



# 4-H Child Care Project Manual

Taking care of a child can be a happy experience for you if you love children and are interested in them.

Children aren't alike and you will find caring for one child will be quite different than caring for another.

You may be caring for younger brothers or sisters, or you may be caring for a neighbor's child. Either is an *important* undertaking.

You will want to remember *you* are responsible for the child's safety and happiness while he is in your hands. You will want to guide him and help him to learn, be happy, and be safe.

Certain things will be expected of you when you "baby sit." The parents of the child will have certain responsibilities, too, and you will need some understanding together.

This Child Care Unit will help you:

1. To better understand children (birth through 5 years of age).
2. To learn that children are different at different ages.
3. To learn ways of caring for children.
4. To understand types of play that children enjoy.
5. To realize that children learn to get along with other people through play.
6. To make good choices of toys, story books and songs for children.



## *Children are not alike*

Children are not alike. One child may have more energy than another. One may be slower in reacting to things around him.

Children who are the same age may not do the same





things. For instance, one child may stand alone and walk at an earlier age than another. Still, both are normal.

Even though children may show some difference in their walking and talking, they all seem to go through certain expected stages in developing.

You will enjoy caring for them more if you understand what you can expect of the child at different ages.

### The infant

At birth, and for several months, an infant is very dependent on other human beings for just living. He depends upon his mother for not only food and warmth, but for other physical comforts.

When he awakens, he may cry to get attention. He thinks only about himself. He will gradually, with loving care, learn that there are others in the home.

To help him be happy and feel secure, he needs lots of loving and being held close. Of course, his main physical needs are to be fed and kept warm.

After a few months, he will discover he has hands, and a little later, feet. He will also soon find he can hold onto your finger. From these early discoveries, he gradually learns other things about himself and the world around him.

### The 2-year old

The 2-year old enjoys activity. He finds he can do things, but still is busy balancing and controlling his body. He runs, but isn't too sure of himself. It's hard for him to slow down or turn quickly. He stoops, crawls, jumps and slides. He enjoys climbing the stairway, climbing up onto furniture or boxes.

Because he is still quite interested in himself and is just learning about other people around him, he is very much interested in stories and songs about his daily activities; those which bring *himself* into the picture.

This 2-year old will want to touch, hear, taste, see, or smell everything. This is his *way of learning*.

He doesn't understand too well how to play with children his own age, but he does enjoy being with them. He has a strong sense of "*mine*" and hasn't just yet learned to share.

He likes to do things for himself, but he may be slow about it. He wants to wash his own face and hang up his own towel (it's important to have the towel bar or hook

at the child's level). He is interested in trying to get into his clothes and feed himself. Now is the time to help him learn, while he's interested in these things.

Simple toys are enjoyed most. The 2-year old will like to build with blocks. He's learning to put one on top of another but isn't ready yet for complicated building.

He will *cooperate* in putting toys away.

The 2½-year old may seem quite contrary—he's in the "no-no" stage and may say "no" when he really means "yes." This is merely a stage of growth for children.

### The 3-year old

The 3-year old begins to be less contrary and wants to cooperate. It's easier for him to handle himself in many ways—walking, running, block building, and drawing with a pencil or a crayon. He will now take part in some play activities.

The 3-year old likes to help do things around the house—dry the dishes, set the table, stir a cake. He can do a better job in washing himself and hanging up his clothes (again hooks and racks need to be low enough for him to reach). He can help himself in going to the toilet. He's beginning to handle simple buttons and fastenings.

We might say, he learns by "trial and success" in place of "trial and error." He needs praise when he's accomplished some of these social tasks. It is through a certain amount of success that he's willing to try again.

### 4- and 5-year olds

The 4- and 5-year olds are much less dependent and require less attention than younger children. They do not depend upon someone to help them eat, dress and undress and go to the toilet.

The play they enjoy is active. They like to play with older children. Outdoor games are the simple running games like racing and tag.

Many questions are asked by 4- and 5-year olds, sometimes to delay going to bed, or doing some task.

New words are interesting to them and "bad" words to *shock you* are *fun to them*.

They enjoy doing things and repeatedly playing the same games, but also like to learn new games. The same stories and songs are enjoyed over and over.

