as the Child Development project leader, can involve parents in many ways, too. For example, they can have meetings in their homes, be involved in teaching, help with transportation for a field trip, etc. Parents may have talents to share that can help 4-H'ers learn more from this project.

The 4-H Leader Handbook (4-H 38) is a guide to help leaders work with young people and to link them to the community and to the Extension Office in their area. In the handbook, there is information on understanding 4-H, involving parents in 4-H, holding effective meetings, understanding youth and helping 4-H'ers with project records. Refer to the 4-H Leader Handbook for areas in which you would like help.

WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

Most young people within an age group have some of the general characteristics typical of the age and developmental stage. However, each child develops at his or her own pace and each is a unique individual. Below are typical characteristics of two age groups with which you will be working. You are likely to observe many of these characteristics in your 4-H members, but you will not find all of them in any one member.

Characteristics of 9- to 11-year-olds:

- Interest in making things is high.
- Large muscle control is fairly well developed.
- Fine finger control is beginning to develop.
- Peer group is of increasing importance.
- Independence from adults is important.
- Have limited decision making abilities.
- Have abounding energy.
- Find it hard to sit still for very long.
- Need to experience early success.
- Need to feel loved and accepted.
- Attention span is good for short periods of time.
- Active participation increases attention span.
- Searching for self-identity and need assistance in building a strong sense of positive personal confidence.
- Need help managing their time.

Characteristics of 12- to 14-year-olds:

- Steady height and weight growth continues.
- Small muscle control is fairly well developed.
- Abstract thought is possible, and plans can extend over several weeks.
- Activities can be evaluated with considerable insight.
- Attention span increases.
- Need self-expression and self-directed activities to develop intellectual skills.
- Need to know and understand the "why" of things.
- Peer group is very important.
- Prejudice may be apparent.
- Both cooperation and competition are enjoyed. Cooperation is more difficult to learn than is competition.
- Independence from adults is important.
- Concept of self is enhanced by feelings of competence.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE 4-H LEADER

1. Attend leader training meetings when possible to receive information on teaching 4-H'ers.

2. Plan meetings for project members.

3. Explain what the project can offer. Encourage 4-H'ers to pursue areas of individual interest and share their findings with others.

4. Help individuals evaluate their projects.

5. Encourage participation in presentations and exhibits to gain poise and confidence.

6. Learn and grow with the members. Broaden your own knowledge in child development.

7. Ask your Extension Agent-Home Economics for help in getting bulletins and other materials and resources listed in this guide.

A 4-H PHILOSOPHY

Much of the 4-H program centers around one major learning technique - the project. A project is a real-life learning experience through which the 4-H member establishes personal objectives, sets out to accomplish these objectives under adult guidance, and actually finishes the job. Projects help members learn by doing and are planned to teach life skills. These skills will help 4-H'ers function as adults in our society and accept responsibilities for community leadership.

Life skills help young people and adults fulfill their potential as individuals and group members. The life skills learned in 4-H include:

- understanding self,
- relating with others,
- communicating,
- decision making/problem solving,
- acquiring, analyzing and using information,
- managing resources, and
- working with others.

In the 4-H Child Development proj-

ect, 4-H'ers will learn and practice these life skills. As a leader, you can encourage 4-H'ers to talk about and share what they observe and do, both formally and informally. Urge them to experiment, ask questions and try new things. Give them opportunities to identify problems and attempt solutions, to set goals and make choices, and to evaluate what they have learned. In this way, you will help them develop life skills which will be useful to them long after they have completed this project.

PLANNING THE PROJECT MEETING

On the following pages are suggested activities for club meetings. It is not necessary to complete all the activities and exercises. Select the ones that interest you and your club members the most. You will have additional ideas of your own, as well.

Get members involved early in the meeting through roll call, reports of what they have done since the last meeting, simple demonstrations, short talks and actual activities. Provide some opportunity for recognition of and participation by every member at each meeting.

Field trips add variety to a club program. For the convenience of everyone concerned, make arrangements for trips well in advance. Talk to the person in charge about what you want

members to learn and see, their interest and age range, the time of your arrival and departure, and anything else that will make the visit worthwhile for 4-H'ers and pleasant for the host.

Involve Junior Leaders as well as 4-H parents in club meetings. Ask them to demonstrate a skill, assist with a group activity or help individual 4-H'ers.

Take some time at your first meeting to organize. Introduce the project to members and their parents. Explain the project and, if possible, give examples of what is included in some of the units. Discuss keeping a journal to record project experiences and observations.

