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Recommended Citation
Parsons, Barbara (1948) "Games, Stories and Jungle Jims Keep Pammel Young Set Busy," The Iowa Homemaker: Vol. 28 : No. 2 , Article 3.
Available at: http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol28/iss2/3

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Games, Stories and Jungle Jims

Keep Pammel Young Set Busy

by Barbara Parsons

"COME chick-chick-chick."

Small boys and girls imitating baby chicks creep close to the Pammel Court Nursery teacher and then with screams of delight they scatter as she shoos them away. A visitor can't help laughing as the children, on hands and knees in another game, dizzily chase around, kick their legs and raise their hands.

Nearly 110 youngsters take part in such games as this at the school, organized primarily for children of Pammel Court students.

With only a few feet between barracks, no grass and no playground facilities for their children, students in the court felt that it was time to promote a much-needed nursery school. Four barracks were combined, three of them forming wings, to serve as the nursery building. Enthusiastic support was given, not only in money contributions, but parents volunteered their services to paint the interior, construct furniture and repair toys. Pounding and nailing continued for many days and even nights but when they finished they had the results they wanted—a place where they knew their children would be safe and supervised.

The school has currently received more than $5,500 in cash and equipment, which includes first aid supplies. Services of a registered nurse have been donated by the American Red Cross, and the American Legion Auxiliary has given $1800. When plans were still in an early stage, members of the Department of Child Development assisted them in purchasing necessary equipment.

Everyone Helps

Even persons with no children willingly devoted time to aid the project. Heat and maintenance for the building, which was originally set up for recreational purposes, is furnished by the college.

Children of Pammel Court parents or other Iowa State students are eligible to attend. Those parents who gave the most time in the construction work were allowed to enroll their children first.

It's doubtful if there are any dull moments for these children. Trucks, balls and puzzles keep them entertained for many hours. Little curly-haired girls play "mother" in areas arranged to form houses. Sally irons on a small-sized ironing board while Judy sets the table.

Individuality is given full sway at nursery school. If a young cowboy feels like riding the range on an ancient rubber tire, he does so without interference from anyone.
Oblong and cylinder blocks are soon transformed into garages, forts and barns. Other blocks, painted green, are large enough for Johnny and Mary to build structures on which they can climb.

Tractors, dishes, crayons and other toys are kept on shelves that line both sides of the long buildings. Door knobs are placed high out of reach of youngsters who might desire to wander.

A nursery school day begins at 7:45 a.m. The morning group leaves at 12:15 p.m. and the afternoon children arrive at 12:45 p.m., remaining until 5:15 p.m. Director of the school is Mrs. Marjorie Chilcote. Six others are employed as supervisors. Students in the Department of Child Development assist the teachers, and a registered nurse examines each child daily to prevent the spread of colds and insure the health of the youngsters. Immunization against small pox, diphtheria and whooping cough is required before a child may attend the school.

Story Hours

Story-telling time is a fascinating event of an afternoon or morning. Sitting in a semi-circle around the teacher, the children scarcely take their eyes away from her face as she relates tales of dogs, cats and story-book children. Some of the youngsters are bashful and others are more than talkative but nearly all join in to tell the group the first signs of spring they have seen.

The oldest children, who are 3 1/2 to 5-years-old, will play games or paint for 15 to 20 minutes without losing interest. The morning group, whose ages range from 2 to 3 1/2, discard crayons and toys after 5 minutes.

Tired, sleepy children take time between games to rest onawning cots, built only 2 or 3 inches from the floor. The cots are easily folded and stacked in corners of the room. Each child brings his own bedding and stores it on shelves constructed especially for this purpose.

Creative time is one of the most popular moments during the day. Art work is done at low, round tables. Miniature chairs are just right for their short legs. Though the scribbles and scrawls may mean nothing to an adult, each child believes his crayon drawing or water painting to be an exceptional piece of art work. He proudly displays them to supervisors for words of praise. Finger painting keeps the older group occupied for nearly 25 minutes. Boys and girls enthusiastically cut paper, and sweep the floor with small brooms and dustpans.

Patty-cake and other finger games are accompanied with shrills of laughter and energetic jumping. Children's records provide music for marching, jumping and skipping games and gives them a chance to use some of their exuberant energy. All the little girls wear slacks or rompers so they won't have to worry about keeping their dresses clean.

Warm sunny days find the children outside in an enclosed yard. Shiny red trucks and yellow tricycles as well as swings and slides are among the equipment provided.

The school is managed by a board of directors of two representatives from Ames, two from the college and three members of Pammel Court. Future plans for the nursery include the starting of an all-day group or two additional one-half-day groups. Currently, only four or five children attend the full day from morning until late afternoon. A parent's program beginning soon will provide parent-teacher conferences on behavior problems and a library of books on child guidance.

"We'll be asking parents to help repair toys and finish a new wing soon," Mrs. Chilcote says. The school will be operated during the summer and through vacations as long as there is a demand for it.

"Whewee-ee" This time she got a push from a helpful student instructor. Next time she may have to work a bit harder, but she'll find that jumping gets as good results.

Most women at Iowa State would be more grateful for four-wheeled transportation than this young lady appears to be. Her distrust is probably caused by the driver, not the wagon.

May, 1948