

Minnesota. Dept. of Public Welfare.

Teach Me

A Guide for Parents and Others Who Have
the Care of Subnormal Children



MENTAL HEALTH UNIT
DIVISION OF PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY

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TEACH ME

Practical Suggestions for Training the Very Slow Child

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FORWARD

This booklet is printed by the Division of Public Institutions of Minnesota for parents, foster-parents and others who must care for or plan for children who learn so slowly they may never go to school. It has been felt for a long time that these children are not always understood and it is certain that it is more difficult to teach or train them than it is to teach or train the normal child. For several years it has seemed that the Division of Public Institutions should take the lead in getting out some printed matter which might be helpful. More than two years ago a number of persons were asked to serve as a committee together with those within the Division representing the institutions and departments directly interested in this group. From outside the Division there were social workers from the Division of Social Welfare and the County Welfare Boards, representatives from the State Board of Health including public health nurses from both state and county, and representatives from the State Department of Education with some participation by local school teachers and superintendents. Following discussion of what was needed, the senior psychologist of the Bureau of Psychological Services was chosen to head a sub-committee to carry out the directions of this larger committee in actually writing the booklet. There has been full committee participation including discussion and constructive criticism of all material in order to make possible the final form of this booklet. However, Dr. Louise Gates, formerly senior psychologist of the Bureau of Psychological Services, and Miss Jessie Wells, now with the Bureau as psychologist, have served as a sub-committee and should have especial appreciation for the great amount of work they have done.

It is hoped the use of this booklet will help to make the very slow child happier and better able to fit into the life of the family and the community.

CARL H. SWANSON, Director
Division of Public Institutions

September 1, 1945



HOME TRAINING FOR THE VERY SLOW CHILD

The new things we see children do from day to day happen partly because they are growing up and partly because someone is teaching them. Children whose minds grow very slowly are the ones we will talk about in this booklet. We mean those who are so very slow that it has been noticed since they were tiny children. You cannot make the very slow child develop as you would like to have him, but you will find that, if you know how to teach him, he can learn more than you expected. You will find here some things which you can teach the very slow child in your home. When he learns to do these things, everyone will like him better. He will be easier to care for and more like other children. He will look nicer, act better, and be more help to you around the house. He will also be a happier child.

Your aim will be for the child to learn a thing so well that he can do it without thinking. This is what we call a habit. It will be very hard to train him because he cannot ever learn very fast. He will need a great deal of time to learn even very easy things, but the time you spend will be worth while.

The very slow child can learn best if he is made to feel loved and wanted at home, and is included in things the family does.

There are certain ways you can go about it to get the best results. Choose whatever you think he will be able to learn now. He will learn a thing only when his mind is developed enough. You will know when this is because he will show interest, be willing to pay attention, and learn a little the first time you try. If he is stubborn and refuses, it is probably too hard for him. Forcing him to do things before he is able is useless and may be harmful. It will be easier to teach him if you follow these rules:

1. Be sure he is watching and listening.
2. Repeat often. He will need to do a thing himself many times before you can expect him always to do it right. With

most things this will mean doing it every day. A little practice each time is best. If he becomes too tired he will lose interest.

3. Keep to a routine. Have him do things in the same place at the same time of day. This regularity will help him know when he is to do such things as wash his face, eat his dinner, and go to bed. Then he is more likely to be ready for each thing as it comes. It will also make him feel sure of himself.

4. Allow plenty of time. Don't rush him! Don't let him just "fool around" either.

5. Show him how to do a thing rather than just tell him. You may have to show him many times, but if he learns to do it right in the first place, then a bad habit cannot get started.

6. Help him only when he needs it. Let him do as much as he can for himself. It may take him longer, but it is the only way he can really learn.

7. Have him finish. Things should not be left half done. The task should be short enough to hold his interest until he is through. Finishing a thing brings about good work habits.

8. Let him know you are pleased when he does well. Sometimes just a smile or a pat will be enough. You do not want him to look to you for praise for every little thing, but it should be given freely when he deserves it. Some children need more praise than others, and the slow child will probably need quite a bit at first.

The results will come sooner and last longer if you, yourself will try to form habits. Relax yourself. Have a great deal of patience. Be firm but gentle. Don't scold if he does not do something the way you want him to. Often it means he "can't" rather than he "won't." Work on one thing at a time because some habits get in the way of each other. You will only mix him up, for example, if you keep asking him to sit up straight while he is trying to remember not to spill his food. Be sure he has learned a thing well before teaching him a harder one.

If you think of it as just a duty, you will not get as good results as if you really want to see him improve. At all times remember that the child is learning from what he sees others do, so it is important for others in the family to behave as you want him to behave.

