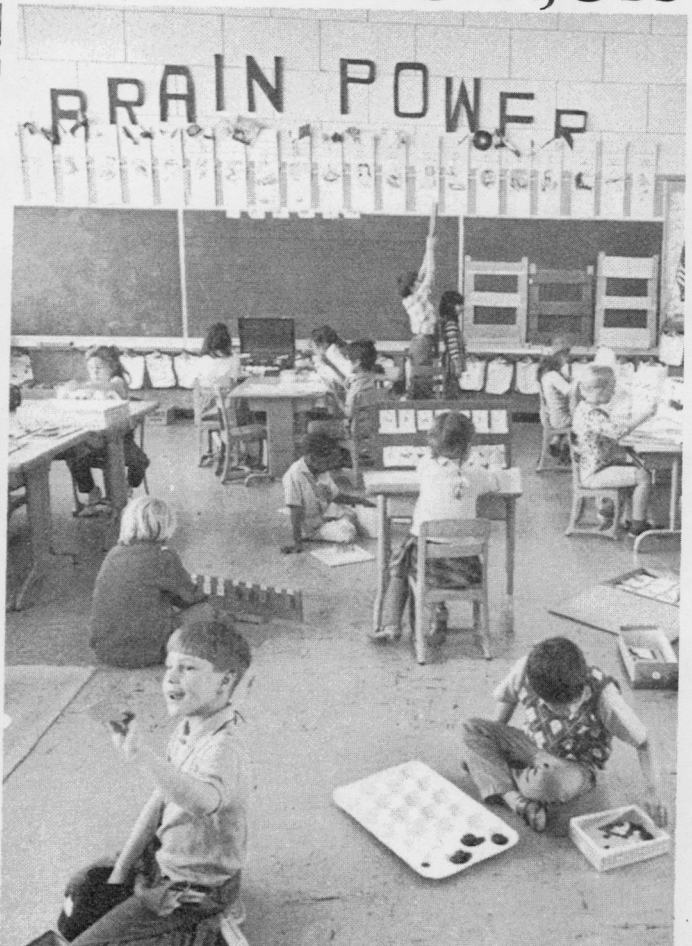
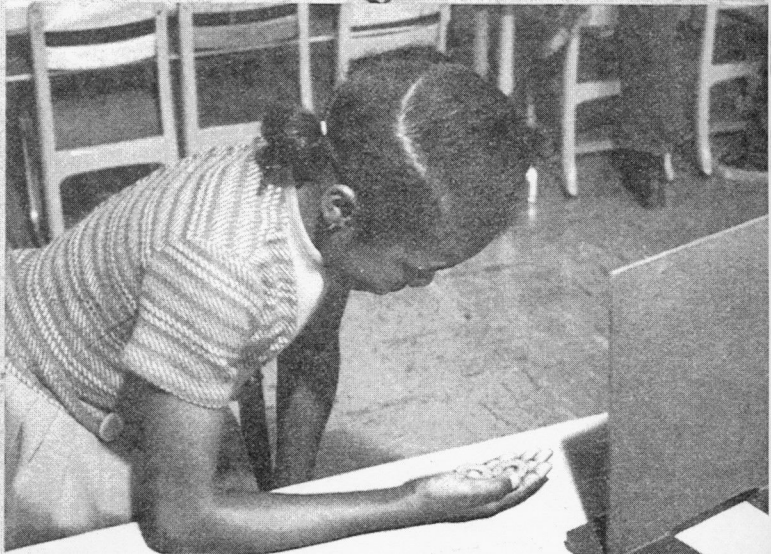
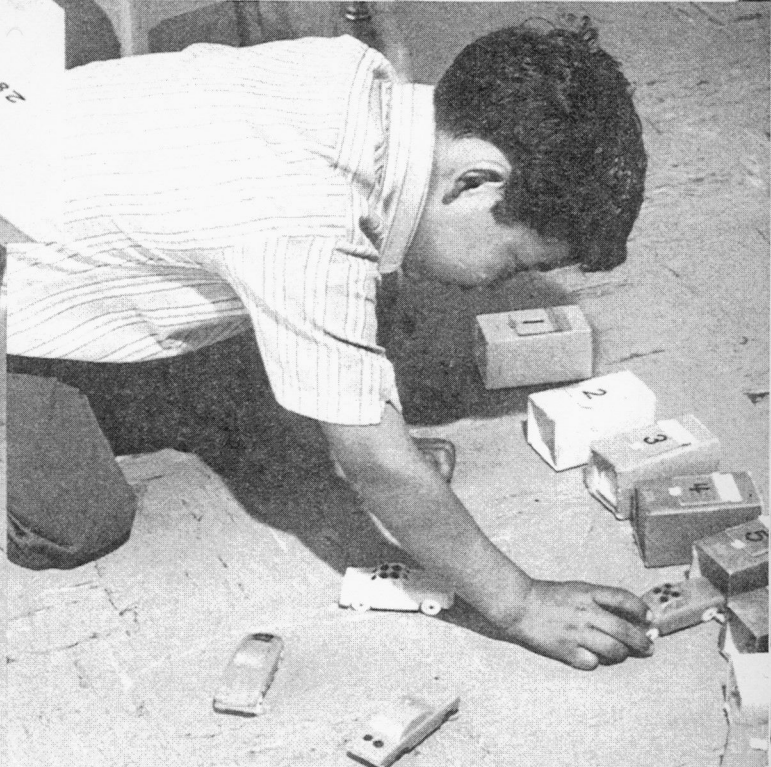
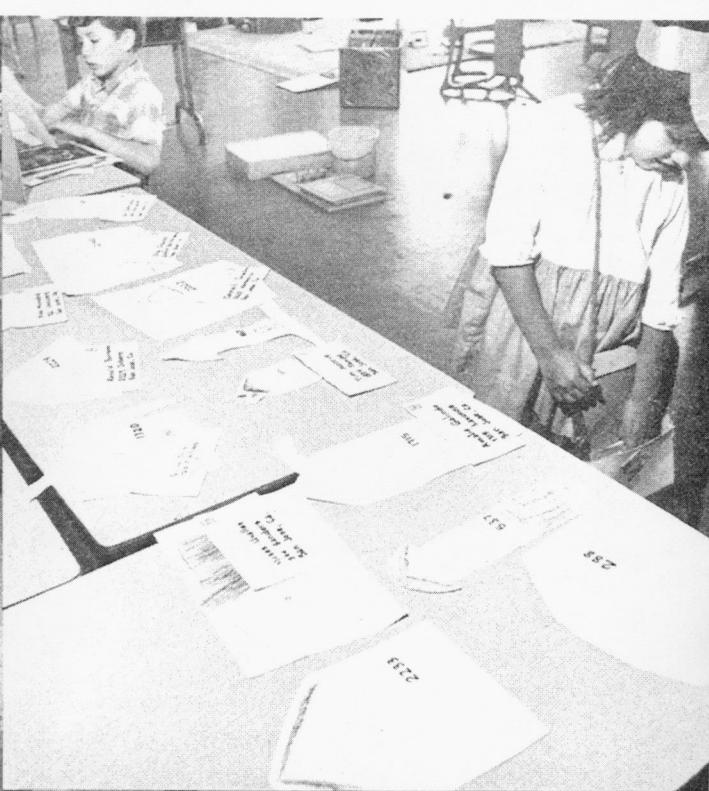




