



ARTICLES BY BETTY WARD CAIN

MAKE THE ROOM CONDUCIVE TO LEARNING

Find a quiet, well-lit space in your home to use for learning. A special room would be ideal, but not necessary. A friend of mine used a tree house. She had it wired for electricity and added a heater and window air conditioner. Then she furnished the room with desks, bulletin boards, eraser boards and it looked like a classroom.

You wouldn't necessarily need to go to that extreme, but do make the learning environment as quiet and conducive to learning as possible. Post alphabet line charts and number line charts on the wall. Collect small counting objects such as matchbox cars, soldiers, marbles, buttons, beans or anything that can be used for counting.

Make learning games your child can play alone or with you. There are several examples on our Games page. If your child is having difficulty with a skill such as telling time, opposites, rhyming, etc. just make them a game. If you don't know where to start in making a game, contact Betty Cain at jaybcain@gmail.com and she will try to give you ideas or compose the game for you.

Before a child can learn to write correctly, they need to develop their pinscher muscles in their hands. Have several things available for them to use—playdough (you can make your own. E-mail me for the

recipe), scissors, crayons, craft paper, etc. Light Bright sets are good for the pinscher muscle development.

Help your child develop eye-hand coordination. When I was a child, they played a game at birthday parties called “drop the clothespin into the jar.” I didn’t know it at the time, but this was a learning game. It helps a child develop coordination between their eye and hand. Take a quart jar and place it on the floor at the child’s feet. They must stand upright without bending (except their head) and drop clothespins into the jar. This is a fun way to develop eye-hand coordination.

Music is a fun way to learn. Children’s CD’s with learning songs would be an asset to your learning environment as well. When a child is having difficulty with a skill, many times they can learn just by singing songs. For example, a child who is having problems learning to count will learn quicker with a counting song or a child who is having trouble reciting their ABC’s will learn by singing the alphabet song. (Just be sure to have the number charts or alphabet charts to point to each number or letter as it is sung. This way they are beginning to recognize the numbers or letters without realizing it.

My philosophy has been to make learning so much fun, the student doesn’t realize they are learning until it is too late. Then they are thrilled and proud of themselves. Every child needs to feel successful no matter at what learning level they are. Give them games they know how to do, then gradually sneak one or two new skills in and before you know it they have learned all the numbers to 20, or all the letters of the alphabet, or the sounds of all the letters, or they are beginning to read simple words.

Teach a child to read and you have touched their lives forever.

Reading is “fun”damental to all learning.