

ABC'S 123'S Earlier is not Better

Many parents are concerned when their children aren't learning letters and numbers. They feel that ditto sheets and homework in preschool or child care programs will prepare their children for elementary school.

We could give your children workbooks. We could make them memorize the alphabet. We could drill them. We could test them. But we know that if we do, your children are going to lose something very important.

Children who are rushed into reading and writing too soon miss important steps in learning and may suffer later on because they lack the foundation they need for using language. Children who are taught to read in preschool may be able to sound out and recognize words, but they may also have little understanding of what they are reading. If they aren't allowed to string beads, button, dress up, cut, paste, pour, and draw, they won't develop the small muscle skills they need for writing.

Because math involves more than memorizing facts (like $2+2=4$), because it involves logical thinking, children need many opportunities to count objects, sort them into piles, and add some to a pile and take some away. It is by playing games like these that they will learn to truly understand addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication. Without these concrete experiences, children may give correct answers but probably won't understand what they are doing and why.

Worst of all, if children are rushed into academic subjects too soon, they may lose their enthusiasm for learning and lose their sense of themselves as learners. If children are TOLD what to learn and memorize by the teacher, they may become more passive and dependent learners, and be less excited about learning something new. Children who are given plenty of time to play, however, learn to ask their own questions and figure out their own answers. They are responsible for their own learning. they see themselves as explorers, discoverers, problem solvers, and inventors.