## WORKJOBS





During my years of teaching I have made learning tasks for the children in my classes in the form of manipulative activities built around a single concept. My idea was that through active involvement with the materials the child would draw out the generalizations within the material. Through conversation with me, the teacher, the child would have the opportunity to express something about his experience and I would have the opportunity to ask him questions to help him become aware of patterns and relationships he intuitively observed but could not yet clearly define.

The children called the activities their "work" or their "jobs." One day a child put the words together as a joke—and it stuck.

*M.B.L.*

## WORKJOBS IN ACTION: A GLIMPSE

Patricia has on a paper mailman's hat and is taking a letter from the mail pouch around her shoulder. She carefully scans the 14 paper houses placed on the table in front of her for the house number that matches the address on the letter. The fifth house number is a match—Patricia smiles and places the letter on top of the house. In a very businesslike way, she takes the next letter from the mail pouch and begins scanning the 14 paper houses for their numbers so she may "deliver" the letter.

David is working on the floor with the cars and garages. He is counting the number of dots on a small toy car. "One, two, three, four, five." David looks among the garages for the one with the number 5. "Ruhnnn!" Into the garage with the number 5 on top goes the car. David takes the next car and begins to count its dots. "One, two, three . . ."

Lisa is working nearby with the hook board. She is sorting the small, medium, and large metal washers onto the small, medium, and large hooks. She has nearly finished but is having trouble. There are two large washers left in her hand but there is one large and one medium hook left on the board. Lisa seems very perplexed. She looks back at the hook board, fingers the medium hook, and looks down at the large washer. Then she begins systematically checking the other washers on the board. After several minutes Lisa laughs and removes a medium washer from a large hook where she had placed it earlier, and puts the

medium washer there and the two large washers on the two remaining large hooks. With a squeal of delight Lisa jumps up and goes to the teacher saying, "I did it! Come and see." The teacher is working with John at the pocket chart but says she will be right there.

John has the color cards at the top of the pocket chart (red, black, yellow, blue, green, white, brown, gray, and orange) and is sorting black and white pictures of various objects under their appropriate color. The teacher is asking John, "What is this a picture of?" John answers confidently, "A snowman." The teacher asks, "If you were playing in the snow and made a snowman, what color would he be?" John points to the white color card at the top of the pocket chart and answers, "White." "Very good, John. Where will you put this picture, then?" He places it under the white color card. John takes the next picture, a fire engine, and indicates that it would be placed under the red color card; he then places it there. The teacher compliments John on his work and reminds him to let her know when he finishes. Now the teacher goes to see Lisa's work at the hook board.

"What a fine job you've done. Tell me about it."

Lisa explains: "I put the little rings on the little hooks, the big ones on the big hooks, and this kind-a-ones, here."

Indicating the size Lisa just described, the teacher asks her, "And what size could you call this one?"

Lisa thinks a moment and says, "I don't know, but it's like Mama bear in *The Three Bears* story!"

The teacher smiles and says, "Yes, it is, isn't it? Mama bear is not as big as Papa bear and not as small as Baby bear—she's in the middle. Now, what could you call this size ring if it's like Mama bear?"

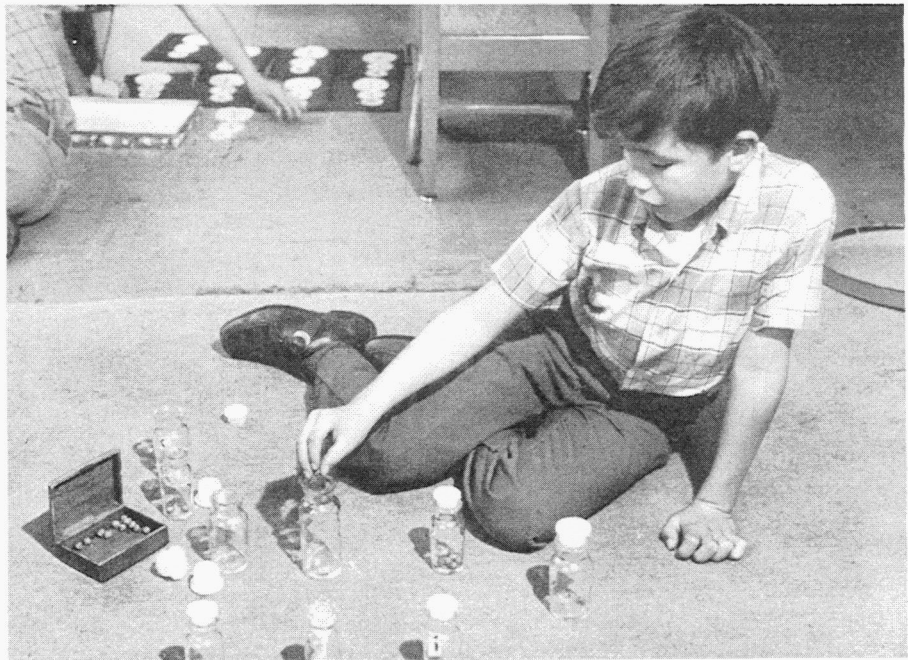
Lisa shrugs and says, "I guess we could say it's middle-sized too!"

