

Dallas DARED and did it

When people feel good about what they are doing together, it shows. This past summer, smiles and enthusiasm stretched the seams of the district's Intermediate School which housed the six-week Dallas DARES program. Good feelings also extended into the homes and hearts of the students, teachers, aides and parents who were involved.

"Richard loves summer school this year," one parent reported in the post-DARES evaluation. "His teachers have worked miracles with our son. He loves DARES and will miss the warmth and guidance of these excellent teachers."

One father pinpointed the planned effectiveness of the 1975 Dallas Approach to Remediation and Enrichment Summer when he observed, "DARES was of short duration and not dragged out. No chance for my son to get bored."

Another mother noticed important learning outcomes in her child. "Lisa knows her multiplication tables very well for the first time," she commented. "Her speed reading has been a real accomplishment and of course, she just loved ballet and arts and crafts! All in all, in our opinion it has been three of the best weeks as far as learning and fun can be for her. Thank you all for making this program available and to the selection of really excellent teachers and aides that must really love children and teaching."

"I think DARES is teaching some of the practical skills boys and girls need," suggested another mother. "They are learning to sew, to read, to play musical instruments. It's great."

Aides and teachers who participated were also queried about their involvement in DARES. One young teacher-in-training who had joined the ranks of DARES aides indicated, "DARES helped the children learn without being uptight."

A longtime Dallas teacher who became a DARES instructor recognized that

scheduled enrichment activities provided a break that refreshed and lengthened students' attention spans for studying. She also reported on a key concept which contributed to the program's success. "It was a joint effort between the student and the regular school year's teacher to OBJECTIVELY pinpoint weaknesses the students might have. We could then use the BEST teaching techniques to help each child and not stick strictly to teaching from the book."

"Staff involvement and enthusiasm is important to a project like DARES," replied another teacher. "Teachers created learning centers that were very effective in reading, language arts, and math. They gave children a chance to learn exactly what they needed."

In reply to a question asking how participation in DARES had helped them professionally, one teacher's response summarized the feelings of many DARES staff members. "DARES gave me better insight into the field of education," stated this lady. "I learned how to work together effectively with other teachers to plan for children. Most importantly, it helped me to understand children better."

Enthusiasm, involvement, warmth, and positive learning outcomes for students and teachers were the results of DARES plan developed by a representative group of elementary teachers, principals, and counselors who worked many long hours together during the spring months.

In April, Dr. Linford A. Werkheiser, Superintendent of the Dallas Schools, had announced to this group that the federal funds which had supported past summer school programs in Dallas were again available for the district's use. He also reminded them that the summer school program had been cancelled the summer before because the limited enrollment of 32 had not justified the establishment of the program.

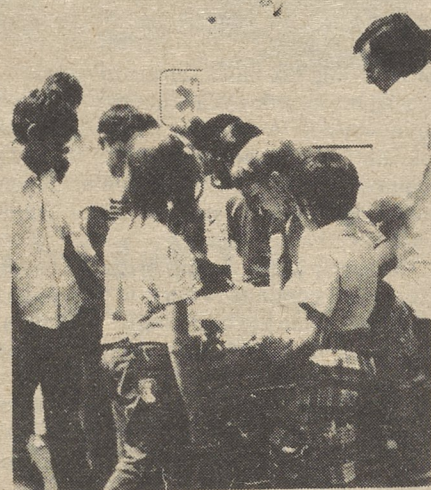
He challenged the group to ask the critical questions of themselves and others that would help to frame a program that would more effectively meet the needs of students within the district. Questions were asked and answers were given.

What resulted was a plan to personalize and individualize instruction. It was based on the assumption that every child would benefit from a concentrated opportunity to mix supportive and action-oriented enrichment activities with chances to improve needed specific language arts and math skills. "No child knows everything," remarked one member of the planning group. "Why not take the stigma of failure away from summer school and give all of our students the chance to learn something they really need to feel successful next year in school?"

From these plans and the pre-DARES inservice activities organized and conducted for staff members, each child attending DARES developed a personal contact for learning with his or her regular classroom teacher that included involvement in needed language arts and math learning centers as well as two enrichment activities.

Scheduling and logistical problems were worked out so that children participated in DARES learning teams with students of their same ages. They were guided by teachers and aides who shared the responsibilities for planning and implementing the learning situations according to their areas of expertise and interest.