THE PRESCHOOLER

This unit of the Child Development project is about the development of preschoolers from 3 to 6 years. In it the 4-H'er will observe and learn about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of preschoolers. It is important to remind members that each child is unique and will progress through these stages at an individual rate. Ages given for various stages of development and accomplishment are approximate ages.

For more information about the development and care of preschoolers, refer to the following Fact Sheets available at your Extension office:

- FL21 How Young Children Learn
- FL23 The Preschool Years - Three to Five
- FL26 The Three-Year-Old
- FL27 The Four-Year-Old
- FL28 The Five-Year-Old
- FL40 Toys and Play for Young Children
- FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
- FL80 Read to Your Child

The following 4-H publications also may be useful:

- 4-H 181 Communicating with Young Children
- 4-H 267 The Sitter, Member Manual
- 4-H 268 The Sitter, Leader Guide

The amount of responsibility a 4-H'er takes for actual care of a child in this project depends on the 4-H'er's age and experience. **The member's manual has project suggestions for members in three age groups: 9 to 11 years old, 12 to 14 years old, and 15 to 19 years old.**

UNDERSTANDING THE PRESCHOOLER

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn how a preschooler grows physically, mentally, socially and emotionally.

Meeting Suggestions: (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

Roll Call Ideas:

- Why I have chosen to study preschoolers.
- An experience I have had with a preschooler.
- One thing I know about preschoolers.
- Ask each member to bring a picture of themselves as a preschooler.

Topics to Talk About:

- **Characteristics of preschoolers.** Review "I Am A Preschooler," page 8 in the member manual. Explain to 4-H'ers that developmental materials are generalized information to help us see the various stages through which a child moves. It is important to realize that each child develops at his or her own pace.

- **Observing preschoolers.** Refer to the Observation Form on page 6 in the member manual and discuss skills preschoolers learn in each area: physical, social, intellectual and emotional. Encourage members to observe as many preschoolers as possible during this project.

- **Keeping a journal.** Encourage members to keep a Child Development journal in which they record their observations. A loose-leaf notebook would allow 4-H'ers to duplicate the Observation Form and make several observations throughout their project. This journal also may include a record of other experiences in the project as well as pictures and newspaper or magazine articles about the development and care of preschoolers.

Activities:

- Use project suggestions on page 4 of the member manual. Discuss what each member would like to learn and do. Complete the first column of the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet together (page 2, member manual).

- Make a journal entry as a group. In it record your plans for the project year.

- Using the Observation Form provided on page 6 of the member manual, have members record:

- changes in one preschooler over a period of time.

- differences between two or more preschoolers of approximately the same age.

Have members include these observations in their journal.

- Visit a local day care center or preschool where 4-H'ers can observe more than one preschooler. Each member could select two children of the same approximate age and note similarities and differences in physical, emotional, intellectual and social development. Have members record what they see on Observation Forms. Encourage 4-H'ers to ask questions of the day care provider or preschool director. (You may want to have members prepare a list of questions together ahead of time.)

- As a group, list some "don'ts" that members have used with preschoolers. Practice restating them as "do" statements.

CARING FOR THE PRESCHOOLER

Purpose: The 4-H'er will learn how to feed, clothe and care for the preschooler, and how to promote feelings of security and safety.

Meeting Suggestions: (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

Roll Call Ideas:

- One safety rule for caring for a preschooler.
- A snack idea that preschoolers could fix for themselves.

Possible Presentations by Members:

- Nutritional needs of a preschooler.
- Nutritious snacks for preschoolers.
- Clothing for a preschooler.
- Teaching a child to tie shoes.

Topics to Talk About:

• Feeding a preschooler. Discuss nutritional needs and how they change as a preschooler grows. Also talk about providing a relaxed atmosphere at mealtime and beginning to learn table manners.

• Clothing a preschooler. Clothing features that make dressing easier for preschoolers.

• Quiet activities that can help prepare a preschooler for nap or bedtime.

Activities:

• Invite a guest speaker to attend your 4-H meeting. Before the speaker arrives, develop a list of questions you would like answered. Ideas for guest speakers include:

— a preschool teacher to talk about the daily schedule and activities at a preschool or running a preschool as a business.

— someone from your local Head

Start to explain the Head Start program.

• Visit a store where preschool clothing is sold. Look at sizes, age ranges and features that would be attractive to preschoolers. Note construction details and care labels.

• As members develop skills in caring for a preschooler, and as they learn through observations and other experiences, encourage them to share what they have learned. This sharing may be done informally, through group discussion, or through formal presentations such as demonstrations, speeches, posters, reports or exhibits.