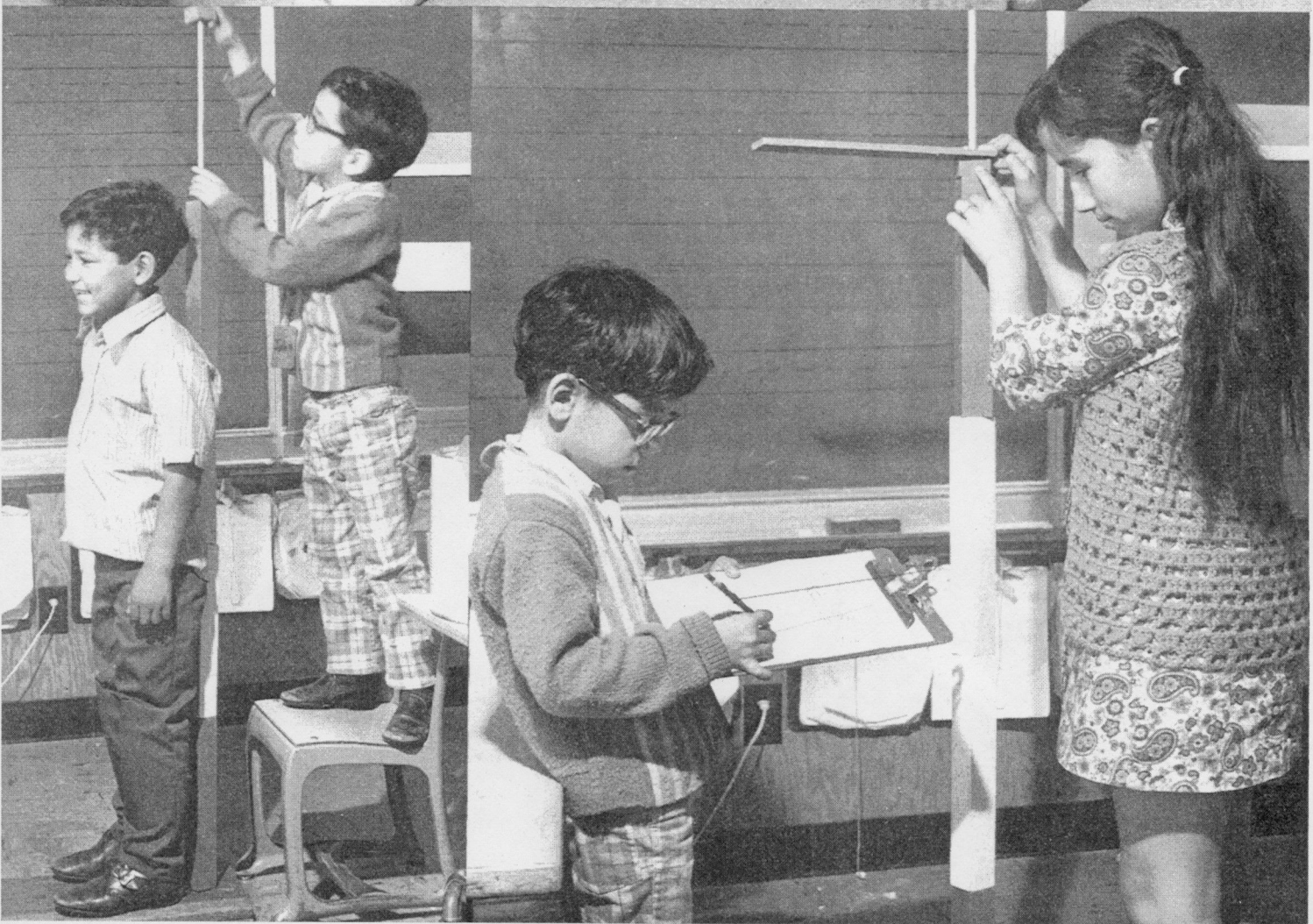
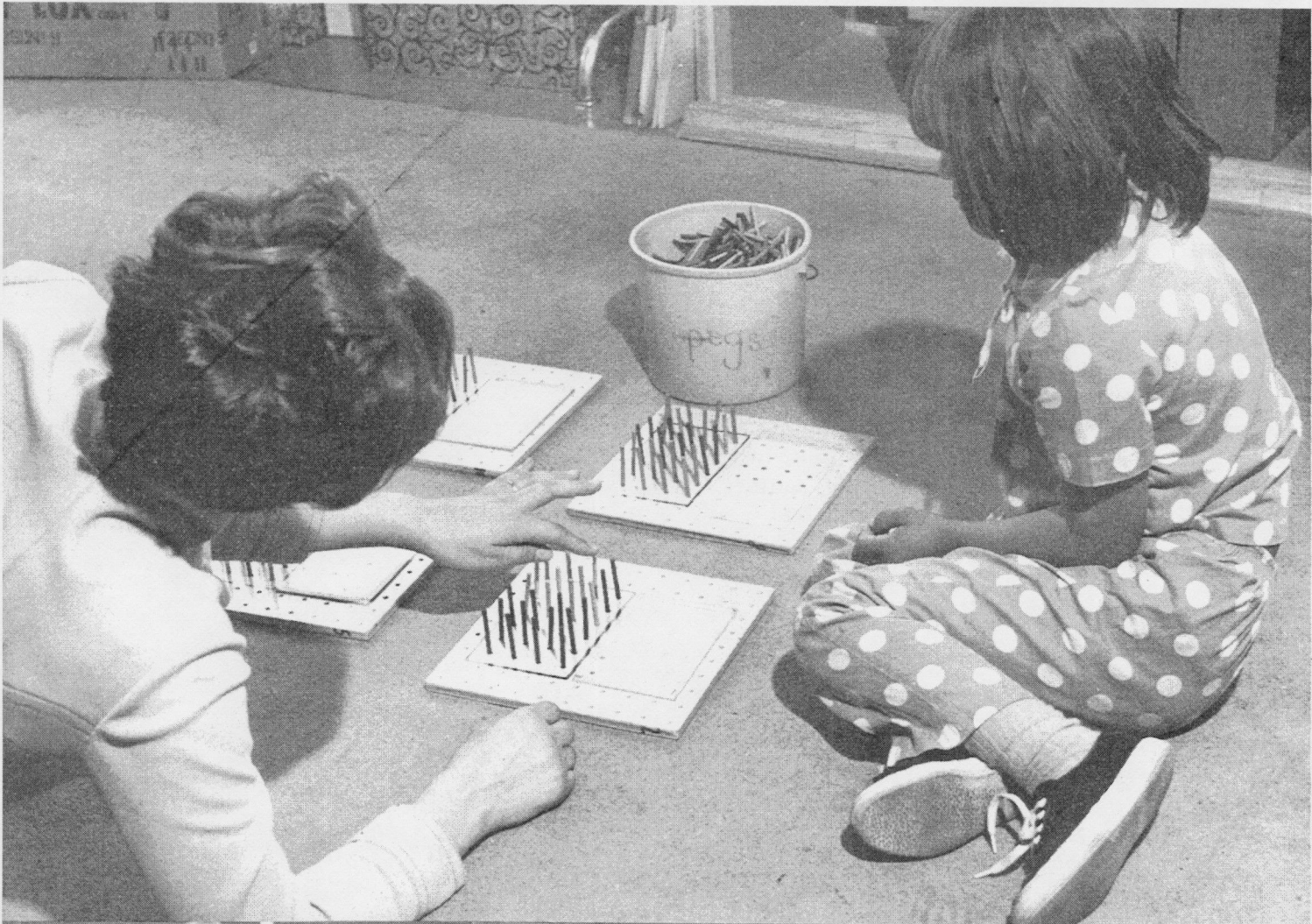
They laugh together and then the teacher asks, "How many middle-sized rings are there?" Lisa begins to count . . .