The booklet has six main parts: Habit Training, Discipline, Emotions, Lessons, Looks and Manners, and Irregular Behavior. Under these headings, the things which we want the child to learn are listed and described, with the easiest things first and the hardest last. Also there are suggestions for teaching him these things. Try whatever he seems able to do, but remember not to force him.

There is also a part of Health with some suggestions of what you can do to keep the child in good health.



I. HABIT TRAINING

It is fun to help yourself

Most slow children can learn to take care of their own body needs and the things they use. The more the child can do for himself the better. He should not be babied or waited on. He will take pride in doing something he can do well. The more he does for himself the more time you will have for other things.

We have listed things a child learns to do in their order from easiest to hardest. First come things he can learn earliest and then come things he cannot learn until later. This is done so you will have a better idea of what to expect. If you watch any child you will notice that he starts trying to do a thing by himself when he is ready to learn it. Begin at a place in each list where you think he will have an easy and quick success. Then try the next hardest task. Not all children are alike in development, so you may have to skip for the present some things that look easy but turn out to be too hard. Try them later. The lists do not include everything a child can do. You probably know many things which it would be sensible to teach him along with the things we have named. That's fine; go ahead, but be sure not to force him before he is ready.

We suggest that you read the chapter before this one again, to be sure you know the best ways of teaching the child. Remember that he will need more time than other children. Especially let him try to do things for himself, and praise him for "being grown up", but do not hesitate to help him, too. You must expect to give him some supervision while he is dressing or eating or washing. If he is left alone, his mind may wander, and he may forget to finish the job.

Here are some suggestions for things you can make or buy. Many mothers have found that by using them learning is speeded up, because it is pleasanter and easier.

His own drinking cup, bib or napkin, high-sided plate, comb, toothbrush, towel, wash cloth, nail file, low towel rack, and all personal toilet articles.

Wide apron, covering from neck to knees.

Chair high enough for him to sit at the table comfortably, or small table and chair.

Foot rest.

Box or stool to stand on to reach wash bowl, mirror, cup, etc.

Simple clothes with easy fastenings.

Low drawers and hooks for clothes.

Shoe laces with stiff ends.

Box for toys.

What to teach him:

Eating

1. Drinking from cup with your help.
2. Chewing food.
3. Drinking from cup without your help.
4. Holding spoon without spilling much.
5. Learning what is to be eaten, what is not.
6. Using fork
7. Getting a drink without help.
8. Asking for certain food instead of pointing or crying.
9. Wiping mouth.
10. Closing mouth while chewing.
11. Using knife for spreading but probably not for cutting.

Dressing

1. Pulling off socks and shoes.
2. Holding foot up for sock and shoe to be put on.
3. Putting on hat and shoes.
4. Taking off coat and dress.
5. Holding arms in positions for sleeves.
6. Unbuttoning.
7. Putting on coat and dress or blouse.
8. Undressing entirely.
9. Buttoning coat or dress (buttoning taught at "Lessons" earlier).
10. Lacing shoes—tying bows usually takes long training.
11. Dressing entirely except for tying shoes.

Going to the toilet

1. Taking him at regular two-hour intervals or less, and expect accidents—show him you like it when he keeps dry.
2. Wetting and then telling you.
3. Having simple way of showing need in time to reach toilet.

4. Asking to go but needing some help.
5. Keeping dry in daytime.
6. Keeping dry at night.
7. Caring for himself alone—do not punish him for occasional accidents (For bed wetting, see section VI Irregular Behavior).

Keeping tidy

1. Drying his own hands.
2. Keeping shoes together in pairs and straight.
3. Putting away toys and work material.
4. Hanging up clothes.
5. Washing hands without help.
6. Washing face without help.
7. Straightening his own shelves and drawers—putting all things of one kind together.
8. Brushing teeth.
9. Using handkerchief.
10. Bathing with some help.
11. Remembering to wash hands before meals and after toilet.



II. DISCIPLINE

It is fun to be good

Just as your child can be taught good habits of eating and dressing, so, too, he can learn that some things are right to do and others are wrong. This is for his own safety when young, and for his self-control when older. It is especially important for the very slow child to be taught to obey. He may never be able to learn why he should not put things in his mouth but he can learn, "I mustn't because mother says so, and mother knows."

If we see that the child has things to do that we approve of, he will be less likely to do other things we do not want him to, like spoiling his toys or running around "like a wild man".

Be consistent. We have said before that a child must repeat a thing many times in order to learn it. If you want him to learn not to slap his sister you cannot punish him for it today and tomorrow let him do it as much as he likes. He will never know what to expect from you, and will not learn.

Teach him each thing separately. If you teach him not to touch knives because they are sharp and will hurt him, he still may not figure out that he must not touch a farm machine because it is sharp. He will have to be taught this, too.

