Model for kindergarten orientation

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Abstract
There is a variation in the way children adjust to school as they enter with different levels of maturation. A basic factor in understanding the nature of children is the recognition that every child is unique. Children are born with genetic variations that predispose them to be different in appearance, temperament, growth patterns and learning style. All of these factors are interrelated and interdependent and function as a unit to produce unique personalities. In terms of promoting competence, individuality dictates a tolerance and understanding of learning differences, a variety of approaches to teaching and learning in the classroom or at home, a knowledge of children and a respect for their uniqueness. Each child is more proficient in some areas and less proficient in others. Individual differences must be recognized in terms of cognition and in terms of values, ethnic variation, life styles and personalities.
MODEL FOR KINDERGARTEN ORIENTATION

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I. Introduction

There is a variation in the way children adjust to school as they enter with different levels of maturation. A basic factor in understanding the nature of children is the recognition that every child is unique. Children are born with genetic variations that predispose them to be different in appearance, temperament, growth patterns and learning style. All of these factors are interrelated and interdependent and function as a unit to produce unique personalities. In terms of promoting competence, individuality dictates a tolerance and understanding of learning differences, a variety of approaches to teaching and learning in the classroom or at home, a knowledge of children and a respect for their uniqueness. Each child is more proficient in some areas and less proficient in others. Individual differences must be recognized in terms of cognition and in terms of values, ethnic variation, life styles and personalities.

Many factors contribute to the development of competence in the child by the prekindergarten age. The factors emanate from the discrete biological inheritance and nature of a child and interact within the child's environment. Individuals in the child's early environment contribute significantly to personal competence by providing the foundations of future development. Increasingly with age, the child contributes to personal efficacy.
New trends in American life have created changes in the traditional family. The rise in single-parent families, divorce rates, inflation and the number of women entering the labor force indicate trends which have altered the structure and function of the family unit.

While children cannot be expected to deal with the resolutions of problems that loom over the general population, educators cannot assume these factors do not affect the way children act and react. Children simply respond within the framework of their developmental capabilities.

Early childhood experiences impact later life. Research in many areas of development and behavior indicate that early experiences are highly significant. According to Bloom, in terms of intelligence measured at age 17, 50% of I.Q. development occurs between conception and age four, 30% between ages four and eight and 20% between ages eight and seventeen. White (1964) has concluded that the sense of competence is the result of cumulative learning and influences behavior. Effectiveness in dealing with the environment is achieved largely through learning, and Hess (1966) points out that behavior which leads to social, educational and economic poverty, is acquired and learned in early childhood.

A large percentage of children entering kindergarten each fall, will have experienced some form of prekindergarten
education. Some of the children will bring to Kindergarten two or three years of formal readiness experiences. The old concept of the kindergarten as a transitional center between home and formal education is no longer totally valid. Legitimate nursery school experiences, the increased sophistication of children through the mass media, our national rate of mobility and changing views regarding readiness of children have led to the belief that contemporary kindergarten children differ from those of past generations.

Therefore, this investigation will examine factors influencing initial attitude, home-family structure, prior experiences, and pre-kindergarten orientation programs. It will present an innovative pre-kindergarten model.

Statement of the Problem

The major research question to be investigated is to seek ways to promote an easy transition from home to school as the child enters this situation with varying adjustment levels. Literature will be reviewed to determine if research shows that there is a variation in adjustment level factors influencing the child. This study will describe, from the literature, various factors influencing home/school transition and suggest a facilitative model.

Definition of Terms

Day Care—an institution for the organized care of infants and toddlers through five-year-olds or even school-age
children, outside their homes.

Early Childhood Education—refers to the program and curriculum for children in nursery school and kindergarten.

Nursery School—a school for children between the ages of three and five years, concerned with optimum development and adjustment of the individual child as a member of a group.

Orientation—a program to help pupils prepare for and adjust to new situations as they progress through school, as from home to kindergarten.

Preschool Child—the child up to five years of age

Preschool Curriculum—the program in a school for preschool children based on the stage of development of the individual children and specific needs of the group, geared to promote maximum intellectual, social, physical and emotional development.

Preschool Education—the method and theory guiding young children in a group, referring to education demonstrated in nursery schools; emphasis is placed on developing capacities of the individual and on helping the child with problems.

Preschool Period—a term that refers, usually, to that period in the child's life between the ages of two and five.

Readiness—willingness, desire and ability to engage in a given activity, depending on the learner's level of maturity and previous experiences.
II. Review of Literature

Factors Influencing Initial Attitude

Many personal and external factors contribute to inter and intra individual variability. The factors to be discussed are: maturational development, universal needs, school readiness, and parental attitudes.

Maturational Development

There are great individual differences among children. For each individual, inherited temperament and potential, the human environment, and unique perceptions directly influence development of feelings of competence and the quality of everyday life.

The overall competence (or lack of competence), begins in a child's infancy and is a critical antecedent for later success in school. (White 1975)

Infants have intelligence. They learn, change and develop action patterns early. Their intelligence is sensory as they construct knowledge (Piaget 1954). Intelligence is not fixed; thus the child's potential for change, in a positive or negative direction, is great (Hunt 1961).