Comparison of the pre and post DARES learning assessment surveys administered to DARES students have indicated that children gained needed skills in reading, language arts, and math disciplines. This information together with the comments and suggestions of those who participated helped to evaluate the success of the DARES program for



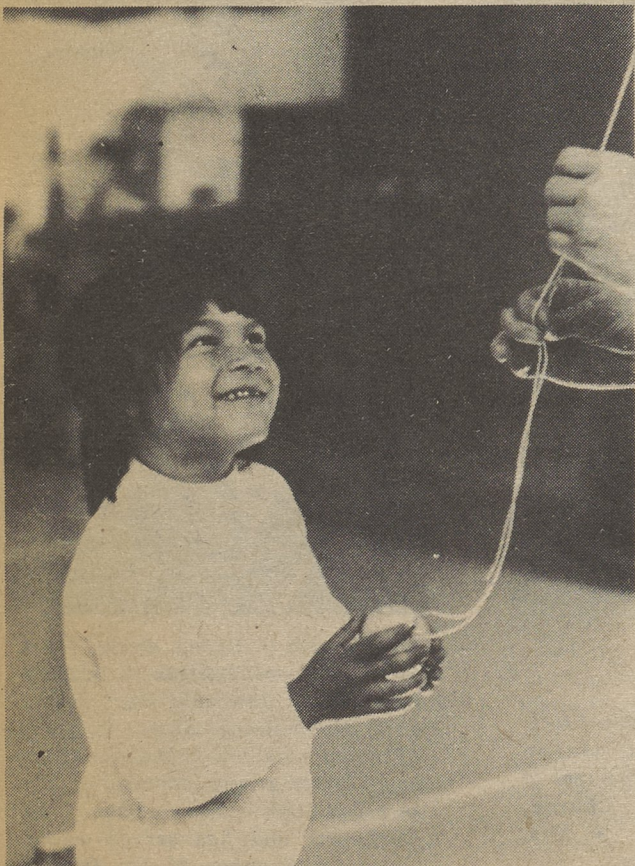
The Dallas ambulance came to DARES as part of the first aid enrichment program. Other activities for kids that generated enthusiasm included ballet, baton, stuffed animal workshop, ceramics, baseball, basketball, gymnastics, puppet playhouse, watercolor and sketching.

both Dallas and the federal funding source, E.S.E.A. Title I program.

Dallas DARED and did it. There is room for improvement as there is in any new venture that is attempted. Feedback from participants will help to refine the program if it is implemented again.

As one enthusiastic mother summarized, "I think the DARES program proves that learning CAN be fun! It can also be a total program for all kinds of children. More emphasis is placed on individual progress and the development of each child's creativity in an area he enjoys. I hope that DALLAS WILL DARE AGAIN!"

Learning resource program begun

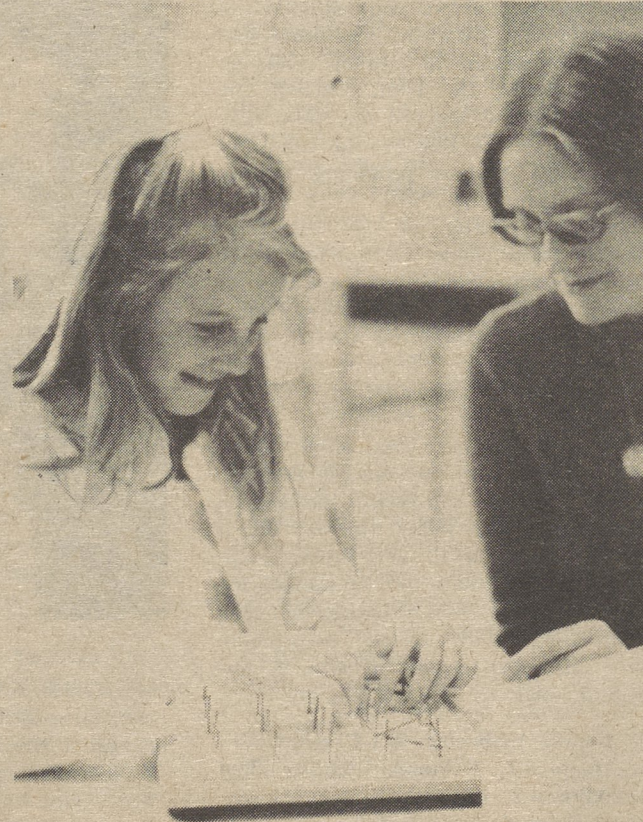


Trust, training, and togetherness are the necessary ingredients for a child's success in the learning resource program. Nickie Cavuto has found them.

For the past eight years, funds from Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act have provided supplemental instruction for primary age children with special learning needs. The Dallas School District through this funding has developed the Learning Resource Program to involve students in learning activities designed to assist youngsters in areas of personal development and in the acquisition of pre-requisite learning skills necessary to assure success in school.

Learning Resource classes have been established in the Dallas Township and Westmoreland Elementary Schools under the direction of Mrs. Grace Fries, Mrs. Kathy Flick, and Mrs. Jean Utter. These specially trained learning resource teachers and aides work with Kindergarten, first and second grade teachers to diagnose needs, prescribe, and implement appropriate learning activities for primary age children who have unique learning and developmental needs.

Students recommended to the program work part of the day with the learning resource teacher and part of the day with their regular classroom teacher. Learning resource classes emphasize an individualized, diagnostic-prescriptive approach to learning enhanced by reduced pupil-teacher ratios. Presently more than 30 primary students are involved



Learning resource teacher, Mrs. Grace Fries, looks on as a smiling, young student uses the geometric form board to develop visual-motor dexterity, important for improving writing skills.