



VOLUNTEER teacher Mrs. Robert M. Erickson read "The Five Pennies" to preschoolers in Grandview Elementary School. The youngsters spend an hour each week becoming acquainted with school surroundings and future classmates.



LEARNING TO be a good audience is one objective for pre-school youngsters. Front, from left: Shelley Mortenson, Daniel Waldman, Patrick Slatin and Michael Driscoll, with Terry Wenson in back.

All Ready For Kindergarten

4-Year-Olds, Mothers In Class At Grandview

In September, many prospective kindergartners at Clarenceville's Grandview Elementary School won't have to ask their mothers "What do you do in kindergarten, mommy?" They'll know.

For several weeks now, preschoolers (four-year-olds) who will be enrolled in kindergarten this fall have been visiting the school for one-hour Tuesday mornings. The 42 children who come to school (about 80 youngsters are pre-registered for kindergarten this fall) are divided into two classes and kept busy with a variety of activities. Grandview is located at 19814 Louise, Livonia.

"What we're trying to do," explains Mrs. Jack Rowens, one of the volunteer mother teachers, "is to just get the children accustomed to doing simple things. They form circles. Learn how to hold crayons. Recite rhymes."

In addition to the actual physical activities performed by the children are the socialization processes they learn from being together.

As Mrs. Rowens says, "We try to ready them for kindergarten by getting them accustomed to each other. We teach them to sit and listen, to be a good audience. To relate to each other."

Volunteer teachers, too, try to identify preschoolers who, for any reason, might have problems adapting to kindergarten and school life.

MRS. ROWENS along with Mrs. Robert M. Erickson, the second of the two teachers, spent a considerable amount of time preparing the lessons. To their delight they found their lessons paralleled closely those of TV's outstanding children's program "Sesame Street."

Each lesson has a definite theme and color for study. The first lesson back in March featured "Trying New Things." The color studied was green. New things youngsters discussed were school, food and new clothes. They talked about grass being "the prettiest

green I've ever seen." They colored paper alligators green.

Subsequent lessons dealt with Friendship, Listening, Parts of the Body, Big and Little, Brown, Red, Blue and Yellow. Children also spend time at each session listening to stories and learning new games.

Their Friendship lesson was planned so that all children were introduced to each other and then asked to shake hands. Their story for the day was "A Friend is Someone who Likes You."

Mother aides who thus far have worked with Mrs. Rowens and Mrs. Erickson are Mrs. John Bresien, Mrs. John Slatin, Mrs. William Connor and Mrs. Donald Heidelberg.

WHILE THE PRESCHOOLERS are readying themselves for kindergarten, mothers are readying themselves, too. The pre-school program, organized as a community school project at Grandview, was set up in part to inform and interest mothers in their children's prospective role in school and in the Clarenceville school system itself.

During the time the youngsters are busy with their teachers, mothers meet at Grandview for "come-as-you-are" coffee and discussion. A child is not allowed to take part in the preschool program unless his mother attends the coffee and discussion sessions.

To date, mothers have had question and answer sessions with Grandview Principal Albie LaBarge Jr.; have heard from Mrs. Elizabeth Moore, Clarenceville's director of special services; have heard a representative from Schoolcraft College, and have been visited by the school nurse and speech therapist. Discussion topics have ranged from children's health, to artificial resuscitation, to sexuality.

Grandview's program was begun after representatives from Clarenceville's chapter of the Association for Childhood Education heard a speaker from Hazel Park public schools discuss a similar program being conducted in that system as a community school project.

Grandview's Assistant Principal Frank Brenner and a Grandview committee visited Hazel Park, and in less than two weeks Clarenceville's program was born.

Mrs. Henry Ellis, a member of Clarenceville's chapter of the Association for Childhood Education, has expressed hope that the other three elementary schools in the system (Edgewood, Botsford and Westbrook) will organize similar programs. Grandview's will be concluded in May but will be resumed again this fall in October.

GRANDVIEW PROGRAM planners have indicated they're interested in conducting a workshop this summer. They'd like to attract mothers interested in working with them not only at Grandview but at Clarenceville's other elementary schools. Mothers needn't be college-trained instructors nor nursery-school teachers. Previous work with pre-schoolers is not a prerequisite.

As Mrs. Rowens says, "We're not really looking for pre-school specialists. We don't especially care about mothers who are specialists, but we'll train mothers who especially care."

Mrs. Rowens, who has substituted in the Clarenceville district has not previously taught preschoolers. She has Mrs. Erickson who was a secondary English teacher in Detroit.

"This is our first experience with teaching preschoolers," explains Mrs. Rowens, "and we're having fun."

The program actually involves no money. The children use two rooms at Grandview, mothers one. Children need only crayons, paper and scissors. Mothers pay for their own coffee.

STORY: Nancy Richard

PICTURES: Harry Mauthe



MOTHERS HEAR Mrs. Ben Moran, Oakland County public health nurse, talk about the growth and development of three-to five-year-olds in a come-as-you-are discussion over coffee.



INDIAN LORE was combined one day with numbers (remember "10 Little Indians"?), and the children made headbands and played Indian games. Joseph Barney III gets an adjustment from Mrs. Jack Rowens, volunteer teacher.



JAMIE BOWLES carefully selects the right crayon. She's one of 42 youngsters in the pre-school program.

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