According to Piaget, intellect develops in a series of hierarchial stages, each built upon the preceding stage. The stage that encompasses infants and toddlers (birth to two years) is called sensory-motor, the child is preoccupied with senses and motor activities; the next stage, two
to seven years, is called preoperational. At this stage the child becomes more able to internally represent events and is less dependent on direct sensimiotor actions. Another characteristic of the child's thought during this period is its egocentric nature. Decentration, the ability to center attention on more than one quality, is developing. Representational thinking, the building of mental structures, is developing through play, drawings, imitation and words that lead to logical thinking. Language is the most important development and it serves to stimulate, reinforce, and motivate the child to progress further socially, emotionally, and cognitively. Socialization of the child's behavior is appearing in activities which include verbal interactions and games using rules.

As children develop, the way they organize and adapt to environmental experiences is reflected by this succession of stages of thought and behavior. The rate at which each proceeds varies to some extent but Piaget believes the sequence is the same in all children.

Universal Needs

Young children have specific and different ways of learning, but they all share some common needs. Those considered critical are the following:

First, children must have healthy bodies in order to benefit from other experiences. A healthy child is more alert and ready to learn.
Second, psychological and physical safety are fundamental to overall success and a balanced perspective on life. Data on the incidences of child abuse and neglect indicates a need to protect children.

Third, is the need for security. It is essential that a child trusts the people in the environment and is assured they will give protection. Children who have felt security at home adjust to classroom life quickly and easily.

Fourth, the need for love is a natural outgrowth of a child's sense of trust and security.

Fifth, the need for exploration emerges and with this curiosity is the need for mastery. Mastery is associated with performance, achievement, independence, control and power and can involve objects or people.

Sixth, is the child's need for recognition to establish identity. This recognition is essential to develop the child's self-image.

Seventh, is the need for people to serve as models and as aides.

Readiness

"Readiness" as applied to early childhood education refers primarily to maturation. In these early years, the young child undergoes a rapid state of development. Much of school learning requires a maturational level so the concept of school readiness rests heavily of maturation.
Tyler (1959) pointed out that there seems to be a period of time during which the learner is "ripe" or ready for learning and proposed that the idea of the "psychological movement" has significance for the concept of development.

McCandless (1961) concludes the notions of biological and mental maturity have been associated with an "internal ripening", with biological unfolding, with neurophysiological-biochemical changes that occur as a "function" of time. Here too are implications that readiness for learning is a matter of waiting for an appropriate moment.

A hierarchical theory of cognitive organization is useful for diagnosing readiness especially if the stages are conceived in terms of intellectual structures built out of experiences. This concept of readiness is consistent with Pribram's (1964) suggestion that we can discover the boundaries of what a child knows simply by asking questions. The boundaries provide evidence of readiness for moving from the familiar to the unfamiliar. Learning occurs when the learner perceives that a new experience resembles an old one.

Dr. Walter Block (1981) considers the important factors for school readiness to be physical, including general health and coordination; mental, including intelligence, attitudes and feelings and; emotional/behavioral/social factors. He emphasizes the third set of factors.
Parental Attitudes

A longitudinal investigation (Bradley 1979) showed a moderate relationship between home-environment processes when children are three to five years of age and children's classroom behavior in the primary grades. Encouragement of social maturity showed the strongest relationship with classroom behavior particularly patience, internal reliance and attentiveness. Comprehension showed the largest number of significant relationships with early environment variables.

Previous research indicates that early parental practices, and other aspects of the home environment, are related to school achievement. (Bradley, in press) Environmental variables are related to the development of behavioral competence associated with classroom achievement. Children who experience a rich language environment, have appropriate learning materials, are encouraged to attain social maturity and are not harshly disciplined will generally understand and be more attentive in the classroom. They are more self reliant, and less defiant or disruptive.

The study indicates that a moderate relationship exists between the quality of stimulation available to a child in the preschool home environment and the child's behavior in the classroom.

Results from this study partially reflect the lower-middle class sample used, suggesting that many of these families
tend not to enculcate the types of social behavior needed for school success. Those who do may provide their children with a better basis for school success.

Backgrounds vary because of biological influences, levels of cognitive development, degree of needs involved, readiness attained and parental attitudes toward the child and school.

Structure of Home/Family

The traditional family unit, once viewed as standard in American society, is undergoing radical changes. Textbook descriptions with father, mother and two children in middle class neighborhoods, can no longer be regarded as the norm of school age children. Family structure and function are being redefined. The components of this redefinition, to be discussed, are: organization of the home, life style and structure of the family.

Organization of Home

A 1979 census report reveals that the form of the family is changing. The percentage of children living with both parents has declined dramatically since 1960. In 1978, 78% of all children under 14 lived with two parents, a decrease of almost 10% from 1960. This means that over eight million children under 14 are living with one parent, and another 1.7 million are living with neither parent. Most white children (84.8%) lived with both parents, while less than half of black children (42.6%) lived with both parents. Black
children were more likely to live with nonparental relatives.

The decline in the number of children in two-parent families is mainly the result of a soaring divorce rate. One in three marriages now ends in divorce. Current estimates show that between 20% and 30% of children growing up in the 1970's eventually will have divorced parents. Another 5% to 10% will be living with a single parent because of annulment, separation or death.

Statistics show that four out of five divorced persons remarry within a five to six year period. This pre-marriage period has a psychologically and socially significant effect on the child. Stress in parental relationships causes stress on the child. Children need understanding in these difficult periods.