They enjoy cutting paper, or making things with paper, cloth, wood, sand or clay. Indoor games are enjoyed, such

as tea party or "find me." They enjoy acting out stories you tell them.

They like to use tools: blunt scissors (to cut with and make paper dolls or chains), brooms, hammers, saws and toy kitchen equipment, to name a few.

## *Children's emotions*

All children have feelings. Each is a separate individual trying to learn to live with his family and his society.

The child is not born with fear, love, hate or anger. He develops these as he grows older. Because of his experiences, he will develop desirable or undesirable emotions. He will learn to love if he is shown love; he will learn to fear if he has been frightened or does not understand. He has to learn to know his world.

### **Fears**

Sudden changes, such as a noise or a fall, will cause fear in a small child. A fire siren or vacuum cleaner may cause him to be afraid until he understands what it is. Many times, animals frighten him—the dog jumping upon him or animals pushed toward him. Thunderstorms are frightening to the child, because he does not understand.

Imagination plays a strong part in a child's fear. When a room is dark, he may imagine that there is an animal in his closet or under the bed. To him, it seems quite real. Shadows may frighten him because he imagines them to be something they are not.

Many times, fears are learned from adults. He may hear them talk about things he does not quite understand, or he may sense they are afraid of things such as certain animals or thunderstorms.

Punishment given by frightening a child is very hard on him. Because he is so dependent upon adults, he believes what they tell him and may suffer from fear long after the incident itself is forgotten.

### **Anger**

When the tiny infant does not get his food when he wants it, he will show anger in his cry. As he grows older and he cannot get his shoe on or put a toy together to suit him, the result may be an outburst of anger. A normal amount of this is expected and desirable, but anger can get out of hand.

Children who have not yet learned to express themselves, show anger because *you* do not understand what they mean. But, patience with him and giving him a little help in what he is trying to do will lessen his frustrated feeling.

Hunger and fatigue seem to be the most common causes of anger.

A child may go into a tantrum because he finds this will help him get his own way or get attention. Ignoring the outburst and later on giving him more attention in a desirable way, such as reading or talking to him, probably will be the best way to handle tantrums.

### **Jealousy**

Most children will show some jealousy.

The child who has a new younger brother or sister may suddenly feel "left out," because he had been so close to his parents, and does not quite understand that he is still

loved by his parents, although he must share parental attention with the younger child. Fear of losing others' love can cause jealousy.

The child must feel that he is loved and wanted. And he must come to learn that he must share this love and attention with others.

### **Love and affection**

All children need love.

They learn to love by the way they are shown love. The first sign of the child's love is a smile. He wants to be close to you and to feel that you want him. He must feel secure to be happy. He needs the hug; dancing around with him; taking time to listen to his little chatter; answering his many questions; and laughing with him help him to feel loved and secure.

Holding a child and telling him a story, reading to him or singing to him, will help him to feel that he is loved and that he is sharing something with you as an older person.

## *Caring for children*

Patience and kindness are the 2 things most needed when you care for children. There are times when you need to be firm (but never cross).

Children take the lead in their own play. You can play with them, but try to remember that *they are learning through their play to live like others around them*. Sometimes they enjoy suggestions from you, but try to realize that each youngster is an individual and wants you to treat him with respect.

You cannot let him hurt something or someone; he must not go out into the street: these are some examples of times when you will need to be firm and say, "NO."

When you talk with a child, talk slowly and distinctly. Read or tell your stories slowly, sing your songs so that he understands them.

The young child will not perform a task as well as an older child. Be patient and remember he needs praise and approval for a job done as best he can.

Never frighten a child to get him to behave or to do something you want him to do.

A lot of patience may be needed when the child is eating. Use of proper eating equipment has to be learned. He may want to "dawdle" along while eating. Sometimes he gets tired and you may help by feeding him. But let him eat without nagging or giving too much attention to his manners.

Toilet time and bed time may be hard, trying times. Again, you will need patience. Give him plenty of time to go to the toilet. You will need to be firm, but never scold nor shame him during toilet training.

You can help him get into the mood for bedtime by doing things to help him quiet himself. Rowdiness excites him too much and he will not be ready for sleep.

