

HELPS FOR USING TOOLS

THE activity program makes many demands upon us as teachers. It calls for an understanding of children's interests, a wide knowledge in many fields, and an appreciation of the crafts and the principles involved in creating anything simple but beautiful. Much has been written about all these qualities that we teachers would possess.

But there is another ability required—skill in the handling of tools, together with a sufficient knowledge of technique, in order that we may guide young children toward success in their constructional activities. So one more block is added to the tower of preparation we must climb before we are ready to teach. And now the depression comes and would shake our very foundations; it threatens to take away the activity period from the children by cutting our supplies below what we once considered a minimum.

But we need not weaken in our belief that working with materials is one of the most natural and educative experiences for children. Present conditions should challenge us to be alert in securing free and inexpensive materials, to be resourceful in adapting odds and ends to useful purposes, and to be thrifty in using what is provided.

The following list of helps in using tools has been compiled from observation of tradesmen, suggestions from instructors, and years of experience in working with children. From the kindergarten through the primary grades these simple instructions have proved useful in helping the children to acquire skills which they will not have to unlearn later.

In giving this information, an effort has been made to make it clear and concise that it may prove a convenient source of reference to all primary teachers. But these helps are *never* to be used as a list of rules to give to children; they are suggestions to augment the teacher's knowledge of tech-

nique, and are intended to serve as a guide to her in building up proper habits of work in the children.

T-SQUARE

Make a dot to show where the board is to be cut off. Lay the flat edge of the T-square on the true edge of the board so that the right edge touches the dot. Put fingers of the left hand in the hole and thumb on the board. Hold the T-square in this position firmly and draw a line through the dot the distance that is to be sawed.

VISE

Put the board in the vise close to the line for sawing. Stand with the right side of the body near the vise for hand-sawing, or facing the vise for coping saw work.

HAND SAW

Always draw a line before sawing. Place the board in the vise or clamp close to the line. Hold the saw loosely. Start near the handle and pull back, then proceed with long even strokes. Do not bear down—"let the saw do the work."

COPING SAW

Point the teeth of the blade toward the handle. Use only for sawing shapes from thin wood and for evening off the jagged edges on a board.

FILE

Smooth off the edges of a board first with the file. Then wrap sandpaper around a small board, to make a firmer rubbing surface, and continue sandpapering until the board is very smooth.

PLANE

Use the plane to level off boards along the grain of the wood. Use long even strokes. Use both hands to hold the plane level. Only a mechanic or teacher should try to adjust the knife.

HAMMER

Hold the hammer near the center of the

handle. Before a board is nailed make a line or dots where the nails are to go. Pound the nails into the top board until they come through on the other side. Then nail the two boards together.

BRACE AND BIT

Mark a dot where the hole is to be bored. Place an old piece of wood under the board as a protection. Hold the brace against the body and turn evenly. Stop boring as soon as the bit pricks through and unscrew the bit carefully to avoid bending it. Then turn the board over and complete the smooth hole.

PAINT BRUSHES

Dip the brush into the paint about one half inch. Paint with long even strokes moving with the grain of the wood and covering all light spots before going on. Keep oil paint brushes in turpentine. Keep shellac brushes in alcohol. Use the same kind of liquid to clean each. Calcimo brushes are cleaned with water.

SCISSORS

Open the scissors wide and use the full length of the blade for cutting straight edges. To cut a smooth curve, keep the scissors pointing upward and turn the paper. When trimming off edges hold the paper by the larger portion to get a firmer grasp and to enable the child to see the edge to be trimmed more easily.

CRAYONS

Hold the crayon loosely and rub horizontally with a short stroke (about one inch) covering that portion before going on to the next. A stroke in line with the design or picture's edge is often effective as the child acquires more skill.

SEWING

Always cut a pattern before cutting into cloth. A full-sized pattern is easier for a child to use in calculating the proper fit (as for a doll's dress). This pattern may then

be folded together and pinned on the fold of cloth as usual. Always hold the cloth so that the seam to be sewed is at the top, i. e., not close to the body, when starting to sew.

—NELLIE L. WALKER

MANANA

Pronounced languidly and in a leisurely fashion and one has expressed the "perfect day" of a lazy person. Manana is the Spanish word for tomorrow and, as is well known, tomorrow never comes. Tomorrow is the date upon which the politician fulfils his pre-election promises, the day upon which the bum gets busy, the day when the dipsomaniac mounts the water wagon, and the day whereupon technocracy will prove that the world needs something greater and better than straight thinking, clean living, and less harping upon the outworn string of democracy, viz., "I'm as good as anybody."

The collective man power wasted in one day by putting off until tomorrow the things that should be done today could cause the wildest assertions of technocracy to appear pale and anemic. That is, if by fiat, divine or mussoliniwise, the human propensity of "putting it off until tomorrow" could be abrogated, and human "good intentions" were transmuted into actions as soon as formulated. Were that done, hell would not only be without pavements, but the Devil himself might reform and apply for a job as a technocrat, and thus become an angel of light.

Human nature was the same yesterday as it is today, and undoubtedly will be the same in untold ages to come. It was true yesterday, and it is true today, that each and everyone of us make largely the heaven or the hell in which we pass our mundane existence. The next world? Why worry about that? *Today* is the best day of all days to do your stuff. Why manana?—*The Kalends*, Baltimore.