Children of divorce are more likely than others to be delinquent, psychologically disturbed, and low achievers. (Calhoun 1979)

A 1979 census reports that between 10% and 15% of all households, with eight to ten million children, are step-families. These children with step-parents face difficult adjustments. Current research on the long term effects of those adjustments is inconclusive. Problems include consistent discipline, money policies, and establishing supportive relations with members of the extended step-family.
Children are reared within diverse family structures moreso than the earlier mother-child relationship in the intact nuclear family. The family is more complex now than in past years. Researchers have also discovered the fathers role in the family has changed. (Clark-Stewart 1978)

More research needs to be done to explore the role of other family members such as siblings and grandparents in socialization and effects on the child. (Bronfenbrenner 1977)

According to Ainsworth, Bell and Stayton (1974) the effective parent is not someone stamped from a mold, responding in the same way to all children, but rather one who has empathic understanding of the distinctive child's style. Some children are inherently more difficult to rear than others. (Thomas-Chess 1977)

The responsibility for the outcome of socialization rests neither on the parents nor on the child alone.

The child is affected by every institution in society. (Keniston and the Carnegie Council on Children 1977). Children are influenced by the state of the economy, by the length of the work day and by the media. They are affected by the availability of satisfactory day care arrangements, and by the area the live in. The family is still the primary agent of a child's socialization, but not the sole agent.

The child has little control over these elements but is affected by the organization of the home, the life style exhibited there and the home structure. These influencing factors are shaping the child.
Preschool Experiences

Children's experiences vary greatly according to the opportunities that are available to them. Group experiences away from home have become a popular and acceptable means of supplementing a child's home education and offering alternative child care arrangements for working parents. Therefore some children are enrolled in preschool and some are not. The major influences on kindergarten readiness, to be discussed, are reasons for preschool enrollment, variations in preschool curricula, pros and cons of preschools and early intervention programs.

Reasons for Preschool Enrollment

In the United States, more than half of all women with school-age children now work and over 30% of women with children under six do so. These figures have risen markedly since 1962, when there were 35% and 16% respectively. (White House Conference on Children, 1970). A new focus is on school-age day care since two-thirds of day-care needs are now for school-age children. Nearly 2,000,000 school age children are "latch key children", who return home to an empty house each day. (U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, 1970)

These working parents have various reasons for enrolling their children in early education programs. One reason is it suffices as a simple substitute for babysitting. Some desire a safe, pleasant and convenient arrangement for their
child with opportunities for social experiences.

Still other parents, working or not, express a concern regarding their children's daily experiences. These parents desire a program which promotes socialization experiences and activities designed to further the child's progress in intellectual, motor and emotional development.

Many families do not have the resources to provide full learning opportunities for their children. Early education programs become not just a substitute for a good home experience, but a developmental necessity.

Variations in Preschool Curricula

The primary goal of all preschools is to provide sound educational experiences for young children. Programs vary widely in the specifics of their educational philosophy and the content of their curriculum. The traditional school emphasizes social skills, the learning potential of play, and the value of creativity in the use of materials and equipment, placing relatively little emphasis on formal instruction.

Montessori schools and many of the demonstration experimental schools provide highly structural learning materials to be used in prescribed ways, placing relatively little emphasis on the free exploration of materials and equipment and informal social interaction. Many contemporary programs for preschoolers are someplace between these two extremes.
Pros and Cons

Evaluation of research in the field of preschool programs is difficult for several reasons. The programs differ greatly and rarely fall into clearly defined categories. They deal with children of different ages from varying circumstances selected for participation by different criteria in programs with very small to large enrollments.

Education programs for children of prekindergarten age have both supporters and critics. Arguments favoring the establishment and growth of preschool programs often center on the educational importance of the early years and the need to avoid wasting these formative years. Supporters emphasize the fact that preschool programs can offer intellectual stimulation as well as provide a good basis for the social, emotional and physical development of children.

Butler (1973) supports the necessity of supplying sound educational experiences for children who cannot be cared for at home because of the increase in the number of working mothers and changing role of modern women. She states that early education need not be a threat to the family or home when family members and school personnel coordinate their efforts.

Some critics (Moore, 1972) counter such arguments with the assertion that preschool programs may weaken family ties and deny children the benefits of "mothering". Home is the best place for children and development in the earliest years
should stress the affective rather than the cognitive elements of human growth. According to this analysis, emphasis should be placed upon the family and helping parents encourage their children's development in the home setting.

It is the experiences that are more important than the settings. Some homes have stimulating environments, others are more isolated. It is the quality of these experiences, either at home or away from home, that is influential.

A child's early experiences provide opportunities to establish cognitive structure which contribute toward readiness for the types of learning expected in the classroom. Covington (1962) reported that training improved the ability of children from lower economic levels to discriminate visual stimuli. A relevant structure makes for readiness and hence for transfer. A verbally enriched background makes success in a verbally oriented educational program more likely.

Various emerging curricula such as found in Project Head Start (Dobbin, 1966) and the Illinois Project (Bereiter and Englemann, 1966) for educationally disadvantaged children are designed to enrich backgrounds of pupils and form cognitive structures relevant to school learning.

Readiness is being manipulated and established. If readiness is thought of as some condition other than a "maturational" state then it becomes possible to propose instructional programs and materials and educational oppor-
tunities that will produce the appropriate cognitive structure or state of readiness.

Early Intervention Programs

In an early intervention program conducted by Sara Ballard (1981) in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, children entering Kindergarten were screened through a variety of tests and discussions as part of the systems Academic Readiness Program. The children needing help were identified. A full-time academic readiness teacher worked individually, or in small groups, with these children in areas such as language skills, body awareness and control, visual spatial relations, auditory perception skills, fine and gross motor skills and reading and number readiness.

