

ing steps¹⁴ for putting a library in order have been suggested by Miss Wilson

Preparation of shelving
Collecting the books belonging to the library
Ordering supplies
Sorting the books into groups
Discards
Books to be rebound
Books to be mended
Books in good condition of known usefulness
Mending books
Removing old labels from backs
Mechanical preparation of books
Placing book pockets on inside front or back cover
Classification
Accessioning
Writing book cards
Marking books on back
Arrangement of books on shelves
Marking shelves, posting classification outline
Checking school list
Charging records
Making the card records
Shelf list
Catalog

And last, if the library has everything that is needed and has not a librarian, the heart has been left out. The whole intellectual phase of the school centers around the library, and the librarian is the heart of it all. It is she who has the opportunity to guide and direct the formation of ideals of the young lives with whom she comes in contact.

The librarian should have training for her work just the same as any other member of the faculty. But until Virginia can have trained librarians in all the schools, the teacher who is best prepared and who has a real love for her work should be selected for the place. The teacher-librarian might have as her ideal such a librarian as Miss Wilson describes:

"He believes in people and finds his greatest satisfaction in serving and helping them to greater opportunities and lasting pleasure through contact with books. . . . He is a big social force working for others, finding his remuneration greatest in the benefits he sees others reap from his labors. He is approachable, gracious, industrious in effort,

untiring in his search for the desired end, a fountain of knowledge, and a source of inspiration."¹⁵

ANNIE E. SNEAD

CHILDREN AND BOOKS

What we make children love and desire is more important than what we make them learn.

WE ALL give books to children, but do we ever stop to think why we do it? Or why the children want the books? The first books are given more for their pictures than for anything else. These pictures for the young child should have a central idea and not too many details. The young child gets confused when there is a jumble of things in a picture, and doesn't know what it is all about.

Very soon after, or rather along with the picture-book stage, comes the story stage. The child desires to be read to or to read to himself. The baby's reading is just memorizing what mother has read aloud many, many times and then reciting this by looking at the pictures. I knew a little boy once who learned all of "The Night Before Christmas" within a month or two. He was only three years old, but by just looking at the pictures he could very glibly "read it," and he could correct anyone else who made a mistake in repeating it.

But why do children read books? The child who learned "The Night Before Christmas" evidently did it for himself, because he wanted to find out for himself what the pictures were about. He wanted to find out. Every child wants to know; he wants to find out the how and why of whatever it is he is interested in. The first and most natural way for a child to find out is to ask mother or father. The next method by which he learns is by reading. Therefore he needs books to find out from.

Most books will teach something, either

¹⁴Martha Wilson. *School Library Management*. p. 27-28,

¹⁵Martha Wilson, *School Library Experience*. p. 200.

an ideal or something more concrete. When a boy wants to find out how to make a new model kite or a submarine, or any of the numerous things he is always making, where does he find out how to do it? Does he ask mother or father? Sometimes, but most often he finds out from a book or a magazine.

Do all children consciously read to find out? Or for any particular reason at all? Christopher Morley says, "Is there anything on earth more touching than a child reading? The innocence and completeness with which the child's spirit is rendered up to the book, its utter absorption and forgetfulness, makes this a sight which always moves me strongly. A child does not read to criticize or compare, but just in the unsullied joy of finding itself in a new world."

Finding himself in a new world once, and enjoying it, leads to wanting more. A Northern child, reading her first story of Southern plantation life, will usually ask for another story like it. What child, whether Northern or Southern, is satisfied with just one of Page's or Harris's stories? They must have more and more, and then they must go out and see the goose standing on one leg!

Their experiences aren't enriched by realistic stories only; the fairy tales help them in imagination, and to some children these seem to be as real as any other. When Barrie's play, "Peter Pan," appeared, children in New York, they say, tried to fly from the hotel windows! If a child read only about things which happened to him and around him, and never anything else, either real or fanciful, what would there be to extend his experiences or to encourage him to want to do better things?

We may help a child realize his need and desire for books by helping him have books or have access to them. It has been said and we know it to be true, that the two ways a child becomes acquainted with books is through being read to and through reading for himself. Sometimes a child has his

books read to him for so long that he thinks there is no use learning to read; or he will read at school, but still demands to be read to at home. This should not be allowed. It is the mother in most cases who starts the good or bad habits in reading and in the choice of books. After the child starts to school, there are others to help him. Here also he may become familiar with books. The home, the school, and the city library, if there is one, should work together to improve his reading. The mother, the teacher, and the librarian must co-operate to bring about the very best results.

Some parents do not have books, either for themselves or their children. Either they cannot afford the books or they have not learned to appreciate them. Extra care has to be shown children from this kind of home. They need special encouragement. When a teacher discovers a child from such a home, she may get him interested by encouraging the others in reading, and by talking about what they have read. Then there should be, wherever possible, a greater number of books available; either borrowed books or books belonging to the school or to the room. One of the greatest helps in getting the child started in reading is to have books with pretty bindings. Pretty bindings act as a lure, saying, "Here I am in my pretty dress. Come and play with me. There are many interesting things between these covers."

