



## ARTICLES BY BETTY WARD CAIN

### Teaching Preschoolers



There are so many ways to prepare preschoolers for starting school. Learning can be fun. Making the child feel they are playing a game will help them to enjoy learning so much better. Learning can take place anywhere and at any time you and your child are together.

Nature is the place to start with preschoolers. Taking nature walks to talk about our world and how awesome it is that God created so many different colors, smells and feelings to explore gives the child an appreciation of the world around them.

Teach them to recognize colors by making something together—stir up some grape (purple) Jello and talk about the deep purple color as you stir; make strawberry shortcake and talk about the red, ripe strawberries as you slice them. You could read the Dr. Seuss story of *Green Eggs and Ham*, then color some eggs green and scramble them together. Purchase some tiny colorful cars or character or just some buttons and together play a game of sorting them by colors or shapes or sizes. Make every moment count with the child. They will remember the special times you talked to them or pointed out things for them.

Teach shapes by doing a scavenger hunt. Hand the child a shape such as a circle and have them look for the shape in objects such as clock faces, toy car wheels, bicycle tires, etc. Another day use a different shape. Your child will enjoy this game and will be hunting for the shapes even when the game is over. Find every opportunity to say the shape names.

Sing the alphabet song as you point to the letters on a chart. Children are always confused with the lmnop part of the alphabet because it is sung too fast. Sing the same tune, but sing each phrase like this:

A B C D E F G

H I J K L M N

O P Q

R S T

U V W

X Y Z

You can finish the song with “now I know my abc’s, next time won’t you sing with me.

Take a letter each week and emphasize the phonic sound of the letter. Try and find words that begin with the letter sound. For example, the letter B should not be sounded as “buh” but just forming the lips and making the short sound of “b” as in Bad Billy Bear Bursts Balloons. Then say some words and have the child raise their hand when they hear the “b” sound as in cat; dog; bicycle; frog; ball; house; etc. When the child is familiar with the beginning sounds, have them determine the ending sounds of words such as cab; jab; nab; cob; gob; etc. Even silly made up words are fine and the child will enjoy their sound.

Practice counting objects such as the small objects used in paragraph three. Start with just a few object like 3 and move up to larger sets of objects. Be sure to use a card with the number on it so the child can become familiar with the number associated with the amount. Let the child touch each object as they count to help them understand the one to one ratio of numbers. Another game is to call out the

number while holding up the card and have the child make a set of that many objects. As they get familiar with the numbers, hold up a card with the number without telling what the number is and let them count out that many objects.