At the end of the program, most children experienced a success that would not have been attained otherwise. A survey of parents revealed that 65% were convinced that the child needed the experience to make these gains. They stated they believed their children displayed marked improvement in academic skills, motivation, self confidence, communication skills and independence.

The Pre-School Hour Program "A.B.C.s" (Smith, 1972-73), was a program for four year old children. It included 22 one-hour sessions held once a week from October through April. It was held in each K-6 school in the district. The director of the program was a staff member who utilized
multi-media teaching. The emphasis was on "enjoyment" of the sessions and not on school basic training. While the children are developing readiness skills, they see this as a pleasurable experience and this predisposes them to enjoy the school experience.

This program was based on the rationale that many schools are stressing the vital importance of the learning experiences and the development of readiness in the preschooler. To bridge this gap of time between the preschooler at home and Kindergarten this program was initiated. The program required very minimal funding.

Results showed the program to be highly successful with 70% of the next year's kindergarteners attending the sessions. Superintendent William Smith summarized the program: "The Pre-School Hour is an elemental program that greatly aids the learning process in a manner and at a time that insures maximum results, at a very minimal cost."

Widmer (1967) sees kindergarten as a transition year between home and school and stresses the importance of readiness activities which will be helpful in first grade.

Pre-Kindergarten Orientation Programs

The preceding factors, concerning initial attitude, structure of home and family and prior experiences, have affected the child before entering school. One of the most important experiences in a child's life is the beginning
of public school. Kindergarten will be many children's initial exposure to public education and this plays a part in the establishment of life-long attitudes toward school and education. Kindergarten may be either a beginning or a continuation. For many children it is the next educational step after day care or preschool. For other children, it is truly the beginning. This initial orientation to public education needs to promote a satisfactory adjustment.

A study undertaken in Canada entitled, Orientations and Transitions, states the necessity of discovering how children's initial orientation to public education is facilitated and how successfully this occurs. This study will be discussed.

Some schools have implemented transitional programs based on easing the child's adjustment to school. These models were developed in Marshalltown, Iowa; and Bangor, Maine and details will be discussed.

Necessity

The study in Canada conducted by Margie Mayfield (1980) hypothesized that some children would adapt more readily to Kindergarten than other children; and that the trend for more children who have had a preschool program, might have implications on the ease of initial adjustment to Kindergarten. Two factors were examined: 1) significance of the child's initial adjustment to kindergarten; 2) initial adjustment
to Kindergarten. Questionnaires were sent to teachers, principals and parents involved.

At least 90% of Kindergarten teachers, principals and parents agreed that the transition into Kindergarten is very important in setting the tone and determining how a child will feel about school. Few Kindergarten teachers (10%) and principals (3%) disagreed; no parent disagreed.

A high percentage of Kindergarten teachers (92%) and principals (94%) thought some children have difficulty adjusting to kindergarten. They indicated that such children are most frequently boys; however, most Kindergarten teachers (62%) and principals (74%) placed this percentage at 10% or less. Few parents (17%) indicated that their child had difficulty adjusting to kindergarten. The reasons for difficulties included length of day, child's individual characteristics, and child's special needs. Several parents stated that their child did not have problems because of previous enrollment in a preschool program. Subsequent analysis showed a high rate of preschool attendance.

Types

There are a variety of possible activities that can help prepare children and parents for the beginning of kindergarten. Some suggestions were: 1) calling informal group meetings with parents in the spring to explain the Kindergarten program, 2) arranging visits by parents and children to
Kindergarten classes, 3) arranging for printed information to be sent to parents, 4) doing home visits.

Of the 39 Kindergarten teachers who returned the questionnaire, 36 (92%) indicated that they and/or the school did some type of orientation work with children and/or parents in preparation for beginning kindergarten. The most frequently reported type of orientation was an invited visit by children to the Kindergarten room during the spring prior to their registration. The next most frequently reported type was an interview/visit in early September for the purpose of familiarization with the Kindergarten program, classroom, and teacher.

Models

Program at Marshalltown, Iowa

This program helped eligible children have a successful experience in the school they would be attending for kindergarten, prior to their actual enrollment. The model was designed to acquaint the child with the overall kindergarten program and to promote a more satisfactory transition into the school setting. The ultimate objective was to facilitate adjustment into the kindergarten classroom. Parents attended informational meetings while the children attended the sessions.

Evaluation of the individual child's adjustment to the program or, readiness for kindergarten was based upon observation of the child's adjustment in the variety of
classroom activities performed. Observations were made by all staff members involved. Testing was not considered a necessary part of the program. Results were not given for the study.

Program at Bangor, Maine

The designers of this program felt strongly that not enough was known about the kindergarten children before they enrolled each September. Also they felt that some children were confused by all the strange, new situations and people encountered during the first few weeks of school. This abrupt introduction was often detrimental to their total early school adjustment. The program was aimed at satisfying both these needs.

The Early Detection Inventory was used as the basic instrument for the screening process. Each item was rated on a 0-1-2 scale, to obtain a total score. At the end of each interview, the examiner rated each child's impression of overall readiness.

For re-evaluation purposes the Slossom Intelligence Test was administered and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. This was followed by an indepth conference with parents.

The participants in the program were the children who might have the most difficulty in adjusting to the regular school program because of shyness, or other social or
emotional conditions or severe speech problems. Many of them were those most likely to be overlooked by the teacher in the busy first days of school. They were the ones to whom immediate special attention should be given. Twenty-four children participated in the week-long orientation program two weeks before school began. The staff included the principal, originator of the project, guidance consultant, three kindergarten teachers and the aide. The entire staff helped to formulate and implement the daily activity plans.

