

THE FIRST DAY

As the school year opens another large group of children waits excitedly and somewhat apprehensively.

They are the five and six year olds for whom the new year will mean the commencement of a new and important stage of life.

There is no doubt that starting school brings about many changes in a child's life, and the wise parent will take precautions to prepare his child for these changes and also help him to overcome any unforeseen difficulties that may arise. The following are a few of the ways in which parents may prepare a child for school.

First of all, a parent should help foster a child's desire for school, teach him to regard it as a place of new and exciting adventures and above all, never use it as a threat for disciplining your child. Fear of school is sometimes caused by thoughtless parents who say, "Wait till you get to school . . ."

Train your child in habits of personal hygiene. Teach him to button and unbutton his clothes and shoes, and be sure he wears clothes that he can manage. This will save the child embarrassment and give the child a feeling of independence which is so important to him.

Make sure he can recognize his own clothing and mark them in a way he and his teacher can recognize. Among so many others it is often so difficult to find clothing and a child is spared much anxiety when clothing can be quickly and positively identified.

Your child must be prepared to accept authority and discipline and to respect the rights and privileges of his fellow pupils. In this regard it is wise to give him the opportunity to meet and play with other children of his own age group, especially those who will be attending the same school, so that on the first day there will be some well-known faces among the crowd of beginners.

Be interested in your child's school and schooling. Listen to his daily report on school life. He will have

much to tell you at first, but remember that the child doesn't always get happenings into his head in their proper perspective, and sometimes a child may "romance", so be guarded in what you believe.

If a child does experience any difficulties in his adjustment to school life, consult and co-operate with his teacher.

Unfortunately, a few children do experience these difficulties, but they can be quickly and easily overcome with parent teacher co-operation. Teachers are always anxious to talk things over with parents and they realize the importance of parental influence on the progress of the child.

Whatever you do, if at all possible, accompany your child on his first day at school. Your presence will give him a sense of security and confidence which will help him settle into his new environment.

Also, you will be required to fill in an enrolment form which provides the teacher with added and needed information. If your child suffers from any disability which could possibly hinder his progress, or which should be known by the teacher be sure to mention it on that day.

Be sure that your child knows the way to and from school, that he can accomplish his journey in safety, and if possible, arrange for an older pupil to accompany him each day.

The radio programme "Kindergarten of the Air" is especially designed for pre-school children. By listening to it and taking part in it the pre-school child gains valuable training which will aid his adjustment to school life.

As a thoughtful parent, it is your duty to do all you can to prepare your child for one of the most important events in his life.

(With acknowledgments to the North-West Champion.)



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