Remember, "experience is the best teacher." Let the child do as much for himself as he can. Your patient, kind example will also help.

### **Music**

Most children love music. Singing to the child can help

*Continued on page 6*



## *Requirements for child care unit*

### **First Year**

You will have completed this unit when you have selected and finished the activities below. Check the things you plan to do, and when you have done them, fill out your Child Care Record:

#### **I. Select and do 3 or more of the following:**

- Spend a total of at least 3 hours with a child reading or telling him stories or singing with him.
- Play with a child during 3 of his 2-hour play periods, alone or with other children.
- Help a child at least 3 times with his bath. Help him to undress and dress.
- Help a child prepare for bedtime at least 3 different nights.
- Following his mother's directions, prepare at least 3 meals for the child and eat with him, if possible.

#### **II. Choose and prepare 1 of the following:**

- A surprise bag.
- A child's large scrap book (pictures children enjoy).
- Three toys for a child.

#### **III. Give a demonstration or talk on 1 of the following:**

- Story books and songs for certain age child—ideas to include:
  1. What to look for in books and why.
  2. Tell or read some stories.
  3. Sing some songs.
- How to make a toy.
- Preparing a meal and eating with a child.
- Helping to prepare a child for bed.
- Helping to give a child a bath.

#### **IV. Prepare and display an exhibit. Here are some ideas:**

- Surprise bag (containing play articles).
- Scrapbook containing pictures of interest to a child.
- Three toys you made.
- Story or song exhibit (books or stories or songs suitable for children).

#### **V. Write a story, telling about your experiences caring for a child.**

## Advanced work in child care

As you continue to carry the project in future years, you will want to gain more experience in the skills you have already learned in Child Care. You will also want to learn many new things necessary in caring for children.

To help you learn more about child care, you should continue to do the things you have already learned in the project and learn to do at least 3 or 4 new things each year that you carry the project.

Check the things you plan to do, and when you have done them, fill out your Child Care record:

### I. Select and do at least 3 of the following:

- Bathe baby 3 times (according to mother's instructions).
- Prepare 3 feedings for baby and feed him (according to mother's instructions.)
- Prepare baby 3 times for bed and be responsible for him at least 2 hours.
- Care for baby 2 hours on 3 different days.
- Plan and give a party for 6 or more children (ages 2 to 6—child might help plan if old enough).
- Plan and prepare 3 meals letting child help you (see *Feeding Your Baby and Child*, Spock and Lowenberg).
- Go on 3 one-hour walks with child.

### II. Prepare 1 of the following:

- Make 3 toys for children.
  
- Make 2 game boards.

### III. Give demonstration or 5-minute talk on 2 of these subjects:

- Bathing a baby (may substitute large doll for baby).
- Feeding a baby.
- Meals for a child (see *Feeding Your Baby and Child*, Spock and Lowenberg).
- Getting a child ready for bed.
- Making games for children.
- The child's party.
- Going on a walk with a child.

### IV. Prepare and display an exhibit. Exhibit at least 2 of the following:

- Games and toys for children.
- Party plans.
- Large scrap book containing short articles and pictures on care for a child, clipped from magazines. Include information on feeding, play, and preparation for nap or bedtime.
- Two large children's scrapbooks, containing pictures suitable for children of different ages.

### V. Write a story, telling about your experiences caring for a child.

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to quiet him or give him a feeling of closeness to you. It is said, "You can live *as long* without music, but *not as well*." The mother soothes her small child by singing a lullaby. You, in caring for children, can do a great deal in helping them to like music.

Their experience of music activity—whether it be singing, moving (rhythm), or dramatizing a song story—produces personal and direct impressions which have lasting effects upon the child's feelings and judgments.

The infant will enjoy having you softly hum or sing to him. The child who is a little older will enjoy having you sing, especially songs which he can understand. He, too, will enjoy singing (or trying to sing) along with you. Some can sing alone. Nearly all children can learn to sing, but some will learn at an earlier age and more easily than others.

The child will enjoy songs (sung or played) for their rhythm. He will like to clap his hands, or use some simple rhythm instruments such as sticks, clappers or cymbals.

A group of children love rhythm together.

Just listening to music gives the child enjoyment. You may sing to him or play a record suitable for children. (Singing without an instrument is preferred.)

