

Project Suggestions



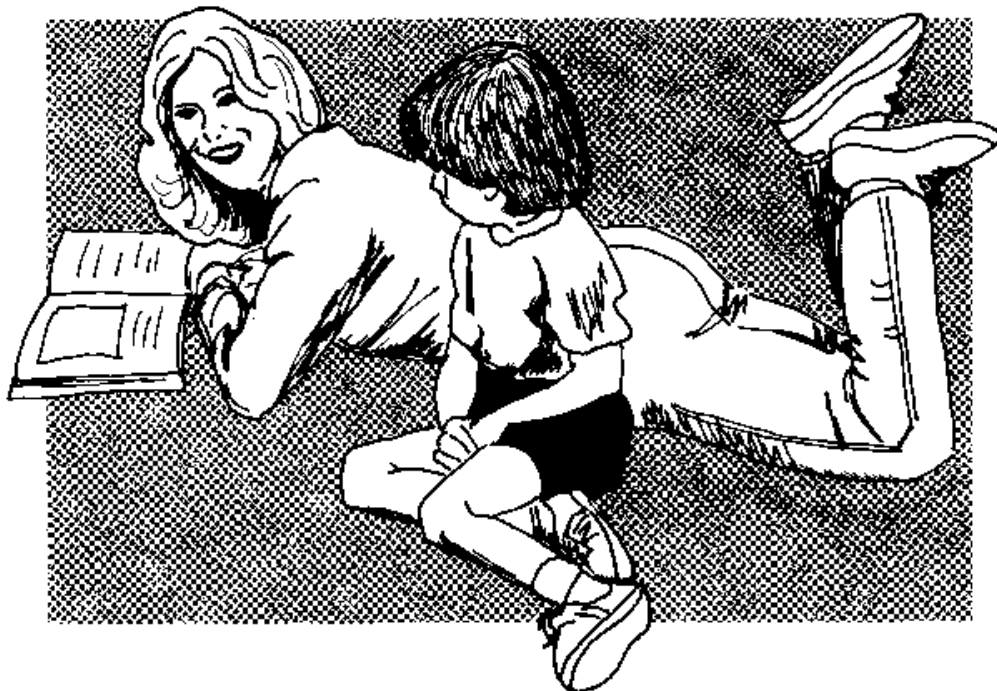
exploring your project

Alabama Cooperative Extension System
Alabama A&M and Auburn Universities

By now you've had a lot of experience in the 4-H Child Development Project. You should know the basics of how children grow and develop, how to care for children at different stages of development, and how to give children the love, security, discipline, and emotional support they need to develop well.

You may not be able to do all the activities listed in this leaflet. Choose the ones you want to do this year. Check the ones you complete. Ask for Leaflet YHE-225, "Child Development Annual 4-H Record," to keep a good record of the work you do.

Child Development



PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

If you have been around babies, you know they change very fast physically. When their central nervous systems, muscles, and bones have matured enough, they will lift their heads. They do not have to be taught to do this; the more they practice, the better they get. As they master an activity they are ready to tackle the next sequence of motor skills. Babies learn head control, sitting, rolling over, prewalking, standing, walking, and grasping.

Each child develops at his or her own individual pace. Some children grow faster than others. Nutrition has a strong influence on growth. For example, malnourished children will have slower bone development.

Children in early childhood (3 to 5 years) experiment with walking, running, jumping, throwing, catching, bouncing, hopping, climbing. In middle childhood (6 to 12 years) they refine their motor skills.

Suggested Activities

- _____ 1. Review the information in Leaflet YHE-63, "Growth And Development Of Preschool Children." Do each of the following: Help a child at mealtime. Help a child dress. Help a child bathe. Help a child with playtime.
- _____ 2. Study the motor and social skills expected at various ages. See Extension Circulars HE-730 (a-i) for additional information.
- _____ 3. Keep a diary of the development of a baby over a period of several months.
- _____ 4. Learn about some of the physical handicaps young children may have and what treatments and therapy are available to help them overcome their handicaps.
- _____ 5. Conduct a safety survey to make sure a home is safe for a child.

INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT

What is learning? It is a change in behavior as a result of experience. Changes caused by heredity or growth are not counted as learning. Children learn in a variety of ways. One way is through imitation. If you have been around young children you have probably seen them imitate your facial expression, your movements, or what you say.

Children also learn through a process called *operant conditioning*. For example, when a child does something the parents like, the child gets a reward of a smile, hug, etc. This makes it more likely that the child will do that pleasing act again. If the parent does not like what the child does, the parent may ignore the action or show displeasure; the child may be less likely to do the displeasing action again.

Suggested Activities

- _____ 1. Make observations about children in the different stages of development described in the HE-730 (a-i) circulars referred to in the previous section.
- _____ 2. Do a creative activity with a child.
- _____ 3. Make at least two toys for young children.
- _____ 4. Entertain several young children separately. Do the same activities work for all of them? Make a chart of each child's likes and dislikes.
- _____ 5. Read books or stories to a small child.
- _____ 6. Read a book about family life in other countries. Find out whether children from other cultures and races learn things that are different from the things American children learn. Write a short report on what you find.
- _____ 7. Use the suggestions in Leaflet YHE-63, "Growth And Development Of Preschool Children," to help a child enjoy nature.

PERSONALITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Children are born with varying degrees of physical capability, intellectual capability, and temperamental leanings. Each of these areas is strongly influenced during the first years by the child's environment. One of the most important factors of children's emotional environments is how their parents raise them. Reasoning with children and showing them love and support give children a secure emotional environment. This gives children space to express themselves as individuals.

A child's personality development is an ongoing process. Parents, friends, brothers and sisters, teachers, experiences, etc., influence personality development. Preschoolers like playing with water, sand, and mud. They pretend to be all kinds of things. By the end of preschool they like more formal games that have routines and rules.

In the beginning, children tend to play alone; then they play alongside other children but do not really play with them. They finally learn to actually play with other children and interact with them. This is an important step toward maturity, because as young people and adults, we have to learn how to get along with others in our society.

Suggested Activities

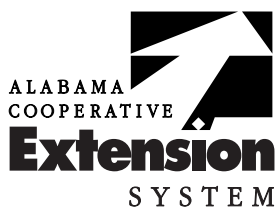
- _____ 1. Learn why self-esteem is important to helping children develop good social skills. List some ways to help children develop a good self-concept.
- _____ 2. Watch children at play at a kindergarten or day-care center. Describe how well they play with others and how they handle disagreements. Explain how you would help them learn to get along with each other.
- _____ 3. Lead games for children at Bible school, a children's party, or at other events where there is a group of children near the same age. Describe ways in which the children are different and ways they are the same.
- _____ 4. Help young children learn to handle small animals safely and gently.

SHARING WITH OTHERS

Part of the fun of learning new things is sharing what you have learned with others.

Suggested Activities

- _____ 1. Write a paper for school about some part of child development.
- _____ 2. Give a talk about how children play and what they learn from play.
- _____ 3. Help with a babysitting clinic.
- _____ 4. Set up an exhibit with a variety of toys and games good for children at different stages of development.
- _____ 5. Think about whether or not you will have children some day. Write a one-page paper on what you've learned that will affect how you raise your children. Share it with your parents.
- _____ 6. Ask your Extension agent for copies of the publications in the "Principles Of Parenting" series. Read them and do the exercises as though you were the parent.



YHE-224

Approved for Extension use in Alabama by Jacquelyn Robinson, *4-H Program Specialist—Educational Design*, Associate Professor, Vocational and Adult Education, Auburn University. Originally prepared by Betty B. Holley, former *Extension Program Specialist*.

For more information, call your county Extension office. Look in your telephone directory under your county's name to find the number.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, and other related acts, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Alabama Cooperative Extension System (Alabama A&M University and Auburn University) offers educational programs, materials, and equal opportunity employment to all people without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, veteran status, or disability.

UPS, 12M07, Rep. 5:97, YHE-224