Patricia has finished the mailman game and now is working over by the sink with the rice game. She is measuring rice through a funnel into various sizes of glass jars. Some are short and squat, some are tall and thin. Some have curved sides, others have straight ones. Patricia is humming and occasionally she talks to herself saying, "Just a little bit more . . . okay . . . STOP!" She smiles when she reaches the rubber band that is glued at a particular level on each jar. Sometimes Patricia goes over the mark slightly and stops humming, frowns, and says, "Too much!" or "Goooooo back!" She then removes some of the rice and fills the jar more slowly than before, stopping exactly at the marker.

Robert is dropping beans into old vitamin bottles according to the number on each bottle. "One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine." He puts the top on the bottle and takes another.

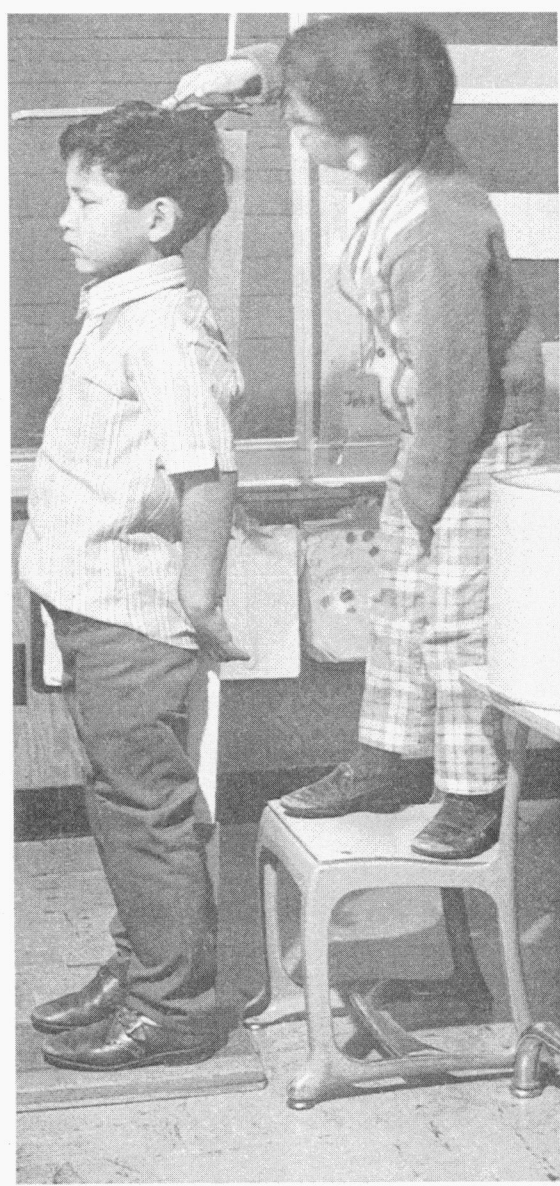




The teacher is checking Amalia's pegboards and is pointing to the model which has been reproduced. She asks Amalia if the pattern is the same as the model. Amalia quickly removes two purple pegs in the yellow area and replaces them with yellow pegs.

