

Pre-schoolers

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animals that the children don't know. And in the Spring I usually bring lambs in for them to see."

In 4-H Annette had a wide variety of projects, including sewing, cooking, home improvement, flowers, vegetable gardens, bees, field crops, wildlife and conservation and capons. She said she did well with her capons and had several grand champions.

She held all offices in the local club and was treasurer for 4-H County Council. She participated in an exchange trip to Colorado and was on the vegetable judging team. She also attended Camp Kanestake, and 4-H Citizenship Short Course at the National 4-H Center in Washington, D.C.

When Annette graduated from Manheim Township School, she attended the Thompson Institute in Harrisburg and became a qualified computer programmer. However, she said she graduated at a time when there were no jobs without experience.

So, she volunteered for two weeks at the Joy Ranch, Inc. in Millsville, Va. Joy Ranch is a children's home, and after her two weeks, she was asked to stay for the summer. When the summer was over she stayed on for three-and-a-half years as a house parent for 16 children ranging from four-19 years old. She says, "Even though I was just 20, the 19-year-olds would listen to me."

She expressed surprise at finding she got along so well in this position, because she is an only child. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Long. Her mother works as a helper in the nursery school several days a week.

While at Joy Ranch Annette began taking courses at Radford College in psychology and sociology, and from then on she was launched on her career of helping young children.

Annette works three days a week at the

nursery school, but on the other two weekdays she does not stray from her children. She has received a day camp license from the Pa. Department of Environmental Resources, and brings children into her home for a group experience there. She said she has the day camp license because no one was sure what department her home work should come under. She offers more than a day care program.

Even in the summers Annette's life is busy - and exciting. For the past four summers she has traveled to Guatemala and helps to operate a mission guest house there. She also teaches bilingual children, and, not surprisingly, works with them in a nursery school environment. She said teaching there is a challenge, because materials are not so readily available. But she said she uses materials at hand, just as she advises young mothers to do here.

Annette Long leads a full and fulfilled life helping the very young get off to a good start. The world of a pre-schooler is important to Annette and she strives to help them in a constructive way, loving, Christian manner.



Finger plays can be fun. Here Annette shows a group of pre-schoolers a favorite play.

Simple things

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Old magazines and catalogues can be a source of many activities. Annette suggests having children cut out things by color or make category scrapbooks. She said children can cut and paste scrapbooks of all cars, all toys, all foods, things with wheels, things with windows, things with doors, things in our homes, things on a farm, things in a grocery store, or any category your imagination can suggest.

Painting is a favorite pre-school activity, and if you're weary of seeing sheet after sheet of construction paper being consumed by your pre-schooler, try using



old grocery bags or other shopping bags. If you're concerned about using paint, Annette suggests letting your child finger paint with chocolate pudding.

If that startles you, Annette says, "Children have to make messes - that's when they have fun." Another fun activity, she says, is playing in water - in the sink or in the bathtub. She adds that often a young child can wash dishes quite well - and have a grand time doing it.

"Dressing-up" can bring a lot of joy to a dull afternoon. Next time you go through your closet to discard out-of-date clothing, look at the garments as a treasure for your pre-schooler. There is nothing more fun than wearing parents' old shoes, hats, gloves or neckties.

Another time-consuming activity, and an inexpensive one, is having the child string beads, spools or macaroni, or straws which have been cut in short lengths.

Annette feels there are a lot of things which can be re-cycled to add to your child's pleasure. For instance, paper bags can be used to make puppets and egg cartons can be used to make bees and caterpillars. An egg carton can also be put to use as a "sorter." Annette suggests letting a child sort buttons, or you can teach a child to count by having him put one button in the first section, two in the second and so on up to twelve.

Milk cartons can make great building blocks, and nothing gives a child more pleasure than a huge, empty carton - and a little imagination.

One very important activity for a pre-schooler, Annette says, is reading to them. She said, "Reading is so important - if a child sees a parent reading, they will want to read. You can start very young. Reading is the most important skill."

If your child is just learning to use scissors, Annette suggests letting them practice by cutting strips of newspaper. It helps them perfect a skill and doesn't waste good paper.

Annette sums up her advice by saying, "you don't need elaborate things. Detergent bottles, fabric scraps, juice can lids - everything can be used."

So start saving your throw-a-ways, and begin enjoying time with your pre-schooler!

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