Statistical results were not given for this study, however the format of the program, the small number of children involved and the excellent rapport among the teaching team suggested it was a successful program. The involvement of a male in the week's activities was valuable, especially to the children who were from broken families, because it gave them a model they lacked at home. Observations of the children during the program revealed considerable progress.
There is an increasing interest on the part of parents relative to kindergarten education and kindergarten methods. Also an interest on the part of parents that the kindergarten program would be a successful experience for the child. The writer proposed a program be conducted in which pre-kindergarten children attend the kindergarten program in their respective school attendance center, as an orientation to the overall kindergarten program. The children would meet the legal requirements for entry unto kindergarten during the fall following the program. This orientation program would be during a period of time approximately five to six months prior to the actual time when the child formally begins the kindergarten program.

The primary aims consisted of satisfying the need for better adjustment to school on the part of the child and the need for more information on the part of the school.

The model used the team approach of the kindergarten teacher, counselor, and media specialist, as coordinators of the weekly sessions. This approach was used for several reasons. First, the media specialist had already established contact with many preschool children through a previous weekly story time program. Secondly, having the kindergarten teacher interact with the children during the eight weeks
would be beneficial to the teacher and the children. Also the close proximity of the kindergarten room to the I.M.C. enabled easy scheduling of the various activities. Thirdly, the counselor established a significant role interacting with the children.

This model, *Across the Bridge to Kindergarten*, was implemented at Wright Elementary School, Cedar Rapids, Iowa in 1974 and also in 1975. It was an eight week pre-kindergarten experience offered to eligible children, in April and May. It was discontinued because of administrative changes.

The description of the writer's model will include the entry form, (Appendix A), the behavioral and curriculum objectives and the activities, the organization of the sessions, and the evaluation.
Objectives

The behavioral and curriculum objectives of the Pre-Kindergarten Hour are:

I. Adaptation to Environment:
   A. To acclimate the pre-school child to the school environment
   B. To increase socialization skills
   C. To function in a group
   D. To provide a pleasurable, enjoyable, happy school experience
   E. To reduce "the fear of school"

II. Readiness:
   A. To provide gross motor ability activities
   B. To provide fine motor-eye-hand coordination activities
   C. To promote number readiness
   D. To generate reading readiness

III. Language Development:
   A. To encourage oral language skills
   B. To provide literature appreciation

Activities in the 7 one-hour sessions include tours of the building, observation of the kindergarten class, participation in art, gym and music and group activities. Special staff personnel are involved. The final session will be scheduled as a part of the regular kindergarten.
## Behavioral/Curriculum Objectives

### I. Adaptation to Environment

**A. To acclimate the preschool child to the school environment**

1. Tour the building including offices, gym, nurse's room, art, music and kindergarten rooms, stage area, cafeteria, film room and IMC (library).

2. Introduce school personnel and explain roles; i.e. principal, teacher, custodian, school secretary, counselor, nurse, cafeteria personnel.

3. Arrange a visit to kindergarten room while in session.

**B. To increase socialization skills and**

**C. To function in a group**

1. Encourage working and playing well with other children.

2. Introduce process of lining up, following a group leader.

3. Encourage respect for other persons' rights, also other groups.

4. Generate confidence through learning activities.

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### II. Readiness:

**A. Provide gross motor ability activities**

1. Walking.

2. Hopping.


4. Skipping.

5. Body planes and rhythms.

6. Throw and catch a large ball.

7. Play simple games.

8. Introduce rhythms through simple rhythm instruments.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioral/Curriculum Objectives</th>
<th>Activities to Achieve Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Provide fine motor-eye-hand coordination activities</td>
<td>1. Use of scissors, paste, crayon, chalk, paint and brushes.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Use of puzzles.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Provide experience in tying shoelaces, bows; use zippers, buttons, snaps and buckles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Promote number readiness</td>
<td>1. Provide activities with numbers 1-10.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Use of fingerplays.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Generate reading readiness</td>
<td>1. Provide activities with color recognition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Introduce geometric shapes, as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Introduce some body planes, as front, back, side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Introduce spatial concepts, as high and low, over, under, around, forward and backward, inside and outside.</td>
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<td>5. Provide activities with concepts left and right.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6. Provide activities which require following directions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7. Build listening skills through story telling.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

III. Language Development

A. To encourage oral language skills

1. Provide activities of name recognition.
2. Teach simple songs.
3. Build vocabulary through discussion, stories, fingerplays.

B. To provide literature appreciation through materials in the IMC

1. Use audio visual materials to enhance language development activities.
Organization of Sessions

The Instructional Materials Center (I.M.C.) was the main setting for the program. The children began and ended there. The building tours and activities in art, music, and physical education were conducted in the appropriate areas of the building.

I. Free Time Continuous Activities

Various areas were set up in the I.M.C. to provide the experiences suggested in A–H of the outline. The media specialist or kindergarten teacher moved from area to area, observing and encouraging the children.

II. Intellectual Activities

The children toured specified places in the building and were introduced to the staff members who briefly explained their role in the school. The art, music, and physical education staff members planned an activity for the children.

III. Activities with the Kindergarten Teacher

The kindergarten teacher conducted activities in the I.M.C. while the media specialist did a planned activity with the kindergarten class.