Near the front of the room John and David are working with the height-measuring game. John has measured David and says he is 3 feet and 13 inches tall. David says yes, but that he thinks John should trade 12 of the little blocks for one more long block. John agrees and makes the exchange. He puts on the fourth long block and then the one little block. John checks to be sure the measurement is correct then calls Valerie, a fifth-grade assistant, over to check his work. Valerie helps John record David's height on the clipboard and asks him who was taller: Mike, the first person he measured, or David, the second.

The teacher is working with Rudy at the other side of the room. He has been arranging several pictures to tell a story and is explaining to the teacher the rationale for his arrangement. "I put this picture first because first the telephone rings up. This one is next because the lady is talking on the phone. At the end she hangs up and goes away because she's done talking." The teacher selects a sequence that she finds questionably arranged and asks Rudy to tell her about it. He explains how the first picture shows the people leaving the house to go on a picnic. The second picture shows they forgot something and have to go back inside to get what was forgotten. Last of all, they arrive at the picnic spot and eat their lunch. The teacher is obviously surprised at Rudy's story for she had been looking at it another way. She smiles and explains that she thought his explanation and arrangement very interesting. She had thought the second picture would go at the end, showing the people when they returned home after the picnic was over. Certainly, though, she could see it Rudy's way too! They discuss another sequence together, and then the teacher goes to see John, who has been waiting to show her his activity.

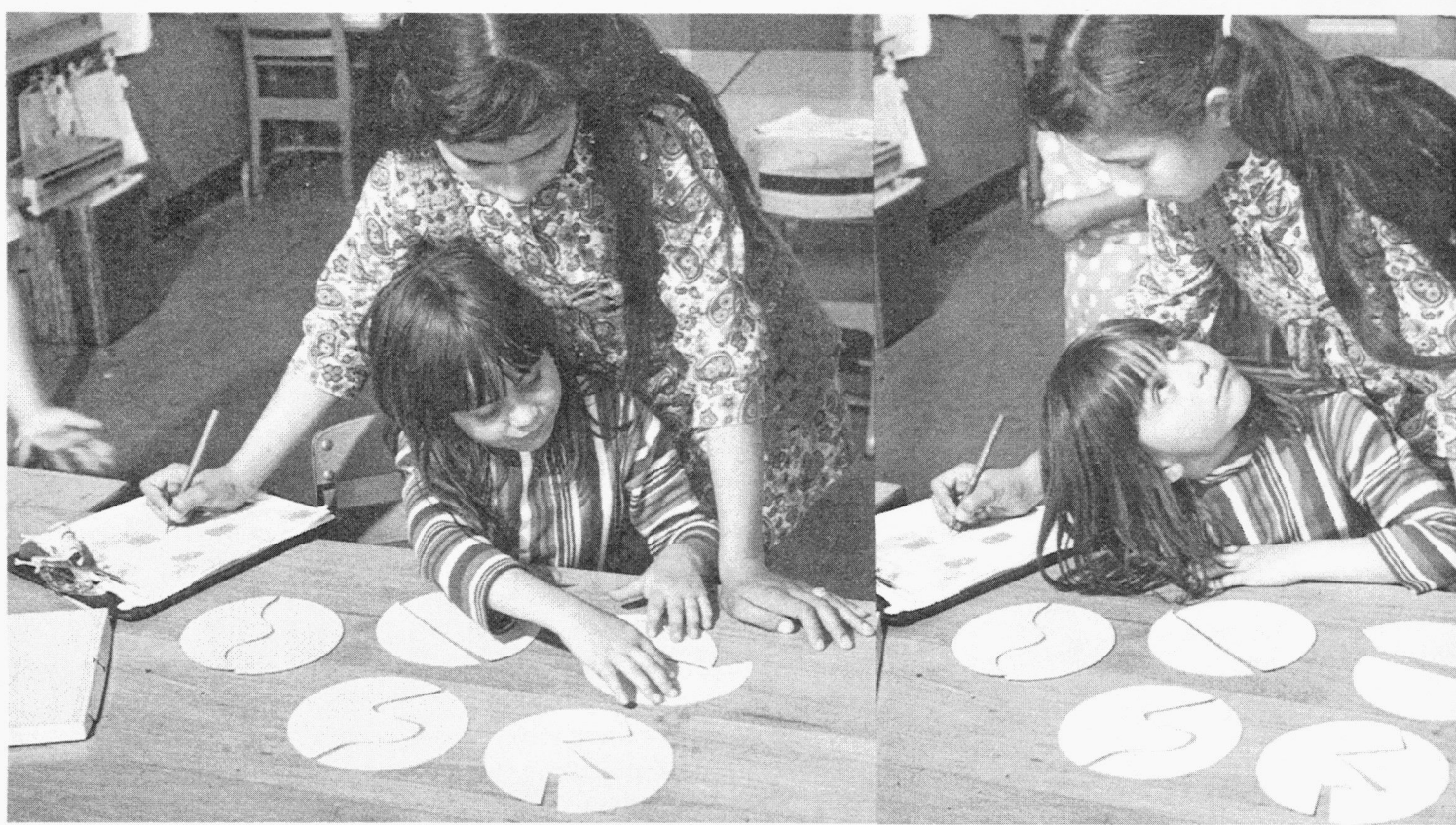


Antoinette has been working at the back of the room in a cubbyhole behind the teacher's desk. She has finished matching plastic letters from her name to an alphabet strip and tells the teacher with surprise, "Look! I have five *ts*." Together they go to Antoinette's desk and examine her name card to verify this. They find three *ts* in her first name and two in her last. The teacher asks her if she has a lot of any other letter in her name. "Yes," she responds, "four *es* and two *os* and three *ns*—see!" The teacher notices the letter *g* from her last name has not been placed on the alphabet strip and asks Antoinette about it. "I didn't know where to put it." The teacher places it under the letter *a* and asks, "Is this the same letter?" Then she places it under the letter *c* and asks again, "Is this the same letter?" She continues this questioning until Antoinette sees the *g* and takes the letter from her hand and places it over the letter *g* on the alphabet strip. Then she asks Antoinette to point to some of the letters as she names them: *y, m, c, j, . . .*

Noemi and Karla are at the workshelf selecting their next activity. Tommy is working with the flannelboard putting up body parts so they fit together to form a body. Elizabeth is working on the language board hanging up pictures of boys and girls and matching the words *boy* and *girl* to the pictures. Jimmy is finding the two cans that sound alike when he shakes them and is placing them in pairs on the answerboards. Eric is sitting at the side table trying to pair various squares of textured materials while blindfolded.