There are two main ways we teach a child what we want, or do not want, him to do. We teach him, "No," about some kinds of behavior by putting together with it something he does not like, such as a spanking. These are punishments. We teach him, "Yes," about other kinds of behavior by putting together with them something he likes very much, such as a smile or maybe a piece of candy. These are rewards.

Punishments

The child does some bad acts by mistake, or because he is clumsy, as when he spills food because he cannot handle his fork well. Do not give punishment for these acts. Do give

punishment if you need to when he does a thing on purpose and needs to find out that he cannot go on doing it. Do not punish older children in front of others, especially in front of other children. Mild punishment is usually best. Have it come right after he is naughty or not at all. He cannot remember very long, and if you wait he will only think that you are punishing him when he hasn't done anything wrong. Try not to be excited when you punish the child. You do not want him to feel angry at you, but just to understand that he must not do that thing. Once the punishment is over do not talk about it.

Some kinds of punishment are more helpful than others. This is especially true when you are training a very slow child. The following three kinds are good because you can use them right away, and he will connect the punishment with what he has done wrong.

1. Slapping the hands and spanking are very helpful with the slow child because he does not understand words very well. It should not be too hard or too often, because he might connect it in his mind with the person and be afraid of him, instead of learning what not to do.

2. Keeping him from something he is very fond of. If he hits his brother with the toy he loves most, put it away for a little while. If he does not eat a fair amount of his dinner, do not give him dessert, and give him no food until the next meal.

3. Separating the child from other people. Do not put him in a closet, or he may become afraid of the dark. And probably he should not be put to bed, as it will make him hate to go to bed at night. But have him sit on a chair, or stay in a room where he is safe and can do no harm. Then pay no attention to him for a short while, even if he cries.

The following kinds of punishment do not work well with the slow child and must not be used.

1. Scolding and nagging especially in a loud voice, will not help much. He will just get used to it and pay no attention.

2. Threats and warnings will usually not bring results because he won't understand or remember them.

3. Reasoning or explaining we use often with a normal child, but the very slow child cannot understand, and only gets confused and worried. Very simple explanations may be tried with older children. You will soon know whether it helps or not. Sometimes what a child does, punishes him. We cannot always depend, though, on this method of teaching him to do better, because the results might be harmful to him. For instance, you cannot let him get run over in order to learn not to run out into the streets! But you can use daily happenings to teach him. If he runs away, tie his feet to-

gether for a short time. If he has trouble with children who are on their way from school, keep him in until they are home. He will then be more likely to connect the punishment with his wrongdoing.

Rewards

The slow child is likely to do so many things poorly that you should be sure to encourage him when he does something well, or tries.

1. One way of praising him is to name the thing he did well. Don't say that he "is a good boy", but that he "did a good job of shovelling snow."

2. Sometimes just a smile of approval is enough to make him burst with pride, especially if others are in the room.

3. Give him a piece of candy, or a cookie, or a special treat.

4. Use a chart where the child can paste bright colored stars when he has done right things the right way. The chart might include eating, being polite, being on time for meals, etc., depending on what you are trying to teach him at the time. If you promise anything be sure to "come through" with it, but promises are usually no better than threats because the child may not remember.



III. EMOTIONS

It is fun to be happy

When Jimmy runs to the front door calling out, "Daddy's home! Come see what Daddy has!" we know that he is feeling excited and happy; when he catches a wheel of his cart in a crack and starts crying and kicking, we know that he is feeling angry. These ways of behaving and the strong feelings that go with them are what we mean by **emotions**. Some ways of behaving are useless; others are useful. A more useful way for Jimmy to have behaved in the second example would be to push and lift and twist until the wheel came out of the crack. But at first a child does not know which are the best ways of behaving, and so we must expect that he will do some useless things like crying, kicking, and screaming. The slow child has to learn good emotional behavior just as he has to learn the others things that we talk about in this booklet. You will be better able to help him if you know a little about three kinds of feelings: feeling afraid, feeling love and affection, and feeling angry.

Feeling afraid

We do not want the slow child to be afraid of many things or worry for no use. The only things we might want him to be afraid of, or rather cautious about, are dangerous situations. But we cannot teach his caution because he cannot understand things well enough. We must therefore watch him carefully so no serious accidents will happen. You will find some hints about safety in the chapter on "Lessons."

We must also try to protect the slow child from things that might frighten him. We know that he does not inherit from his parents fear of particular things, like snakes. He becomes afraid of things.

Why is a child afraid?

1. While growing up, he sees and hears new and unusual things about him that he doesn't understand, and these strange things may frighten him.

2. Some things he is afraid of because something unpleasant was connected with them. If he teases a dog and the dog bites him, he may become afraid of that dog and other dogs too. Try to avoid unpleasant experiences like this, and help him to have happy experiences with the dark, with animals, with strangers, etc.