• As a group, or for an individual assignment, have members plan one day's menus for a preschooler.

• Role-play talking with a preschooler about table manners. Discuss or role-play ways to introduce new foods.

• Gather a variety of clothing fasteners — zippers (large and small), buttons, snaps, hooks, gripper strips, etc. — and discuss which would be easier for a preschooler to manage and how they can be used to make clothing easier for the preschooler to put on and take off alone.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn to choose types of play preschoolers enjoy and toys that are suitable for preschoolers.

Meeting Suggestions: (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

Roll Call Ideas:

- Your favorite toy as a preschooler.
- Name a toy a preschooler would enjoy.
- A safety tip for playing with a preschooler.
- An idea or picture of a preschooler's toy I could make.

Possible Member Presentations:

- Selecting or making a toy for a preschooler.
- Teaching a game or a song to a preschooler.

Topics to Talk About:

- Types of play which encourage a preschooler's physical, emotional, social and intellectual development.
- Preschoolers and make-believe. Use the section on Imaginative Play, page 11 in the member manual, as a discussion guide.
- What makes a good toy for a preschooler? Use the section on "Toys for the Preschooler," page 16 in the member manual, as a discussion guide.

Activities:

- Collect four or five toys for preschoolers. Ask members to evaluate each toy in regard to quality of construction, safety and appropriateness for use by a preschooler.
- Invite a librarian to attend your meeting and talk about books for preschoolers. The librarian could also share ideas about telling stories.
- Ask each member to bring a short children's book to your meeting and practice telling the story rather than reading it.
- Learn some finger plays and action songs that members can share with their preschool friends. (See page 14, member manual.)
- Ask each member to bring supplies needed to make a drop box or other toy for a preschooler. Make the toy at your meeting. You may want to enlist the help of one or two junior leaders or parents.
- Ask members to keep a journal. By observing a child at play a 4-H'er can learn a great deal about what the child is thinking and feeling. Encourage members to write in their journals about what they observe.
- Complete Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet found in the front of the member manual. Encourage members to record what they learned and comments about each activity.

AN ACHIEVEMENT MEETING

If possible, share the achievements of the members in this project at a final club "achievement" meeting. This would be an ideal time to invite families to learn about what members have done.

An achievement meeting could include an exhibit of members' work, displays or posters showing things learned, presentations by members, and sharing of observations about the growth and development of preschoolers.

MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

This unit includes information about development in middle childhood. In it 4-H'ers will observe and learn about the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of 6- to 8-year-olds. It is important to remind members that each child is unique and will progress through these stages at an individual rate. Ages given for various stages of development and accomplishment are approximate.

Erik Erikson*, who studied human development, believed that people learn certain lessons and gain certain skills according to their age and stage of growth. He divided the average lifetime into eight stages and suggested eight major lessons to go with each of these stages. The lesson he identified for middle childhood was industry versus inferiority.

Erikson believed that children in middle childhood are learning about the value of work and about the confidence they gain when they know they have done a job well (industry). He also believed that children who don't feel good about their accomplishments or who never learn to finish projects or jobs won't feel good about themselves (inferiority). He stated that children's main needs during these years are for achievement, acceptance by friends and important adults, and a sense of self-esteem.

Children 6, 7 and 8 years old, he said, are at the beginning of this stage and are excited about doing, acting, exploring, daring, experimenting, inventing, building and completing their projects. Duties at home, school assignments and other projects provide children with opportunities to commit to tasks. Successful completion of these tasks helps them feel good about themselves.

For more information about the development and care of children in middle childhood, refer to the following Fact Sheets that are available at your Extension office:

- FL24 When Your Child Starts School
- FL45 Your Child From Six to Twelve
- FL52 Self-Esteem: Our Gift to Children
- FL80 Read to Your Child

The following 4-H publications also may be useful:

- 4-H 181 Communicating with Young Children
- 4-H 267 The Sitter, Member Manual
- 4-H 268 The Sitter, Leader Guide

The amount of responsibility a 4-H'er takes for actual care of a child in this project depends on the 4-H'er's age and experience. The member's manual has project suggestions for members in three age groups: 9 to 11 years old, 12 to 14 years old, and 15 to 19 years old.

*Sue Bredekamp, ed., DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 8 (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988), pp 64-65.

UNDERSTANDING MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn how children grow physically, intellectually, socially and emotionally during middle childhood.

