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Barbara Fischer
Iowa State College

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At the Nursery School
Billy Eats, Sleeps and Plays
By Barbara Fischer

THE newcomer gazed with wide-opened, four-year-old eyes at the wonder playground which lay before him. Each new encounter which had preceded this entry had been a pleasant surprise—the early morning ride in daddy's car; the stranger in white who put a wide stick in his mouth, like the handle of a lollipop, and then, with "You're fine this morning, aren't you, Bill?" had sent him outdoors. There were strange children, adults and sounds of cheerful voices greeted his eyes and ears as he stood in the doorway—feet apart, hands on his hips, curious eyes roving from one side of the yard to the other. Bill's first day at Iowa State College nursery school had begun.

Around him were about thirty other children from families such as his; children of business men, professors, and some whose parents were students in the college. Before him were numerous pieces of equipment, promising hours of exciting experimentation. The foremost question in Bill's mind, as his eager eyes traveled across the possibilities before him was not "What shall I do?" but "What shall I do first?" Perhaps this question could be a keynote to the typical day spent by the children at nursery school. The wide variety of equipment; the new sensory and motor experiences offered, the social group with its definite problems of daily adjustment, offer a never ending array of interesting possibilities for activity to the child. When one realizes the growth and development taking place in the child with each new adjustment which he makes, one can see that the nursery school is not merely the place for helterskelter play activities as it may appear on the surface, but a laboratory wherein young children are developing the use of their bodies and minds and learning the art of getting along with people. Each part of the day's schedule is planned with these two objectives constantly in mind, and the equipment is such as to encourage self help and self expression in every way possible.

Imagination runs rampant, finding outlets in all forms of expression—roughly modeled clay creatures, symbolic of some interesting idea; bright splashes of color; strange combinations of color as the "artist" paints several colors over the same spot; block structures, which tax the imagination of adults when asked by the child to "guess what it is!" Much of the child's satisfaction is obtained by manipulation of the materials rather than the formation of a really representative object. Perhaps we follow Bill as he goes up the steps after the outdoor play period. Due to lack of practice, the taking off and putting on of his snow suit on a hook all his own, low enough for him to reach, takes him a longer time than it does the "old timers" at the job; so that by the time he reaches the play room, there are already numerous block structures spread over the floor. Over in a corner several children have gathered for the opening of a gasoline station, the owner of which is offering free gas. There are boats, houses, garages, and aeroplanes rapidly growing to represent the object in mind. The room is fairly quiet though there is a constant hum of voices as each child talks either to himself or to his neighbor, while carefully completing the details of his own construction.

In another room is a future carpenter, perhaps, busily working at the miniature work bench, equipped with nails, saws, hammers, and plenty of wood. You can almost hear the sighs of relief from the onlookers as each stroke of the hammer is completed with no bruised fingers as the result.

The artists, with smocks and long paint brushes, are the next point of focus for Bill's excited eyes. It won't be long before he too will be expressing some idea through streaks and dabs of color, by smearing the paints and by manipulating the long brushes. Large pieces of paper prevent the danger of dropping paint on the floor—and the children are free to paint as they wish.

The morning, so full of varied activities, is almost ended. Blocks, paints and clay are put away, accepted as part of the necessary procedure involved with getting them out. Along with the rest of the children, Bill spreads his rug out on the floor and as he lies there, his tired nerves and muscles regaining life and vigor, he may listen to a far away melody, or to a voice speaking in a soft rhythmic manner.

Dinner is served, with the children seated at low tables, on chairs low enough for their feet to easily reach the floor. Bill is with two other children of his own age, and the meal becomes a never to be forgotten experience. Conversation about the morning activities, about the new baby sister at Janet's house, about the snow plow which has cleared the walks during the morning, about ever so many things which he knew of and understood, is a pleasant change from exclusive adult talk about unfamiliar people and things. And have you ever served raw cauliflower and crisp lettuce for relishes? Or sand-
wiches made with celery, grated carrot of parsley on very thinly sliced whole wheat bread? Nursery school menus have suggestions to offer to even the most ingenious meal planner, from the nutritional as well as the novel aspect.