3. Other fears the child gets from grownups, like fear of lightning, or mice. It is hard for a grownup to hide his fear from a child, so the fewer fears you have the fewer your child will have. And when it is something really dangerous, like fire, keeping calm may help him not to get excited.

4. The child also becomes afraid if he has been warned too often of being punished. We know one child who was afraid to leave the house because his mother had threatened to give him away if he were naughty.

How can we get over being afraid?

People try many ways, some of which are more helpful than others. The following three are good:

1. Put something nice with the thing or the person that frightened him. If he is frightened of a family friend, have that person give the child a bit of candy or some little surprise each time he comes to the house.

2. Let him see other children who are not afraid. We have said before that he copies things he sees others doing. He may get over being afraid of his bath if he watches another child in the family having fun in his bath.

3. Let him get used to the thing if it frightened him because it was new or strange. If he sees a man with a moustache he may be afraid the first time, but if the man keeps a little distance away from him, he will probably get over it. Don't just tell him not to be afraid. It will not help. Neither will scolding, punishing, or making fun of him.

Worries

The slow child may come to have fearful ways of feeling about many things. This we call worrying. It is really almost constant fear. He may be afraid of people because they are strange to him or because he has been frequently teased, laughed at, hurt or had his friendliness repulsed. To get him over this, you may:

1. Praise him for trying to do something if it is the best he can do. Do not make fun of his mistakes.

2. Give him things to do that he can do well, no matter how simple they may seem to you. If he says "I can't" or refuses to try, perhaps you are expecting too much of him.

3. Plan something for him to do that will make him happy when he cannot join with the family or neighbors in what they are doing.

Feeling affection

The slow child feels affection for others just as all children do. He comes to love those who care for him in his own home, or in some other person's home. He feels happy when he can show you that he loves you. Teach him little ways he can help you about the house, or let him give you a little present. Discourage the child from showing his affection by fondling and kissing because it may become a bad habit when he is older. He needs, however, to feel loved and wanted as much as other children. He will know it if you are ashamed of him. If you make progress teaching him how to behave, as this booklet suggests, it will be easier to feel real pride in him. Brother and sisters can learn to be helpful in caring for him.

Jealousy

This means that the child does not like to have someone he loves pay attention to someone else (usually a child). It comes from his wanting love and not receiving as much of it as others do. It is hard in any family not to have the prettier, brighter child shown more attention by the family or by visitors in the home even when they don't mean to show this. When he feels left out of things he may lose his temper, or destroy things, or try to get your attention by showing off. It will help the slow child to feel loved if you do these things:

1. Give him things of his own. Fix him a little "school corner" so he can feel important.

This does not mean coddling him. You do not want him to be too dependent on affection, but if he feels secure and needed there will be no reason for him to feel jealous.

2. Show him as much love as you do the other children.

3. Don't let anyone tease him, either adult or children.

4. See that the other children, include him in their play some of the time. They will be willing if you plan other times when he is not allowed to play with them.

Feeling angry

The slow child needs your help when he feels angry. He feels angry when he is kept from doing or having something he wants. Perhaps he cannot do it because he doesn't know how, or perhaps someone will not let him. As he grows up there will be many such times, and we must expect some outbursts of temper.

What makes a child angry and how can we prevent it?

We will name some of the most important things.

1. Always the child feels helpless. Perhaps he cannot talk well enough to tell you what he wants, or maybe he can't open

a door because he doesn't know how to turn the handle. Show him how to do things and if it is too hard, do it for him; in case he cannot speak clearly, try to understand him.

2. He may object to routine physical habits, like going to bed or going to the toilet. Have his routine regular, and do not change the schedule any oftener than you have to. Also, make the tasks as easy as you can for him in ways we suggested under Habit Training.

3. He may get upset when he is interfered with or hurried when he is trying to do something for himself. It is difficult to avoid this with a slow child because he takes so long at things. Remember that you want him to learn to be independent, and give him time to do it when you can. Then he will be likely to accept your help at other times.

4. He may become upset if he is refused permission to do something, such as play with other children, or cross the street. Try not to refuse things too often. When you have to, use firm even discipline; do not argue with him, but make him happy by giving him something else to do that is fun.

5. The slow child is particularly upset by sudden change or new ways of doing things, even such simple things as changing his place at the table. This is because he depends upon habits, and it is slow to change them. Try to avoid these changes if they are not necessary.

The child's physical condition affects him a great deal. He is quicker to get upset if he is tired, hungry, or not feeling well. Be patient at these times, and be sure that he has good physical care.

Sometimes the child may be stubborn rather than angry when he refuses to do something you ask him to do. Most small children show this behavior sometimes, and it is well to ignore it when you can, and not make too much of small matters. Watch, too, that you are not expecting too much of him.