Meeting Suggestions: (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

Roll Call Ideas:

- Why I have chosen to study middle childhood.
- Ask each member to bring a picture of themselves in middle childhood.
- Name a 6- to 8-year-old you know and tell something about him or her.

Topics to Talk About:

- Characteristics of children in middle childhood. Review "I Am In Middle Childhood," page 7 in the member manual. Tell 4-H'ers that developmental materials are generalized information to help us see the various stages through which a child moves. It is important to realize that each child develops at his or her own pace.

- Observing middle childhood-age children. Refer to the Observation Form on page 6 of the member manual and discuss the skills learned in middle childhood in each area: physical, social, intellectual and emotional. Encourage members to observe as many children in middle childhood as possible during this project.

- Keeping a journal. Encourage members to keep a Child Development journal in which they record their observations. A loose-leaf notebook would allow 4-H'ers to duplicate the Observation Form and make several observations throughout their project. This journal also may include a record of other experiences in the project as well as pictures and newspaper or

magazine articles about the development and care of children in middle childhood.

Activities:

- Use project suggestions on page 4 of the member manual. Discuss what each member would like to learn and do. Complete the first column of the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet together (page 2, member manual).

- Make a journal entry as a group. Record your plans for the project year.

- Record observations. Duplicate the Observation Form provided on page 6 of the member's manual and have members record:

- changes in one child over a period of time.

- differences between two or more children of approximately the same age.

Have members include these observations in their journal.

- Take field trip. Visit a local day care center where 4-H'ers can observe more than one child in middle childhood. Each member could select two children of the same approximate age and note similarities and differences in physical, emotional, mental and social development. Have members record what they see on Observation Forms. Encourage 4-H'ers to ask questions of the day care provider. (You may want to prepare a list of questions together ahead of time.)

CARING FOR THE CHILD IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD

Purpose: The 4-H'er will learn skills to encourage the 6- to 8-year-old child's physical, emotional, intellectual and social development.

Meeting Suggestions: (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

Roll Call Ideas:

- A new skill which 6- to 8-year-olds may be learning.
- A play idea for 6- to 8-year-olds.

Possible Member Presentations:

- Nutritional needs in middle childhood.
- Simple snacks to make with 6- to 8-year-olds.
- Activities to encourage thinking skills.

Topics to Talk About:

- How children change physically during middle childhood. Discuss skills that are developing at this age.

- Thinking skills that develop in middle childhood. Share ways to encourage development of these skills.

- Changes that take place in relating to others during middle childhood. Discuss methods that help 6- to 8-year-olds develop social skills.

- Discuss emotional development in middle childhood and ways in which 4-H'ers can encourage emotional growth in children with whom they associate.

- Discuss handicapping conditions, how they affect a 6- to 8-year-old and how 4-H'ers can encourage a handicapped child.

Activities:

- Invite a guest speaker to attend your 4-H meeting. Before the speaker arrives, develop a list of questions you would like answered. Ideas for guest speakers include:

- a teacher who works with 6- to 8-year-olds.

- a librarian to talk about storytelling and books appropriate for middle childhood.

- a mother to tell about growth and development of her child in middle childhood.

- a handicapped adult to share experiences of middle childhood years.

- As members develop skills in caring for a child in middle childhood, and as they learn through observations and other experiences, encourage them to share what they have learned. This sharing may be done informally through group discussion, or through formal presentations such as demonstrations, speeches, reports, posters or exhibits.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Purpose: 4-H'ers will learn to choose types of play that children in middle childhood enjoy and what toys are suitable for 6- to 8-year-olds.

Meeting Suggestions: (This section may involve two or three meetings.)

Roll Call Ideas:

- Name a toy that a 6- to 8-year-old would enjoy.
- An idea or picture of a toy I could make in this unit.
- Share an action song I know.

Possible Member Presentations:

- Selecting or making a toy for a 6- to 8-year-old.
- What I have learned as I have observed 6- to 8-year-olds.

Topics to Talk About:

- Types of play that encourage physical, emotional, social and intellectual development in middle childhood.
- Articles that might be included in a "care kit" for children in middle childhood.

Activities:

- Collect four or five toys for children in middle childhood. Ask members to evaluate each toy for quality of construction, safety, appropriateness for middle childhood, and how well it would encourage imaginative play.
- Visit a store where toys are sold. Compare toys suggested for 6- to 8-year-olds with what members have learned about skill level of this age group. Ask members to write a report about what they learned.
- Keep a journal. By observing a child's imaginative play a 4-H'er can learn a great deal about what the child is thinking and feeling. Encourage members to write in their journals about what they observe.
- Complete the Project Planning and Evaluation Sheet found at the front of the member manual. Encourage members to record what they have learned and comment about each activity.