IV. Activities with the Media Specialist

A variety of activities were planned to develop socialization skills and to reinforce the concepts presented by the kindergarten teacher. At the end of each session, each child received a yarn bracelet and tag describing the activities and concepts presented in that session.
ORGANIZATION OF SESSIONS

Each session will be organized in four segments as outlined below:

I. Free Time Continuous Activities
   A. Montessori Play/Learn materials
   B. Puzzles
   C. Manipulative items
      1. Bowmar books
      2. Clothing
         a. zip, button
         b. tie, snap, buckle
   D. Picture dominoes/lotto
   E. Paper, crayons, scissors, paste, paint, brushes later
   F. Clay
   G. Large alphabet blocks
   H. Number carpet for floor

II. Intellectual Activities
   A. Tour building (1st session)
      1. Main office (meet principal, secretary)
      2. Kindergarten room (meet teacher)
   B. Tour building (2nd session)
      1. Review first session tour
      2. Nurse's office (meet nurse)
      3. Counselor's office (meet counselor)
   C. Tour building (3rd session)
      1. Review previous tours
      2. Art room (meet teacher)
      3. Music room (meet teacher)
      4. Gym (meet teacher)
D. Tour building (4th session)
   1. Review previous tours
   2. Film room, stage area
   3. Cafeteria (meet cafeteria staff)
   4. Custodial area (meet custodian)
E. Planned 15-10 minute session in art room with art teacher (5th session).
F. Planned 15-20 minute session in music room with music teacher introducing simple rhythmic instruments and simple songs (6th session).
G. Planned 15-20 minute session in gym with physical education teacher introducing large ball activity (7th session).

III. Activities with the Kindergarten Teacher
A. First-Last name (1st session)
   1. Say name to group
   2. Use record WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
   3. Fingerplays "Knock at the door"; "Eye winker"
B. Recognition of body planes (2nd session)
   1. Use record LET'S DANCE
   2. Identify specific parts
   3. Use record HELLO
   4. Fingerplays "This is the circle that is my head"; "Hands on shoulders"
C. Colors (3rd session)
   1. Recognize some colors
   2. Use records COLORS and PARADE OF COLORS
   3. Fingerplay "I clap my hands"
D. Shapes (4th session)
   1. Review fingerplays
   2. Introduce shapes with flannelboard
   3. Use record TRIANGLE, CIRCLE AND SQUARE
E. Large motor activities (5th session)
1. Fingerplays "Suppose"; "Reach for the ceiling"
2. Introduce terms hop, skip, walk, jump
3. Use record WALK AROUND THE CIRCLE
4. Use song "Whistle a Happy Tune"

F. Large motor activities (6th session)
1. Review previous lesson
2. Present DANCE-A-STORY BALLOON

G. Review (7th session)
1. Concentrate on left-right activities
2. Present concepts of inside/outside, around, over, under, forward/backward and high/low
3. Use following records:
   LISTEN AND DO
   LET'S DANCE
   UNDER THE STICK
   HIGH & LOW

H. Schedule 1 hour visit to regular kindergarten session (8th session)

IV. Activities with the Media Specialist in the IMC
(Designed from week-to-week to be flexible with above activities)
A. Book - WILL I HAVE A FRIEND? (1st session)
B. Book - THE SHAPE OF ME AND OTHER STUFF (2nd session)
   Filmstrip Cassette - EARS, NOSE, FINGERS, TOES - Scholastic Beginning Concepts 2
C. Filmstrip Cassette - HARRY AND THE PURPLE CRAYON (3rd session)
D. Filmstrip Cassette - BOXES, CLOCKS, BUILDING BLOCKS - Scholastic Beginning Concepts 1 (4th session)
E. Book - OVER IN THE MEADOW (5th session)
   Record - FARMER IN THE FIELD
F. DANCE-A-STORY - FLAPPY & FLAPPY (6th session)
G. Book - INSIDE, OUTSIDE, UPSIDE DOWN (7th session)
Evaluation

At the end of the program, a questionnaire was sent to all parents who received the original communication. The program was well received by parents. Staff members felt it was very effective. Evaluation results were compiled from children who attended (Appendix B), and children who did not attend (Appendix C). Comments were recorded from the concerning thoughts and ideas shared between the parent and child (Appendix D). Also statements were collected (Appendix E) pertaining to the parents view of the most significant part of the program. Comments/observations (Appendix F) were given by the staff personnel involved in the program.

The writer felt it was a very valuable experience and will continue the program whenever cooperating staff members are available. There is a great deal of merit in helping children meet the initial adjustment to the kindergarten classroom in a positive way with positive reinforcement in this model. It facilitated adjustment to the regular school program. Results of the data revealed that the objectives were met for the majority of the children.

The parents whose children participated in the program were given a list of suggestions, following completion of the sessions, to reinforce the pre-kindergarten experience (Appendix G).
IV. Summary

Because of the entry level variation and differing backgrounds, there is a need for a program to ease the transition from home to school. Some children have a greater need than others. All children will benefit in some degree as they become acclimated to the school.

Influencing factors of biological inheritance, maturity level, differing needs, and parental attitudes have a decided effect on the child. The complex world of family interactions and societal forces have an impact. All the prior experiences are influential.

Kindergarten may either be a continuation or a beginning of school. However it is the introduction to the formal public education program for the child. According to Mayfield (1980), there is a need for a satisfactory adjustment. Wienberger (1976) states, "The transition into Kindergarten is very important in setting the tone and determining how a child will feel about school."

Some schools have implemented orientation programs to meet the goal of helping the child adjust more readily to school. This appears to affect long range attitude and achievement. The model described, Across the Bridge to Kindergarten, incorporates these unique features. If it enables the child to adjust more easily, it would be cost effective.
This pre-kindergarten orientation model was a valuable experience for the writer and for participants. Parents elicited a positive response. Staff members and administrators highly recommend this program to be an effective design.