A child can be quieted and be more ready for a nap or sleep if he can listen to slow, soft music. Try singing softly to him—notice the quieting effect it has on him.

## Stories and picture books

The small child does not want to sit very long, so a story may not be as enjoyable as looking at a picture book with clear, bright, simple pictures. He will enjoy little jingles like Mother Goose rhymes.

From age 2 and on, he will enjoy being read to, or to hear little stories, especially about children like himself. He will take great delight in stories you read or tell about animals. He enjoys mimicking the kitten, dog or other animals.

He will enjoy telling you a story, too. His imagination is wonderful.

Homemade scrap books or carefully chosen books need not be expensive. Cloth books for the smallest youngster are good because he cannot spoil them.

Stories are excellent to help the child develop understanding of the world about him.

## Play things

Try to choose play things that are: 1. suitable for the child's age and development; 2. sturdy; and 3. safe, both for the child himself and for others.

### Toys for the toddler

Push and pull toys (a bell mounted on wheels). Small, sturdily-built wagon or wheel barrow. Pounding sets (peg board and mallets). Nest of blocks (large but not heavy). Balls. Small chair to climb and sit on.

Steps to climb. Plank to slide down (watch out for splinters). Walking board, 2 inches x 10 inches x 10 feet (flat on the ground for youngest, raise 5 or 6 inches for an older child). Three wheeled kiddie-car. Wooden blocks to be hitched together.

### Toys for 3- to 6-year olds

Large, hollow nesting blocks. Packing boxes arranged for safe climbing. Slide (home-made or purchased). Ladder that may be fastened securely to fence or bars. Swing, bars or rope ladder. Tricycle, wagon, sled or scooter. Hammer, shovel, saw and work bench. Dump trucks, trains or airplanes.

### Play materials for creative self-expression

Sand box and sand toys. Kitchen utensils. Cartons, boxes, spools and other household waste materials (be sure they're clean). Peg boards with large pegs. Musical instruments, phonograph and records. Waterproof apron and utensils for water play.

Soft, washable, flexible dolls and cuddly animals. Colored paper for folding and cutting (always provide blunt scissors). Rolls of newsprint paper or wall paper. Crayons, show-card colors and brushes. Clay or plasticene. Blocks of many sizes.

### Materials for imaginative play

Dolls, with beds and other accessories. Household equipment (dishes, brooms, irons, tubs and so on). Trains, trucks, airplanes and boats. Toy animals to cuddle. Plastic or compo-board animals for use in playing circus, farm, zoo and so on. Plastic or "lead" soldiers or model figures. Blocks used for construction of towers, garages for cars, fences for cattle and so on.

## Outdoor play

Outdoors, the child may like to:

Play in a sand box. Run, shout and laugh. Climb low trees, fences, ladders and steps. Do stunts on low tree limbs or horizontal bars, such as hanging from bar by hands or knees, chinning the bar, and skinning-the-cat. Climb a knotted rope. Swing himself, learn to pump. Learn to ride a tricycle. Pull a toy wagon. Help gather eggs.

Help bring in the wood. Hoe in the garden with a small hoe. Rake leaves. Play in shallow stream or brook if one is near the home. Take a walk with you to see the new calf or pigs, to nearby spring or stream, to gather pretty leaves or flowers, to get a Christmas tree or to gather nuts.

## Indoor play

Indoors the child may like to:

Look at picture books. Hear a story told or read to him, or to tell you a story. Learn a song, jingle, finger play, or sing to you. String spools or large wooden beads. Play with all-wooden clothes pins and smoothly cut tin cans or cereal boxes. Dress and undress dolls. Put clothes in doll trunk. Cut out paper dolls. Cut pictures and paste in scrapbook. Make a paper chain, soldier hat, or box.

Make things of modelling clay. Make drum or doll cradle from empty cereal box. Draw on paper with pencil or crayons. Paint on paper with water colors or show-card colors. Dress up in adult's clothes, hats, or shoes. Play tea party (this is particularly good for child with small appetite). Sew doll clothes. Play house or sweep with small broom. Iron doll clothes with toy iron. Build with blocks such things as wall, highway, bridges, fence, house, or barn.