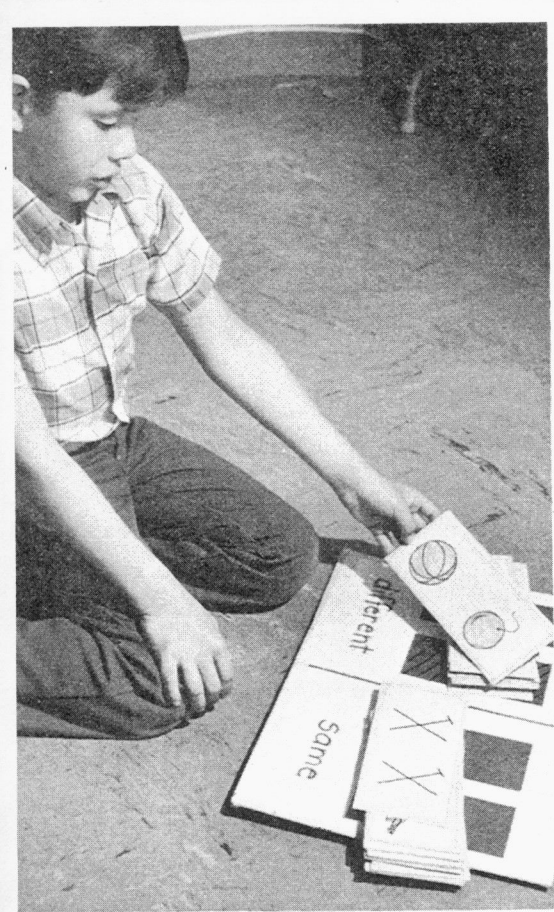


In the middle of the room, Anthony and Leticia are waiting for the teacher's assistant to see their work. Valerie, the assistant, tells Leticia, "Sit by your work until I talk with Anthony—then I'll come to see you." Anthony has been attempting to reproduce a series of pegboard patterns. Valerie, pointing to an incorrectly matched pattern, asks, "Anthony, is this pattern exactly the same as the model?" Anthony studies his pattern and the model. Noticing the error, he answers, "Nope," and immediately begins to remove the incorrectly matched pegs. Valerie leaves Anthony to finish this and goes to see Leticia's work.

Leticia has been working at the table with the puzzle pieces that form geometric shapes. Valerie checks Leticia off on her recording sheet and then talks with her about the circle not yet fit together. Leticia works turning the pieces around and over until she gets them to fit correctly.

Rhonda has been working on the floor near the window with the pincushion game. Walking by, the teacher notices immediately that it has been done perfectly. Five pins are in the pincushion with the number 5. Seven pins are in the one with the number 7. Ten pins are in the pincushion with the number 10, and so forth. She compliments Rhonda on what a good job she is doing and how carefully she is working. Two children working nearby show the teacher how they have lined their work up in numerical order—number 1 first, then number 2, then number 3, and so on. The teacher is obviously pleased and talks with them for a moment.

Valerie is complimenting Anthony's work with the pegboard patterns, which he has now corrected. Soon she goes to the far corner of the room to see another child who has just finished.