Limitations and Implications

The children in Iowa, being an agrarian state, have needs that are not necessarily reflected elsewhere. Iowa does have public school Kindergarten; some states do not. *Education USA*, reported in June 2, 1975, that state-mandated kindergarten programs now total 14. 34 other states have legislation permitting kindergarten and only two states, Mississippi and Idaho, lack legislation either permitting or requiring public kindergarten. The needs of other regions might vary. Therefore the model which appeared effective in this setting, in Iowa, may or may not be effective in other regions.

In the state of Iowa there has been a long time commitment to quality education and, although not mandated, it is a local option and is addressed in the code of Iowa. The code (Bartlett, 1981) states that "No child shall be admitted to school work for the year immediately preceeding the first grade unless he is five years of age on or before the fifteenth of September of the current school year."

No single program model is best for all children, due to the differing needs of children, the influence of different
program goals, and the social context of instruction. Different curricula are effective with different children. Actually the abstractions referred to in education programs or models are not intrinsically effective. Rather they become effective through the human effort expended in making them real.

One of the difficulties in evaluating a program of this nature is the lack of measuring devices available to assess student growth. Program evaluation consists of observations, records made by teacher, achievement on standardized tests, and direct observations by the evaluator. The evaluator must make a judgment about the nature of the program as well as the implementation. The judgment must go beyond the effectiveness of the program to consider the worth of its goals to determine if it is a good learning experience for children.

It is suggested that further study be undertaken to gather empirical data to support the long range effectiveness of a pre-kindergarten orientation program.
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Appendix A

REGISTRATION FORM

Parents' name ____________________________
Child's name ____________________________
Address _________________________________
Telephone ________________________________

Please indicate 1st or 2nd choice on the schedules below. Each session is limited to 20 children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tuesday Schedule</th>
<th>Wednesday Schedule</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
<td>1:00-2:00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30</td>
<td>April 3, 10, 17, 24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 7, 14</td>
<td>May 1, 8, 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return this form at the orientation meeting, Friday, March 15, 2:45 p.m., or to the Wright School main office by Friday, March 15. You will be notified by March 22 in regard to the final schedule.

Wright School presents
ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN
An 8 week pre-kindergarten experience
April-May
Dear Parents,

Your five-year-old will begin his/her school life next September. This is a very important event for every child. Together, parents and teachers must make this experience of leaving home and coming to school a happy one that will help each child develop new powers of independence as well as new skills in relating well with others.

_Across the Bridge to Kindergarten_ is an eight week pre-kindergarten program, designed to provide activities and experiences in the school setting to facilitate transition from home to kindergarten. The one hour sessions will include touring the building, meeting special staff personnel, participating in art, gym and music classes, and functioning in small and large group activities. The final session will provide an opportunity to be part of the regular kindergarten group.

**ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE**

All children participating in this program must be eligible for kindergarten in the fall of 1974, according to state requirements (age 5 by September 15). If you wish to register your child, please complete the enclosed form. All parents are invited to attend a special orientation meeting on Friday, March 15, at 2:45 p.m., in the Wright School IMC (library). At that time the registration forms will be collected. If you are unable to attend the orientation meeting, please return the form to the main office by March 15.
Appendix B

PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN

We recently completed an eight week pre-kindergarten session at Wright School. Your child did attend, and we would appreciate your cooperation in assessing the value of our program. Would you please fill out the enclosed survey and return it by May 31, via the addressed stamped envelope?

1. What was your child's opinion or reaction to the program?
   - enthusiastic 89%
   - thought it was OK 11%
   - not interested 0%

2. Did you receive the notes sent home weekly with your child?
   - yes 100%
   - no ___

3. Did you and your child share thoughts and ideas about the activities of the program?
   - always 58%
   - usually 37%
   - sometimes ___
   - infrequently 5%
   Please give examples if possible:

4. What is your opinion of ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN?
   - very helpful 89%
   - helpful 11%
   - of little help ___

5. Would you recommend the continuation of this program?
   - definitely continue 95%
   - continue with modifications 5%
   - do not continue ___

6. What changes, additions would you recommend?

7. What do you feel was the most significant part of the program?

8. Has your child been enrolled in any other preschool programs?
   - yes 44%
   - no 56%
Appendix C
PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN

We recently completed an eight week pre-kindergarten session at Wright School (ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN). Your child did not attend however we would like to hear from you regarding your decision in not having your child participate. Would you please fill out the enclosed survey and return it by May 31, via the addressed stamped envelope?

1. Did you receive the brochure describing the program at Wright?
   yes 100% no ___

2. Did you attend the orientation meeting held at Wright INC on March 15?
   yes 40% no 60%

3. Has your child been enrolled in any other preschool program?
   yes 100% no ___

4. Which of the items below may have influenced your decision not to participate in our program?
   time conflict 100%
   not interested ___
   did not know about program ___
   did not understand program ___
   other ___ (Please comment):
Appendix D

WRIGHT SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE - ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN

Those who attended the pre-kindergarten session.

Did you and your child share thoughts and ideas about the activities of the program? Give examples:

They told everything they did.

We talked about the people (personnel) she met and saw, also neighborhood friends. Also discussed projects, games played, songs, and stories.

She would tell us what they did each time and would say what she had to do.

Informed me of the people she met at school. Told me how much she enjoyed painting. Enjoyed gym activities.