Not only should the bindings be pretty, but there should also be, for most children's books, many interesting pictures. The child who is not used to having books will have to start at the picture-reading stage of the more fortunate pre-school child. Anyway, it isn't only the children who love picture books—what grown-up doesn't like a book better when it is well illustrated?

If possible, the schoolroom should be amply supplied with the best stories the teacher can bring the child to care for, and the choice among these should be left to him. A wise teacher will give him every en-

couragement for their enjoyment and reading. Some one has said, "We need more beautifully illustrated editions, a larger range of subjects, and more catholicity of enjoyment. Probably our teaching of literature has more often failed because of niggardly lack of fine materials than for any other reason."

Besides placing pretty books—and plenty of them—within easy reach of the child, there are other ways of getting his attention and interest. I once heard a fourth grade teacher read the first chapter from *The Wizard of Oz* to her children. If you have ever read this book, you know what interesting possibilities this first chapter is likely to conjure up in the minds of ten-year-olds. During the reading the children were as quiet as the proverbial "mice," but when the teacher stopped and said that she couldn't read any more, but that she would put the book on the shelf for them to finish some time if they wanted to, the room was in an uproar.

"Oh—let me have it!"

"Let me read it now!"

"No, I've finished my lesson. I want to read it now!"

"Please let me!"

I've seen this method of reading a part of a story used many times, and it has never failed to work.

Children's Book Week may give excellent results when managed by a wise teacher or supervisor. A good way to start it off is to have those children who read a great deal at home tell the others about an interesting book or story which they liked very much. If the child could bring his book to school for a while so that the others may read it, he should be led to tell only a part of his story. This is not hard when the teacher sets the example. Children soon learn where the most interesting part is and how to tell just enough to arouse interest. They will not only tell stories, but they will also tell why they did or did not like certain ones, different children taking opposite sides about

the same book. After talking among themselves for a while, they will most likely decide to have a program for the benefit of some other room. The children whom they choose as having the best and most interesting reports will be on the program. Quite often the child, who up to that week has had little or no interest in books, will develop such a great interest that he is one to be chosen.

A trip to the city library may well follow after Book Week, while the children have a desire to see and learn more about books. All children enjoy this, if for no other reason than to get out of class! It is true, though, that most children want to go for the book's sake. A trip to the library must be prepared for by dividing the class into groups and giving each group something special to look for and report on. Once when I accompanied a group of primary children to a library, they enjoyed the trip so much and learned so much from it that when they got back they decided to have a library of their own.

While preparing their library there will be many occasions for considering the care of books. When a new book is received, the child should be taught how to open it, as the first rule in its care. The book is held with the pages up, one cover at a time being pressed down and firmly smoothed. Then the pages, a few at a time, first at the front and then at the back, are treated the same way as the covers. Unless this is done the book may become broken-backed.

Rev. Henry D. Maxson has collected some rules for the care of books which are very useful for children because of their form. They are printed on a book-mark and represent a library book as speaking:

"Please don't handle me with dirty hands;
Or leave me out in the rain (books can
catch cold as well as children);
Or make marks on me with your pen or
pencil;
Or lean on me with your elbows (it
hurts);

Or open and lay me face down on the table (you wouldn't like to be treated so).

Whenever you are through reading me don't turn down the corner of one of my leaves, but put in a neat little bookmark where you stop.

Help to keep me fresh and clean. Remember that I want to visit a great many others after you are through enjoying me."¹

In the Lincoln School at Teachers College, New York, a fourth grade class was assigned the topic, "The Care of Books," to be reported on at assembly. Here are three of the talks made. They repeat some of the above rules, but in a different way. They give the child's idea of why books should be cared for:

BILLY: The way to keep a place in a book is to put a piece of paper or a bookmark in it. Do not put thick things like pencils or rulers in it because it breaks the binding of a book. Don't turn down the corners, because they get creased and liable to break off. Another thing that is very bad is to slam a book down on a desk face downward. It breaks the back and the binding. If I wanted to lend a book to a friend, I wouldn't want to give a book that the back was broken and the pages torn. It would give them a bad impression of me and they would think I was very careless in the use of books and they would never want to lend any of their books to me.

NATALIE: About one of the worst things you can do to a book is to let it get wet. When I was little I left a book out on the veranda and as it was a very nice day and as I wasn't thinking at all about the book, I just left it there. The next morning it was all dripping with dew and rain and it was all sort-of lumpy in certain places and had lots of brown lines on it. I read that book last year, but I did not enjoy it half so much, because it was not so attractive.

CLARENCE: After you eat or when you are playing you should always wash your hands before reading a book. For when you get a fresh book from the library and you get it all soiled with your sticky fingers, no one else will care to read such a book. . . . —for instance, once when I was eating my breakfast and I was looking at the book I was going to read to the class, I got it all soiled with my sticky fingers, and when I brought it back to Miss— she said that no one else would like to read such a soiled book, and so, after that I never got my hands sticky and before reading a book I always wash my hands if I have been eating or playing.²

¹Maxson, Rev. H. D. Bookmark No. 35. Published by A. L. A. Chicago.

