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College Girls and Children

By Nellie Goethe

The home economics girls at Iowa State College receive instruction in child care and training. The course in Child Psychology is required, and a study is made of the child, of his habits and of special problems which may arise. The girls are also required to observe some particular child and write a report of it. The observations are to be made over a considerable length of time—about 10 weeks—and in as many different situations as possible; that is, how the child eats, how he plays with others and by himself, how he responds when out among strangers, etc.

Another course known specifically as Child Care and Training, is also required. Here, likewise, not only is the subject discussed and studied in class work, but the girls observe the child at the nursery school. They gain experience through helping with the food preparation for their meals, serving it, eating with the children, and assisting them in putting on their wraps, etc.

Incidentally, many interesting little happenings are recorded in these child observation reports. The first two incidents show what a stretch of imagination children sometimes have. Here are the stories as they are told in the reports by the girls who observed the children.

"We were talking about Christmas. I told them the story of the big doll which I received on my fifth Christmas. It was on the top limb of the tree and Daddy had to climb up on a chair to get it down. A few minutes later Jack came to me much excited. He said that when he was a little girl he received a doll for Christmas. His doll was hung up in the sky and his Daddy had to climb up on a ladder to get it."

"Leroy was riding downtown with me in our Chevrolet car. His father had just purchased a Whippet car and this little fellow was quite sold on that kind of a car. "Oh," he said, "the other day we were driving out on the highway and there was a Chevrolet car. It was going 50 miles an hour and we went around it at 30 just as if it were standing still.""

Small children are quite limited in their vocabulary and often express things in an amusing way. "Mary started to put her spoon into some candy that had just been made, and her mother warned her that she would get burned. But she explained that she could "let the candy warm off." Although she got her words mixed, she had the right idea."

One of the girls observed her little seven-year-old sister. She relates this story. "One time Jane came to see me here at school. We went for a ride and she was very restless, wanting to sit first in the front and then in the back of the car. As we were just about off the campus she said, 'Boy, this sure is a big school yard.'"

Their language is again limited when it comes to explaining the reason for a certain thing. "Paul stood on a chair in the kitchen next to the table on which was a cookie bowl. He had a spoon in his hand and was anxiously waiting for his mother to give him some more cookie dough. When Paul was asked why he liked cookie dough, he replied, 'Because my liker told me that I liked it.'"

"That was sufficient reason for him."

Children originate clever ideas of their own. One of the girls told in her report that her little sister delighted in having more money in her bank than her brother had in his. "She thinks it is very wise to get her bank out and tell her brother and sister about her fortune, for generally they give her something to add to it. One time she remarked, 'Gee, I'm glad I got my bank out; it helped me twenty-five cents.'" That was profitable!

And this last incident took place at the nursery school. "One little boy flipped water upon a little girl rather playfully with his wash rag. She immediately took offense and it seemed for a minute that a real water fight might ensue. However, one of the assistants came to the rescue by reminding the little boy that he should wash his face as well as his hands. Upon turning to look at David I saw that he had a big spot of dirt on the end of his nose. The other children saw it, too, and began chanting together, 'Dirty nose, dirty nose.' David seemed to be rather embarrassed and immediately climbed up on his little box and surveyed his troublesome nose in the mirror. Then he washed it hurriedly, showing that he found a dirty nose and the taunts of his playmates very distasteful."

Who Wants to Know?

Do you want to know how to teach small Johnny good manners, or what to feed your husband for dinner before you show him last month's bills? Do you want a fairy story that will make the youngsters beg for milk to drink? Do you know which toys from the dime store to give the baby to develop his character? Or is your biggest problem how to make last year's skirts look like this year's styles?

For the answers to these and a lot of other riddles, look in the Home Economics bulletins published by the Extension Service of Iowa State College. There are one hundred of these booklets, treating every phase of Home Economics.

The largest number of bulletins are about textiles and clothing. From them we learn the secrets of good dress—from the all-important figure as a foundation, to the color and design of each accessory: from baby clothes to tailored suits; from how to put on hose to which feather to wear in the hat.

Food is both near and dear to the heart of man, so foods and cooking furnish subjects for many bulletins. After consulting them, we no longer wonder what to feed the fat, the lean, the constipated, the sick, the baby and the unexpected guest. We'll learn how to cook the meat, what to serve with it, and what to serve it with. We'll learn how to eat and what and when and why. Best of all, we'll learn where to find the calories and vitamins and what to do about them.

One bulletin gives authoritative information on floor coverings, one on artistic windows, one on china, silverware and.

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