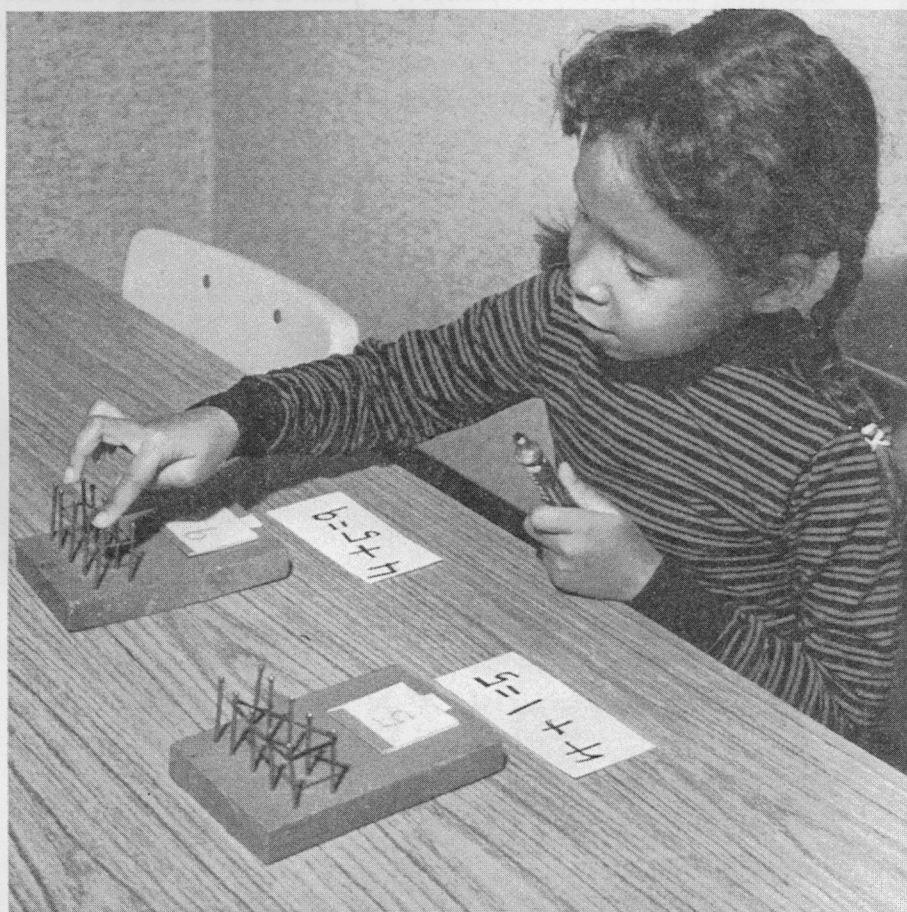


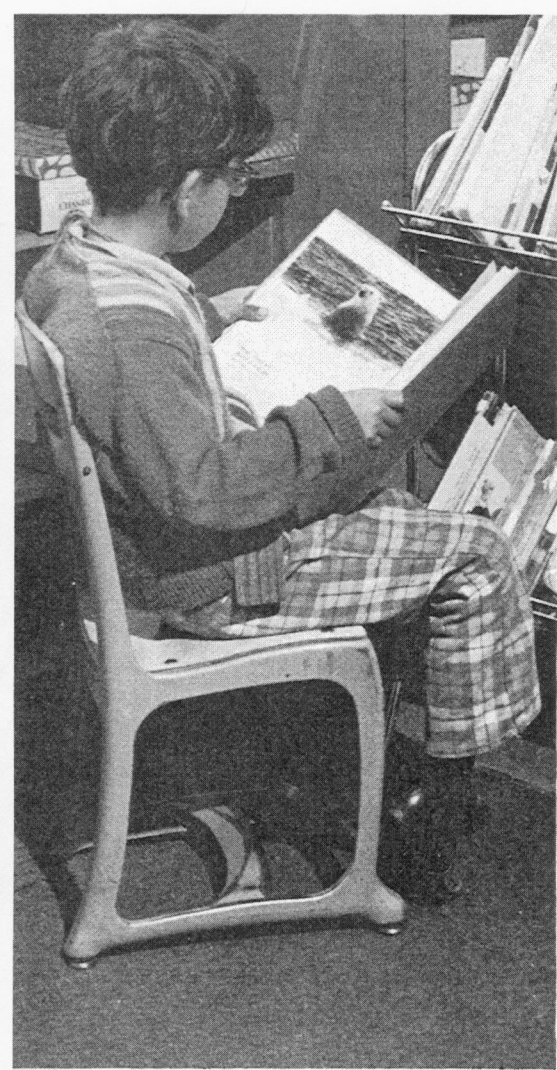
At the side table Lisa is working with the rice game, filling each jar to the rubber band mark. Moses is nearby “delivering the mail” to the paper houses. Olivia is on the rug shaking the sound cans and placing the pairs together. Nearby, Gina is hanging cherries on the plastic trees according to the number indicated on each tree. Pamela is recording the number of nails the rubber band is around in each row.

Patricia is sorting pictures of people of all ages according to whether they are working or playing. Robert is sorting cards on the floor into two piles. Each card has two pictures on it. If they are both the same, Robert puts the card on the answerboard that says “same.” If they are different, he puts the card on the answerboard that says “different.”

The teacher is talking with John very near where Robert is working. “And why did you put this picture (a black and white drawing of some bananas) under this color (green), John?” The child answers unhesitatingly, “Because Mama always buys them when they’re green so they last longer.” The teacher smiles and compliments John on his interesting way of looking at it. The teacher now indicates a picture of a polar bear, which is under the brown color card along with a nest, some wood, and a brown bear. She suggests to John that he go to the library shelf and look in a particular animal book (with which he is familiar) and find a picture of a polar bear. John goes to the shelf to do this and the teacher goes to help the next child who is ready.

On the way to see the next child’s work, the teacher notices that Garvin is not working. She goes up to him and asks what the matter is. Garvin says, “It’s too hard! I can’t do it.” The teacher, who knows Garvin is able to do this work, encourages him. He still insists he doesn’t want to do the work because it’s too hard, so the teacher kneels down beside him and asks him if he saw Gayle Sayers play football on the TV over the weekend. “Do you know how he got to be a football star—such a good one? Well, there were many times when the coach told him to run down to the end of the field when all he wanted to do was give up. What he really wanted to do was just sit down! ‘I’m too tired,’ he’d think. ‘It’s too hard!’ Then he’d think some more about it and realize, ‘Yeah, it’s hard, but I want to be good, and to be a good football player I know I have to do the hard stuff too.’” The teacher asks Garvin, “Do you want to learn and be good at your work—really good?” Garvin hesitatingly says, “Yes.” The teacher then tells him, “When you’re really learning, sometimes it’s going to be hard and you’ll want to quit. You can say ‘it’s hard’—that’s okay. We all understand when it’s hard, but there’s one thing you can’t say—you can’t say, ‘I can’t.’ If it’s tough, you have to keep on trying, a little at a time, and don’t give up. Remember Gayle Sayers doesn’t give up when it’s tough. He doesn’t do only the easy stuff. He keeps at the hard work because he knows it will help him make touchdowns. If you keep at the hard work, you’ll soon be able to do the work and when you’re finished, do you know what? Then you’ll think it’s easy.” Pointing to his work, the teacher asks if he is willing to try again. Looking much encouraged, Garvin says “Yes.” He takes the five pictures that the teacher holds out to him and begins to work. The teacher tells him she will go to see some of the children’s work and then will stop back to see how he’s doing.