As a child gets older he should have learned control and thus have fewer outbursts of temper. If he has many of them, ask yourself which of the above things may explain it, and whether he has learned to scream and "carry on" because he gets his way when he does.

What to do

1. Be calm and unexcited yourself.
2. Ignore him, or punish mildly. Do not try to hold him still because it will only make him more excited.
3. Do not let him have his own way when he acts like this. That is what makes him do it again the next time he wants something.



IV. LESSONS

It is fun to be busy

This section includes things which will keep the child's mind and hands busy in useful ways. This is his "school". It will make him feel important because he's doing what other children are doing. Not only this, but he will learn to pay attention better, be quieter, and be more interested in what is going on around him. Also, he will be learning useful skills. Sometimes we are surprised to see a slow child who is always "on the go" become able to sit still for short periods when given activities like these.

Set aside about a half-hour at the same time each day and spend it with him. Start with the simplest things at the beginning of each list. He may be allowed to work on two or three things at each lesson. One might be a thing he can do pretty well, and one might be something new. He should practice on the same things each day until he can do them well. When each day's lesson is finished, all material should be put away and kept only for his "school" time.

I

You will want to teach the slow child muscle skills—that is, to do things without being clumsy, and also to know the size, shape, color and texture of objects.

Here are some suggestions for materials you will need as the child learns to do more and more difficult tasks:

- Comfortable-sized table and chair
- Different sized wooden blocks
- Small pail or box
- Old spools painted
- Cord or heavy string
- Soft ball or bean bags
- Plain and colored sheets of paper
- Old book of wall-paper samples
- Scraps of yarn and cloth
- Large wooden beads
- Crayons and pencil
- Blunt-end scissors

Soap bubble pipe
Drinking straws
Coloring and "cut-out" books
Paste
Sweater with buttons
Shoes and laces
Clay, wallpaper cleaner or bread dough
Tracing paper
Jig-saw animal puzzles

Things for him to learn:

1. Putting blocks in box or pail.
2. Throwing bean bag or ball to person and into box.
3. Stringing large spools.
4. Building with blocks: first piling, then sorting by size, then making train, chair, etc.
5. Rolling and pulling clay, bread dough or wallpaper cleaner.
6. Cutting strips of paper and cloth—with adult present.
7. Blowing Bubbles.
8. Putting hand into bag and naming whatever is touched before pulling it out (Fill the bag with small toys and other objects).
9. Stringing small beads.
10. Buttoning sweater which is pinned down.
11. Learning number names, 1, 2, 3, etc.
12. Drinking with straws.
13. Coloring paper and pictures with crayons.
14. Matching colored paper, blocks, spools, and yarn scraps.
15. Pasting paper chains.
16. Tracing lines.
17. Lacing a shoe.
18. Learning how to clap or march in time to music (Taught by showing him).
19. Cutting out pictures.
20. Learning the meaning of big, little, long, short, up, down, etc. (This would be taught by showing him).
21. Drawing lines, circles, squares, triangles.
22. Folding paper into basket, envelopes, hats, air-planes.
23. Putting very simple jig-saw puzzles together.
24. Modeling simple clay objects.
25. Drawing people, houses, etc.

II

You will also want to teach the slow child about **Words**, so that he will be able to understand, and use them. Remember that you must expect very slow progress in learning new words. You can teach words best in natural situations. Meal-time is a good time to teach the names of foods. For instance, say the word "bread" for him when he sees it and is eating the bread, so he will connect the word with the bread itself. If he will not talk when you want him to say something, it probably means that you are expecting too much of him. The best thing to do then is to stop urging entirely for a while. If speech is a serious problem you will need the help of a specialist in speech. We have room here for only a few suggestions for materials and activities.

Suggestions for materials:

Picture and story books
Pencil and paper or chalk and slate
Alphabet blocks
Number book
Cardboard clock dial
Jelly labels

What to do:

1. Imitating sounds.
2. Teaching him to say "mama", "bye-bye", "drink", and names of people and things he sees every day (Add a few words at a time.).
3. Encouraging speech when he wants something, instead of pointing or crying.
4. Having him combine words into short sentences.
5. Naming things in pictures from books, catalogues, magazines.
6. Asking him to tell about things he has done.
7. Giving him simple directions, one at a time and letting him try to do the thing without help.
8. Putting hand into bag and naming whatever is touched before pulling it out (Fill the bag with small toys and other objects).
9. Learning number names by rote counting—1, 2, etc.
10. Teaching him nursery rhymes and simple songs.
11. Reading him short stories and then letting him answer questions about them.
12. Showing him how to copy his first name when printed, later his last name.
13. Teaching him to copy numbers from 1 to 10 and printed letters of the alphabet.

14. Learning about quantity—bringing you 4 spoons, 3 pencils, 6 pennies, etc.
15. Reading the names of common objects—CAT, BOY, GIRL, DOG, CUP, SHOE, etc.
16. Printing simple words from memory.
17. Using a cardboard clock to tell the time—for older children only.
18. Writing own name.