She would always talk about the different people she had met, as the nurse, counselor, etc. She liked them all and enjoyed this program so much.

I asked what she did, if she had fun and we tried to have her tell us who she met.

She especially liked the story of the boy with a purple crayon. She mostly talked of the people she met and rooms that she visited. She was very proud of the picture she painted.

Discussion of what was done at session each time and his opinion of this.

At first she wasn't sure she wanted to be away from home, but after it was explained she looked forward to each session. Was always eager to tell and re-tell what she did each time.

Talking and reviewing.

She always tried to tell us in detail just exactly what had gone on for that day.

I always asked her what she learned and who she met. She responded well.

We talked about what they had done and who they met that day.

He told me the things he did and how much he enjoyed them.

Was amazed to hear that our child's ideas about the program were unfailingly positive. Think this will mean a tremendous help in his adjustment to school.
WRIGHT SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE - ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN

Those who attended the pre-kindergarten session.

What do you feel was the most significant part of the program?

They get to know their teacher and the school so they won’t get scared when it is time for school.

Meeting teachers and other personnel to make the child comfortable early in the school year. Acquaint the child with the building. (I do not feel that my (this particular child) needed this experience but I can see that other children of mine may benefit from such a program in the future, depending on the child’s reaction to being away from family, independence, basic maturity. We need to capture a child’s enthusiasm for learning early—perhaps this is a way to help.

Familiarize my child with the school and the people she will see in the fall at kindergarten.

It helped my girl get used to being in groups, without my being there.

Getting my child acquainted with the teachers and the building and getting her away from me for a short time so it will be easier for her to leave me this fall.

Introduction to teachers, classrooms, etc. and general familiarity with manner in which school is conducted.

Getting the child familiar with the school and personnel. Giving the child the opportunity to see what school is like beforehand.

Learning to be with others. The new experiences were happy ones.

The fact that the children were around a group of other ones their own age. Also, feeling a little bit of responsibility of their own.

Getting the child acquainted with school in general.

Most significant was the familiarization of the child to the school, its atmosphere and personnel. Instead of being placed in a totally strange environment this fall, he will be eagerly returning to something familiar and well liked.
Appendix F

COMMENTS/OBSERVATIONS FROM STAFF PERSONNEL INVOLVED IN ACROSS THE BRIDGE TO KINDERGARTEN

Frank Schneider, Principal:

The children in the program exhibited a definite and evident degree of confidence and relaxed mood. Those in the program assumed a leadership role in guiding those children not in the program.

Lillian Frantz, Kindergarten:

It was a successful experience in that the children adjusted more readily to the kindergarten program. The school was a more familiar setting for them and this eliminated some of their fears. The spring program gave them a brief orientation to my methods and expectations.

Mothers have commented favorably about the program, that they definitely feel it helped their children overcome fears of school. There was also positive response about the notes sent home weekly during the program.

Larry Bosen, Counselor:

Important aspects of the program were a building of confidence by eliminating fears of what school would be like during the children's kindergarten year, and an awareness of teachers, building areas, the kindergarten room and special areas.

Paula Colon, Media Specialist:

The first day of Kindergarten the children came with their parents in small groups for approximately 15-20 minutes. I took the children into the IMC while the parents visited with the kindergarten teacher. The children who had been involved in the spring program responded unhesitatingly in leaving their parents to go to the IMC. Familiarity with the IMC, media staff, group activities in the IMC resulted in a relaxed sense of security for the children this first day.

Karol Toland, Art:

I feel that the pre-kindergarten classes held were very worthwhile. The children who participated have a great degree of confidence and awareness. They have seemed very much "at home" from the first day. They have spoken of activities they did last year.
Appendix G

SUGGESTIONS TO FOLLOW YOUR CHILD'S PRE-KINDERGARTEN EXPERIENCE

I. Socialization Skills

Provide opportunities for your child to play with groups of children rather than limiting his playmates to one or two friends.

II. Readiness

A. Motor ability

Provide your child with opportunities to hop on one foot, skip and jump on both feet. Example: jumping rope and hopscotch

Play with large and small balls to help your child develop skills such as catching, throwing, and bouncing.

B. Motor-eye-hand coordination

Trace around a form, as a circle, keeping on the line. Perhaps cut it out.

Provide at home many opportunities such as:
- raking, weeding, clipping the grass
- digging and planting seeds
- stirring foods
- greasing pans
- peeling apples, picking nuts, slicing carrots
- using cookie cutters, egg beater and rolling pin

C. Number readiness

Give your child an opportunity to count the number of plates on the table, pieces of candy, number of steps to the door, etc.

D. Reading readiness

Help your child to identify body parts, planes and refer to them often.

Name the eight colors: red, blue, yellow, orange, green, purple, black and brown. Let your child find objects related to these specific colors and repeat to you: an orange is orange; the grass is green, etc.

Use the words triangle, circle and square. Look for things about home which represent these shapes, such as a circle shape on the lamp, etc.

Try to incorporate into everyday activities and routines, concepts such as the following: inside/outside, around, over, under, forward/backward, high/low, night and day. Example: Give child directions using above concepts to find an object and put it in a specific place.

Have your child follow a simple direction. Give only one direction at a time and check to see if the direction is followed.

Place several objects before your child. Then remove one and have your child tell which one is missing.
III. Language Development

READ TO YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY.

VISIT YOUR SCHOOL AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES REGULARLY

Tell a simple story of two or three sentences. Ask your child to retell it as accurately as possible.