John has now found the picture of the polar bear in a book at the bookshelf. He studies the picture intently. After awhile he goes back to his work and moves the polar bear's picture from under the brown color card to under the white. On the way to check Patricia, the teacher notices Garvin has the five cards sorted that she had given to him. "Wow!" she says, "You didn't give up, Garvin! Good for you. You finished your work just like Gayle Sayers would have." Garvin smiles and the teacher gives him five more cards to sort and says, "Try this new pile of cards and I'll stop back again in a few minutes." Valerie is working at the table at the far side of the room with Carl, a boy who has just entered the class that day. She realizes immediately that Carl has chosen a workjob that is far too difficult for him. He has used no logic with this task and she does not have the time now to stay with him and explain every step. Valerie says to the child, "That's fine, Carl. Let me help you put this workjob away and then we'll find something for you to try next." They go together to the workshelf where three other children are busy putting away the work they have just finished or selecting the task they are going to do next. The assistant selects two activities, both of which will assure Carl's success on his first day in class. He chooses one of the activities and the assistant watches while he begins. She encourages his efforts and then goes to the next child who is waiting for her.

Ronald is counting out the Cocoa Puffs into the vitamin pill bottles. "One, two, three, four, five, six, . . ." John is now driving cars into the garages. Karla is walking over to a place behind the work cupboard with the hook board and the metal washers. She sits down and dumps out the washers onto the rug and begins to place them on the hooks. Eric is putting away the pegboard game on the workshelf.



Gina is sorting pictures of animals into piles of those which live mainly on land, those which live mainly in the water, and those which fly in the air. She sorts pictures for several minutes. When she comes to the picture of the hippopotamus she looks around for the teacher. She sees Patricia and the teacher are engrossed in conversation at the other side of the room so she turns to Vincent working nearby and shows him the picture and asks, "What is this?" Vincent proudly tells her, "It's a hippopotamus." They talk together about where they might see a hippopotamus. Vincent tells how his grandfather took him to the zoo last summer and he remembers seeing a hippopotamus in a big tank of water. Gina still seems puzzled and says, "Well, he goes into the water, but sometimes he can come out and walk around—I remember that on TV—so, could I put him in the middle, between the land and the water?" Vincent smiles and says, "Why not?"

Patricia is explaining why she sorted the picture of a man's pipe into the slot near the man's waist on the big drawing of a man's body. "How does a man use a pipe here?" asks the teacher. Patricia explains how her uncle always carries his pipe in his pocket. "I wouldn't have thought of that!" remarks the teacher with a smile. "And what about this picture of a ring in the slot on the man's head?" Patricia laughs and quickly removes the ring from that slot and shifts it down to a slot near the hand. The teacher checks through the remaining cards, shuffles them, and gives them to Patricia to put away.

Valerie is sitting on the floor beside Alicia discussing her work with the button-sorting game. They stop their conversation momentarily to listen to the teacher talking to Garvin about the work he has just finished. "Is this the same guy who wanted to give up and do only the easy work? Look, everyone, Garvin really stuck to his job! He didn't



say, 'I can't,' when it was hard—and now look, he's finished his work by himself!" Garvin looks very proud and tries to pass all the attention off by saying to his friend standing near by, "Aw, this is easy! Do you want to try it next?"

The teacher is now at the front of the room discussing the measuring game with Lisa and Eric. Rudy is working on the sequence cards by the front blackboard and is lining them up very carefully as he finishes. Kenneth is working with the pincushions and counting out the pins. Tommy is hanging up the clothes on the clothesline in numerical order. He seems to be having some difficulty with which number to put next, but he looks at the workshelf and then goes to get one of the number cards which are in a folder taped to the side. Antoinette is at the back table looking for the number 4605 on the paper houses to match that number on her envelope.

The teacher is sitting with James who has placed the train cars in the following order: 1 2 3 4 5 6 8 9 7 10. The teacher removes the last four cars and says, "Tell me which cars are lined up, James." She points to the cars one at a time, as he counts, "One, two, three, four, five, six." "Good, says the teacher. "Now, what number comes next?" James gets the car and says, "Seven." He continues to link the other cars in order up to ten. The teacher compliments him on his good work and goes to see Antoinette's mailman game at the back table.

Antoinette has matched the envelopes to the houses. All but two are correctly matched. The letter which was supposed to be delivered to 6405 was delivered to 6450. The teacher picks up these two envelopes from the houses and says, "Show me where these two go, will you please?" Antoinette goes about matching the numbers in her own way but ends up with the same result—6405 is matched with 6450 and vice versa. The teacher again picks up the envelopes and says, "Let's do it together this time. Read this number with me, Antoinette." They read



number 6405 together. Then they go to the first house (6450) and the teacher and Antoinette read that number together. The teacher asks her, "Are these two numbers the same?" Antoinette checks each number slowly and finds they are not exactly the same. Then they go to the other house and read its number. She quickly sees that this is the number she is looking for and places the envelope on top of the house. The teacher compliments her on looking carefully at the order of the numbers and says, "You didn't let a tricky number fool you, Antoinette! You've done a very good job."

The teacher glances up at the clock and notices it is almost time for lunch. She calls for the class's attention and points out the time to them. She reminds the children not to choose another activity. When the activity they are now doing is finished and checked, they may get a book from the library shelf and sit down on the rug. Two children who were on their way to the workshelf to get their next activity go instead to the library shelf, get a book, and sit down on the rug. The teacher looks up from where she is working and compliments these two children for following her directions. Overhearing this, two other children, who had stopped to watch their friend complete his activity, hurry to the library shelf to get a book and then join their friends on the rug.

The teacher and Valerie continue working with the children. As each child finishes talking with the teacher, he puts his work back into its container and returns it to the workshelf before going to the library shelf for a book. When most of the children have finished, the teacher leaves her assistant to help those not yet through. She goes to the rug and compliments the children who are there for the wonderful way they worked during the work period. She is really pleased, for they worked so hard and learned so much. She compliments several individual children for what they did today. She smiles at Garvin and praises him especially, because today Garvin learned to say "I can" instead of "I can't."