In connection with his lessons, the child can learn certain things for safety's sake.

1. Sitting down while using any sharp or pointed thing.
2. Chewing gum without swallowing it.
3. Never going away with a stranger.
4. Looking for cars before crossing a street.
5. Learning the meaning of red and green lights at crossings.
6. Giving his name and address plainly.
7. Learning how to get home from places in the neighborhood.

The slow child can become a real help with housework instead of being in the way. To begin with it will take more time to show him how to do each task right than to do it yourself, but in the end it will save you time. Also he may learn to be useful and will not be as likely to break things. Most children enjoy little tasks that help mother and if housework is made into a kind of a game you will have a willing helper.

Things for him to learn:

1. Bring things to you.
2. Finding things for you.
3. Getting his own drink, hanging up his own clothes, etc.
4. Dusting.
5. Carrying wood and water.
6. Cleaning blunt-edged tools, such as a shovel or spade.
7. Pouring water.
8. Wiping dishes.
9. Setting the table.
10. Helping in the garden.
11. Caring for a pet animal.

Here are some suggestions for outdoor playthings:

Sand pile or box, old kitchen spoon and pans
Wagon

Swing

Lumber (2 x 4 inches) cut into different lengths and sanded

Shovel

Old blanket or rug

Sled

Tricycle

Rope



WHEN IS THE SLOW CHILD READY FOR SCHOOL?

To help you know whether your child is ready for school, a quote below some suggestions.* These specialists feel that the child cannot do most of the things listed he will fail in school. He will also be unhappy and will not get along with the other children in the class. These things are important:

1. **Putting on clothes**—able to put on coats, outer clothing, and overshoes. Can button, use zippers, or other fasteners. Uses handkerchief himself, and does not drool. Is able to wash face and hands. Knows his own clothing. Can get a drink on his own.

2. **Toilet habits**—cares for self in toilet. Is able to fasten and unfasten clothes. Does not wet or soil clothes—particularly day clothes.

3. **Habits about play**—is able to roll a ball in play on floor, back and forth to another person. Understands simple ideas about space and motion. Walks up and down stairs unassisted.

4. **Speech and talking**—is able to talk in short, easy sentences. Speech must be better than the baby talk that only parents understand. Puts three or more words together in a sentence.

5. **Paying attention**—is able to give fairly constant attention to a play project, to listen quietly to a short story, and to sit reasonably quiet for periods of ten minutes or longer. His mind should not wander quickly.

6. **Adjusting away from parents**—does not cry easily or quickly when parents are not present. After a little chance to become acquainted, can be left with a friend, with other children, or with a teacher for two or three hours without crying, and gets along happily with them. Goes about home, yard, and immediate neighborhood successfully alone.

7. **Playing with children**—plays reasonably well with other children of same age. Adjusts to new playmates, in addition to familiar ones and to his own brothers and sisters.

*Psychological Clinic of the Detroit Public Schools

Does not injure them. Is not afraid and other children do not constantly tease him.

8. **Using crayon or blackboard**—likes to draw and use crayon or chalk. Draws with some purpose for several minutes at a time. Fills in outline figures. Uses sheets of paper, slate, or small blackboard. Puts material away without constant urging.

9. **Coloring and cutting**—able to match simple colors quickly and name some correctly. Notices color of clothes and flowers. Can cut with blunt scissors, and use other simple tools successfully.

10. **Number and form**—knows the difference between big and little, and between one and two things. Is able to bring 2 spoons, 3 apples, etc. Is able to fit blocks and toys together. Learns that a cup is round, a table has corners, a tree is tall, and similar ideas.

These specialists also stress, as we have done in this booklet, that children cannot be forced into these tasks before they are ready. When their minds have developed enough, they will begin learning them. Only then are they ready for school. Of course, if they are much larger than the children in the kindergarten or first grade by the time they have learned these things, they should probably not go to school.



V. LOOKS AND MANNERS

It's fun to be liked

Many people think you can tell by the look in a child's face or by his eyes that he isn't "quite right." Sometimes this is true, but most of the time it is not. If this is one of the things you worry about, there is much you can do to help. In this chapter we will talk especially about good-looks and manners. These two things can go a long way toward making the child seem like other children, and his slowness will not be nearly as noticeable to strangers.

No one likes to be near a dirty or messy child, and no one will enjoy him very long if he's noisy or rude or a show-off. Of course, this doesn't mean he has to be perfect all day long every day. That is impossible. But he can be clean and tidy and polite most of the time. In these matters you can train him best by doing things for him until he "catches on." For instance, you will have to say, "Thank you" or "Please" for him every time he forgets or be ready with a handkerchief when he needs it. This is the way to keep reminding him. Gradually he will start to do the right thing at the right time.