AN ACHIEVEMENT MEETING

If possible, share the achievements of the members in this project at a final club "achievement" meeting. This would be an ideal time to invite families to learn about what members have done.

An achievement meeting could include an exhibit of members' work, displays or posters showing things learned, presentations by members, and sharing of observations about the growth and development of children in middle childhood.

REFERENCES

"4-H Good Times with Early School-Age Children", Leader's Guide, Colorado State University Cooperative Extension

Bredekamp, Sue, ed. DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE PRACTICE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS SERVING CHILDREN FROM BIRTH THROUGH AGE 8. Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1988.

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A Guide to Children's Toys

Children's rates of growth differ widely, but the sequence of the development is similar. The following guide is not a timetable. It shows a progression in which each new skill adds to and builds on the mastery of the ones before.

STAGES	EMERGING SKILLS	TOYS THAT ENABLE	WAYS TO ENCOURAGE
ENJOYMENT OF THE FAMILIAR (birth to about 6 months)	recognition of faces anticipation of sequences discovery of own body (hand, mouth and vocal play) staring and listening intently learning they can cause things to happen	stuffed toys with faces reflective surfaces, toys to hold, suck, shake crib decorations, music box mobile that moves as a result of baby moving in bed	make faces ritual games (pat-a-cake) think safety in toys that go in mouth sing/talk to baby react
GETTING AROUND (about 6 mo. to 12 mo.)	action—crawling, standing, walking manipulation with hands and mouth sense of self as doer rhythm of absence/presence	things he/she can crawl under, get inside toys for banging, inserting, twisting, pushing pulling, dropping, squeezing, opening, shutting jack-in-box, toys which hide and reveal	gentle rough housing think safety on anything that can go in mouth knee, lap games, tug-o-war peek-a-boo, hear-a-boo
EXPLORING (about 1 to 2 years)	mobility—use of body exploration and testing of relationships (objects as well as people) look for something that's gone imitation making decisions—choice language	wheel toys, push/pull toys, ball construction toys for putting together, taking apart, blocks, containers for emptying and filling, things to throw simple, sturdy books and pictures	chase and be chased finger and hand games hide and find things pretend
DESIRE FOR MASTERY (about 2 to 3 years)	testing surroundings and physical ability exploration and construction self mastery, desire to do it alone performing pretending sustain play in small groups	pedal toys, punching toys sand and water toys drawing materials, water-soluble paints, block, play dough, pasting, puzzles, threading, lacing puppets, books, records	switch roles act out stories, tell stories be an audience help pretend follow the leader, ring games (around the rosy)
MAKE BELIEVE (about 3 to 4 years)	construct toy worlds portray characters with feelings sort and match take turns, play cooperatively, make rules music and rhythm physical exploration	toy house, village, farm, etc. dress up and make believe props for self, toys and dolls blunt scissors, easel, clay records, books on fantasy, familiar places and rhythms simple music and rhythm instruments	participate in make believe hide and seek
LEARNING ORDER (about 4 to 5 years)	differentiate order/disorder differentiate inclusion/exclusion desire for courage and adequacy establish play rituals have secrets and surprises act out imaginary characters	tinker toys, lego and other detailed construction toys simple card and board games	provide place to keep toys orderly play games of courage allow some privacy
THE DREAMER (about 5 to 7 years)	dream—think of "what if" situations elaborate toy worlds begin collections team play chasing and escaping attack and defense sense of self as separate person	comics and books, paper dolls magnets, compass, magnifying glass simple craft kits—weaving, sewing, construction kits simple tools for clay, etc. rope ladder, skates, stilts two wheel bike	play "what if" games improvise movements, objects, characters, situations, feelings provide safe place to store collection referee
ENJOYMENT OF THE ABSURD (about 7 to 9 years)	guessing, riddling develop pastimes—collections, hobbies desire for correctness—no mistakes	card and board games dominoes, checkers mechanical, simple construction tools for woodworking, crafts, etc. jump rope, stilts	play with double meanings indulge nonsense show your skill
DESIRE FOR COMPETENCE (about 9 to 13 years)	concern with opinions of others sense of self and feelings as unique concerned with success/failure	intellectual games (scrabble, charades) models diaries, journals, notebooks camping and exploring equipment more complex craft tools	dramatize imaginary interactions, conflicts ask about experiences, feelings encourage creative writing play sports allow privacy



Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Kenneth R. Bolen, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



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