There is nothing novel in the next step, which follows the completion of dinner. The wash room is the scene of much activity as each child undresses and gets ready for bed. The shuffling of dinner. The wash room is the scene of much activity as each child undresses and gets ready for bed. The shuffling of bedroom slippers marks each entry into the sleeping rooms, where an individual cot is waiting for each child. A few subdued whispers and giggles are heard—then all is quiet as fifteen drowsy children are off to sleep for two refreshing hours.

Bill’s first day at nursery school is coming to a close. There remains only a hurried dressing to allow time for a few moments of play on the Jungle Jim slide before he must look home. Once again, as it had been early in the morning, the yard is filled with energetic, vivacious children, only to settle down within a short time to an impatient quietness, awaiting the return of morning, with running feet and happy voices.

It has been laughingly said by some that a nursery school offers opportunity for the return of “rugged individualism”—a place where self expression is foremost and regard for others is forgotten. It can be seen, even from this brief survey of the day’s major activities, that while the development of individualism is encouraged, it cannot be adequately and satisfactorily obtained with disregard of and isolation from the group. The development of a well rounded individuality, capable of working and playing harmoniously with the group, is one of the foremost principles which the nursery school is constantly striving to achieve.

Food for Gods from the Buffet

By Helen Miller

There was a time, not so long ago, when to invite ten or more people to a “sit-down dinner” at home took all the courage we possessed. But today, even though our dining room may be small and we cannot comfortably seat more than six or eight at the table, we are learning how to entertain easily and happily almost any number of guests.

The young couple living in a small bungalow can make light work of a bountiful dinner for “four or more tables of bridge” and give everyone a glorious time. So, too, the host or hostess with an apartment of just a few rooms may take it as a lark to gather a dozen or more congenial guests for a friendly feast. In fact, more and more of us are adopting the simple, delightfully informal buffet meal—a meal which appeals to men and women alike and which serves almost any number of guests.

One of the nicest things about a buffet luncheon, dinner or supper is that it is always so flexible. For example, if your home is small and you have invited quite a few guests, all you need is a fair-sized table, placed where it is most convenient, and enough comfortable chairs in the same or adjoining room. The buffet fare may be attractively arranged on the table.

The buffet menu should be such as to minimize the danger of holding a plate on the lap, and so foods that need knives or that must be served in sherbet glasses should be saved for some other time. Individual trays may be used.

The mere fact that it is an informal party does not mean that anything can be casual about it. There are two things to be considered about any party, and especially for a buffet meal—the first is the food and the second is the service.

For the “stand-up” luncheon you can dispense with a number of things which are considered essential at a “sit-down” affair. Soup, for example, is not necessary. Confine yourself to two courses, but these must be ample and good. A hot dish such as crabmeat, a meat or chicken pie or chicken croquettes with relishes, buttered hot bread and a crisp, crunchy salad provide an ideal first course. The luncheon should be topped off with a dessert and a hot beverage.

Again, there are two ways of handling this type of party. You may have bridge tables set up in the dining room, hall or living room with knives, forks and glasses already on the tables. Or you can let your guests sit about the house as they please, holding their plates, silver and glasses. The former way is more formal, and undoubtedly more comfortable as most women, and all men, like to sit down at a table for their meals. Men, in particular, get tired of balancing a plate on their knees.

I cannot help but suggest a menu for a buffet meal which seems to fit right in—a menu made up of homely dishes that we have unfortunately classified as plain food. However, down in your heart you’ll say, “Dishes fit for gods and men!”

In fact, I’ll venture to say that many times the Greek gods would have gladly traded their Olympian diet of nectar, ambrosia and golden apples for this good old New England menu:

Individual Pots of Baked Beans
Frankfurter Bacon Rolls
Vegetable Salad Brown Bread
Mustard Pickles Assorted Cheese
Raisin Walnut Turnovers
Coffee