Since he is more likely to do what he sees others do, the rest of the family can help by setting an example. If they speak quietly rather than shout, he will be more likely to do so. If they wipe their mouths at the table, he will be more likely to wipe his. And remember, he will probably do the same things when he is away from home.

First of all, let's see what we can do to improve his appearance.

The Body

1. Bathing in a tub at least twice a week, more often if it can be done. It is just as important for him to be clean as for any other child. Every night before he goes to bed parts of his body should be bathed with a cloth.
2. Washing his hands before and after meals and after toilet. Washing food from his face.
3. Scrubbing his finger nails with a brush, keeping nails cut and cleaned.
4. Brushing his teeth morning and night.
5. Keeping his skin dry and clean to prevent it from getting chapped.
6. Wiping his nose every time it is necessary.
7. Helping him learn to keep his mouth closed and to swallow. Show him what you mean.
8. Keeping his hair looking well. You can do this in the following ways:

Comb and part his hair when he is going to a meal, getting up from bed, and going away from home. Carry a small comb when you take him visiting. Brush his hair often to give it a healthy look. Wash his hair at least every two weeks. Study the best way to cut and part the child's hair. The boy should have a slick boy's haircut. The girl will look much better if her hair is at least as long as the lower edge of her ears and curled a little at the ends. Braiding the hair is also good because it stays neat longer. The hair should always be kept out of the child's eyes. Sometimes the hair should be fixed according to the shape of the head:

If the head is very small, or comes to a point at the top, part the hair on the side. A girl can wear a ribbon on the other side. If the head is very large and the hair is thin, it should be brushed with a soft brush so that it lies flat.

If a girl's head is very round and the forehead high, she can wear bangs, but above all, the hair should not be trimmed above the ears.

9. Keeping his fingers away from his nose and ears. When he is clean he will not be likely to scratch.

10. Helping him learn to sit up straight and to stand with his head up. This is very important to the way he looks.

The Clothes

1. Keeping his clothes clean. There should be enough changes of underwear and socks so that clean ones will be ready when needed. Play clothes should be clean even if mused. "Dress-up" clothes should be ironed before being

worn. Light colored shoes should be cleaned often and dark shoes polished.

2. Having a pile of clean handkerchiefs of cloth or a box of Kleenex handy. It should be kept where it can easily be seen and reached by the child.

3. Putting a pocket in each suit or dress.

4. Repairing clothes as soon as they need it. Buttons and hooks should be sewed on tightly; socks should be darned; shoes should be mended (loose soles are dangerous as well as ugly); and holes should be patched.

5. Having the child wear his clothes right. Shoe laces should be tied with a bow-knot, and the bow ends knotted again. If a belt goes with the suit, it should always be worn. Buttons should be buttoned. Underwear should not show. Dresses should not be too short. All clothes should fit well.

6. Dressing the child like other children of his age in the neighborhood. For play, a simple one piece garment is often best.

7. Keeping one suit or dress for "best". When the child goes away from home for a visit he should look especially nice. For the girl, some extra trimming would be pretty, such as a hair-ribbon to match her socks, embroidery on her dress, or a bracelet or locket. For the boy, cap and coat might match.

Now let's see what we can do to improve his manners.

1. Teaching him to say polite words such as PLEASE, THANK YOU, YOU'RE WELCOME, EXCUSE ME, HOW DO YOU DO, COME IN. Say the words for the child, clearly, but not too loud, and at the proper time, so that he will come to connect the words with the time when you want him to use them.

2. Teaching him to be polite at the table. This means asking for what he wants, taking small bites, keeping his lips closed when chewing, wiping his mouth, and sitting in his chair until excused from the table. It need not matter if he spills food, if you put a tray or extra mat under his dishes and see that his clothes are well covered. Make it easier for him by cutting his food into pieces just the right size for one mouthful. It may be easier to give the child his meal before the family eats. If he eats with the family, have him sit next to the same person at each meal. This person should be the only one who helps him or corrects him during the meal.

3. Teaching him to play nicely with other children. See that the other children include him in their play some of the time. You want him to learn to share his toys or candy and to "take turns". Watch for teasing or bullying either by him or his playmates and if this happens give him something else to do, apart from the others. Don't let him tattle on other children, or expect to play with them all of the time.

4. Teaching him to ask permission to take something which is not his. He needs to be taught the difference between what is his and what belongs to someone else. He should be taught to use things which he borrows as carefully as he would his own things.

5. Teaching the older slow child to answer the door-bell or telephone. Give him certain words to use. At the telephone he might say, "This is.. (his own name)" then "who do you want?" and "I will call her". At the door he might say "How do you do?", or if he knows the person, "Come in". Remember that you will need to say the words for him many times before he remembers.