²*Some Uses of School Assemblies.* Lincoln School. New York. p. 52.

Just as we help a child to care for his books, so must we help him in the choice of what he is to read. We should guide his reading, but this guiding should be in seeing what kind of books he chooses, rather than in saying which particular one he shall read. Kate Douglas Wiggin says, "I would not choose too absolutely for a child save in his earliest years, but would rather surround him with the best and worthiest books and let him choose for himself; for there are elective affinities and antipathies here that need not be disregarded—that are, indeed, certain indications of latent powers, and trustworthy guides to the child's unfolding possibilities."

Whatever we give a child to read, let us see that it is good of its kind and that there is variety. "A discriminating taste in literature is not to be gained without effort, and a constant reading of the little books spoils our appetite for the great ones." A child, just because he is a child, should not be held always to reading the so-called "child's book." If he wants to and can understand them, let him read the grown books. To some people it seems to be "perfectly obvious that all intelligent adult books should be read by children," comments the *Literary Digest*. If it is intelligent, it certainly can't hurt him.

There are many lists of books which have been compiled with the special interests of the child in mind. Some lists are the results of questionnaires; others are the result of finding out which books are asked for most frequently; and others are just lists published by a particular company. I will give here a short list of these compilations, with a few comments on each.

1. *A. L. A. Catalog.* 1923. American Library Association. Chicago.

There is a Children's Section in this book. The books are arranged alphabetically by subject—giving the name of the book, the author, the date, price, publisher, and place of publication. There is also a sentence or two telling what the book is about.

2. *Children's Catalog.* Minnie E. Sears. 1926. \$6.00. H. W. Wilson Co., N. Y.

This is a dictionary catalog of 4100 books for children, based on a children's catalog of 3500 books compiled by Corinne Bacon, supplemented by selected library lists of books. The same information about each book is given as in the A. L. A. Catalog.

3. *Graded Lists of Books for Children*. 1922. \$1.25. Rand McNally & Co. Chicago.

This book is prepared by the Elementary School Library Committee of the N. E. A. The books listed are for general reading for these grades—1-3; 4-6; 7-9. There are 60 reference books for the convenience of the teachers.

4. *Instruction in Use of Books and Libraries*. Fay, L. E., and Eaton, A. T. 1919. Faxon.
5. *Lists of Books for Rural School Libraries*. Adeline B. Zachert. May, 1923. Wilson Bulletin.

This bulletin also tells how rural school libraries may be exchanged, one with another.

6. *The Little Book Shelf*. Grace C. Williams. 1924. 50 cents. Rand McNally.

"This book is designed to meet the needs of the public school teacher—the one to whose lot, whether from choice or otherwise, falls the care of pleasure reading for the children."³

7. *Winnetka Graded Book List*. Washburne, Carleton, and Vogel, Mabel. 1926. American Library Association.

This book is a result of statistical investigation as to the books read and enjoyed by children of various ages and measured degrees of reading ability. The grades 1-10 are provided with lists of books, by grades. There are also lists given according to the age of the child, 8-13.

Not books alone bring enjoyment to children. They frequently are just as fond of certain magazines as they are of many books that they may have. I know a little girl, and she is not yet four years old, who thinks more of *Child Life* than of any of her many books. This is probably because there is more of it—where there is only one copy of a book, there are many copies of *Child Life*. I remember myself how alluring the *Youth's Companion* was every week. There was no getting any work done until this paper had

been finished. These two and *Saint Nicholas* are mostly for younger children. The *American Boy*, *Scientific American*, *The Radio*, and many others are for the older boy, who must always be making something or doing something to make some money.

Along with magazine reading comes that of the newspaper. Most children race to get the paper to read the "funnies" before Daddy comes and starts reading. Sometimes this is as far as they get, but usually even this will lead to reading more and really getting something useful from the paper.

There are ways of getting the interest centered on papers and magazines just as there are in the case of books. Some of the same methods may be used. There are other ways, too; one of the most interesting is to take them to the printer's office where they may see how the actual work is done.

LOUISA H. PERSINGER

AN EXPERIMENT IN THE USE OF HOME ECONOMICS TESTS

WE CAN no longer depend upon personal opinion to determine the efficiency of a school system. Various investigations have been made which show that the teacher's judgment in grading, classifying, and promoting children is not reliable, even with the best trained and experienced teachers.

It is only recently that the scientific method has been applied to home economics education. It involves an objective rather than a subjective method of approach. The objective tests in home economics have not so generally been recognized and used as in other subjects, because scientific measurement was first applied in the primary grades, while home economics was seldom included in the curriculum below the sixth grade. With the gradual application of scientific method in the high school and most recently in the college, home economics tests and measurements have taken their

³Washburne, C. & Vogel, Mabel. *Winnetka Graded Book List*. p. 1.