VI. IRREGULAR BEHAVIOR

The slow child, like all children, may show undesirable behavior of various kinds. There are many different causes for the way he acts, and you may need the help of an expert in understanding and handling your child's behavior. Some of these causes are physical, and you should always talk to the doctor or nurse to find out about these. In this chapter we will mention of only three kinds of behavior briefly, and give you a few suggestions.

The slow child may be "hyperactive." This is what we mean when we say, "He doesn't stay still a minute," or "He's always into something." Often, we really mean both that he is unusually active, and that he plays with a toy just a few minutes and becomes tired of it. Then he jumps up to get something else, and so is constantly "on the go." He does this partly because he is not able to think of much to do with a toy. When another child playing with blocks would perhaps make a train and then a garage, the slow child might just pile the blocks up or lay them end to end. If we try to force him to keep at his play longer, he may become tired of it, and show it by being over-active. Also, he may not have enough exercise.

Try these things:

1. See that he has plenty of chance to be active. Outdoor play is best because here he can run and move freely.
2. Plan some table play, such as we have described under "Lessons." At first give him several things in succession. Make them simple and short things that interest him and that he can do without trying too hard. After a few days, as he becomes able to remain still a few minutes, you can try it for a slightly longer period.

Bedwetting

With the slow child it is very important to know whether or not toilet accidents, especially bedwetting, are because the child has not yet learned to stay dry. A child learns to stay dry during the day long before he can do this at night, and a slow child of 5 or 6 years may still not be fully trained.

If he has been fully trained, and then begins again to wet the bed, ask the doctor to examine him.

There are other reasons, also, for the child's difficulty. Fear and worry are sometimes causes. He may be under strain because too much is expected of him. He may be trying of his own accord, to keep up with brighter children at home or at school. Punishment for toilet accidents or the mother's worry over them may make the behavior worse. Sometimes, too, if he is ignored by the family because he is slow and unattractive, but gets attention when he wets the bed, he may continue to do so. Try these things:

1. Be cheerful and encouraging, helping the child feel he will be able to get over the habit. Do not punish or scold, but be matter-of-fact and calm.
2. Limit drinks and hard play late in the day, but do not cut down on them during the rest of the day, as he needs liquids and exercise.
3. Keep the child from trying to do things that are too hard for him.

Being over-demonstrative.

This means that a person shows his feelings too plainly. We let very small children climb on our laps, give us a big hug, or play with the buttons on our clothes. But such things become very annoying, especially to strangers, the older a child gets.

In most cases when the older very slow child does such things, he is just trying to be friendly and means no harm. He wants people to notice him. He may suddenly go up to a visitor and run his hand over her sleeve or lean against her, or put his face very close and smile. This makes most grown-ups a little uneasy. They don't know just what to do because they don't want to be impolite to you or unfriendly to the child.

The best way is to train the child from the beginning to keep his hands away from people. As he gets older, he can be taught to shake hands when he greets friends.



HEALTH

The main subject of this booklet is the training of the very slow child. Since this training will be more successful if the child is in good health, there are some things to remember in regard to this.

The very slow child should have as good physical care as others. This means that the family doctor should give him an examination at least once a year even though he is not ill. Special care should be taken to make certain whether there is some physical defect with the eyes or ears that would add to his slowness.

Everyone must have enough food and of the right kinds in order to keep healthy. The needs of the very slow child are like those of any other child of his age. There is no special diet for the very slow child unless he also has some physical ailment. See that there are enough liquid foods as well as those having bulk such as leafy vegetables as these will help make bladder and bowel movements regular. See that the child has a definite time for going to the toilet, so that it will become a habit. Right after breakfast is a good time to fix for a bowel movement. Dried fruits, graham crackers, molasses, or raw vegetables are helpful as part of a diet to keep a child from constipation. If he is constipated after eating these foods, ask the family doctor what to do for him. Also ask him to tell you what to feed the child if he has some physical ailment or is unable to get exercise.

All children must have plenty of sleep. Sometimes this means naps in the day time. The very slow child should have the same amount of sleep as the normal child of the same age.

A Final Word

All through this booklet we have been talking about what the slow child can learn and how to teach him. We realize that this teaching is going to take time and practice on someone's part. Most of it will have to be the parent's efforts, especially mother's, because she is the one who is at home, and sometimes this can be quite a burden. It is easier in the country where there is space outside for the child to play and farm tasks for him to do. In the city he usually has less chance to use his physical energy. Apartments and play space are small, and perhaps it is not safe for him to go away from the house. Whoever is responsible for the child will need "time off" occasionally to relax and do other things. This will take planning but is usually possible. Have others in the family take a turn, or find some trusted relative or person outside of the home who can be responsible for the child for at least some time during each week. It is very important to do this if the home is to be a happy one.