

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GUIDE FOR THE SELECTION OF BOOKS,  
FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

By

LOLA WETTIG

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Bachelor of Science

Oklahoma State University

Stillwater, Oklahoma

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FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Thesis Approval:

*Josephine Hoffer*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Adviser

*Birdie A. Ware*  
\_\_\_\_\_

*Lucern Marston*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Dean of the Graduate School

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To  
My Mother  
Mrs. Mamie Wettig  
and  
My Aunt  
Miss Anna May Johnson

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

Books are an important tool for learning for the preschool child. Although books cannot substitute wholly for the experiences of real life, they can add to life's richness. Books should lead the child into new worlds of experience, and bring pleasure to him. Frequently, however, a book is selected without concern of what it will actually do to or for the child.

Parents, educators, and other adults are faced with the problem of selection of appropriate books when they go to a library, a bookshelf, or a bookstore and are confronted with a row of outwardly attractive books. There also are many appealing displays of inexpensive books in a variety of stores which facilitate purchase without evaluation.

The preschool child receives his literary heritage through listening and the interpretation which he may get from pictures in illustrated books as they are read or shared with him by adults. Since parents and teachers and other adults are the chief determiners of a child's literary experiences, the investigator feels that the guide which is developed and tested in this pilot study may contribute to parental understanding of the desired qualities in an appropriate book for the young child. The question to be answered by this pilot investigation is: Will a guide for the selection of books for preschool children which has been identified from the literature and standardized by the approval of a group of



nursery school teachers be helpful to parents when selecting books for preschool children?

#### Need for the Investigation

The need for this study is based on the lack of sufficient guides which would aid parents, educators, and publishers in selecting suitable books for the preschool child.

Specialists in early childhood education have written concerning the qualities of a book which could be used for the selection of books for the young child; however, these suggestions are few and varied and there is no compiled list which could be used as a guide. The qualities that have been recommended by specialists in publications, in research, and in books about children's literature are not functional since they are not available or accessible at the present to most parents. Students and teachers of early childhood education come in contact with recommendations in the literature for selecting books for children, but parents in their busy daily routines seldom have the opportunity to come in contact with readings on what constitutes good books for the preschooler. When and if a guide should be available, it should be accessible in such publications as daily newspapers and magazines, at least those most often purchased by parents.

Educators, who are in a sense specialists in the field of children's literature, have identified the need for standards or guides that will be helpful in selecting books for the young child.

Educator's, Parent's, and Publisher's Need for a Guide. Arbuthnot (4) wrote that among the very poor and unreliable books are the treasures of fine books old and new and "if we are to find these treasures, the

best books for children, of course we need standards for judging the books themselves." (p. 2)

Arbuthnot (4) further emphasized the need for guides by commenting: "Since new titles alone number from a thousand to fourteen hundred each year, the grown-up needs a few general guideposts and specific criteria to help him select wisely." (p. 16)

Eakin (15) stressed the need for guides in the following way:

Unfortunately children are not born with inherently good taste in their choice of books . . . Children do not, of their own accord and with no adult guidance, tend to choose good books in preference to mediocre or poor ones. They will remember the good ones longer and with greater pleasure, but they will not voluntarily choose them without considerable guidance from some adult in whose judgment they have confidence. (p. ix)

Weekes (35) agreed with Arbuthnot and Eakin in the need for guides by stating:

There is a growing realization that we must guide children's appreciation of literature and gain insight into the nature and scope of such guidance. There is no yardstick to measure the worth of children's literature, however, there are standards that all books should reach. (p. 15)

Association of Childhood Education International (7), in Bulletin 36, edited by Suchara, stated that, a parent responding to the outstretched hands of a child, or a teacher sensitive to the values that some inexpensive book would bring to the child, may wish they had time and help in making a more careful selection. Further explanation in the same bulletin was that the problem is to separate the suitable books from the unsuitable books which may seem equally as attractive.

Children's Need for Good Literature. Parents need to know that literature, as Monroe (29) described, is one of the best avenues to learning and to developing a well-adjusted personality. He stated that: "It [literature] can be a vital influence for good; or it can hinder mental, spiritual, social, or emotional development. The difference

comes through choice, which is a special responsibility of parents." (p.8)

Dinkle (14) emphasized the importance of the selection of books for the preschool child when he wrote: "It is important that the children have good books because theory and research have indicated clearly that many of the values, attitudes, and behavior patterns of a person have their source in early family life." (p. 12)

Bess Porter Adams (2) stressed the need for good books for children when she stated:

Good literature, whether for the old or young person, bears the mark of truth and integrity; it carries the person along into genuine, if vicarious, experience; it stirs his emotions, arouses his curiosity, stimulates his mind, and gives him a measuring stick for living. (p. vii)

Adams (2) supported Dinkle's contention that, in relation to the books provided for him, the preschool period of development is very important in the life of a child:

The preschool years are a plastic period; one in which parents and teachers should strive for the establishment of socially desirable habits and attitudes. These are the formative years in which he is establishing behavior patterns which will to a great extent affect his entire life. (p. 117)

Arbuthnot (4) is quoted as stating in regard to children's need for good literature:

Certainly, children need books to widen their horizon, deepen their understandings, and give them sounder social insights. They also need books that minister to their merriment or deepen their appreciation of beauty . . . And they need books that, in the course of a good story, help to develop clear standards of right and wrong. Finally children's books should have those qualities of good writing that distinguish literature for any age or group of people. (p. 16)

Parents need to know what books are best for the very young child because as Duff (15) implied, the child is directed toward his appreciation for good literature from the very beginning of his listening days; and the child must have only the best kind of literature.

Duff (15) described the great possibilities of books as a factor in "character education" by stating:

. . . that with even quite little people books can serve to stimulate thought and release imagination, to deepen the sense of beauty and the sense of humor and sense of wonder; to enlarge the sympathies; to increase understanding of human emotion and human behavior; and to demonstrate the operation of moral principles that give rise to distinction between right and wrong in human conduct. (p. 15)

#### Assumptions

The investigator of this study assumed that:

- (1) there were criteria in the literature which could be used as guides in the selection of appropriate books for the preschool child; however, these criteria had not been organized in a functional way for parents to use.
- (2) nursery school teachers were prepared in the field of early childhood education and that their judgment of preschool children's literature could be a basis for the selection of children's books.
- (3) mothers were selecting and reading books to their four-year-old children.
- (4) mothers who had a four-year-old would have had previous experience in selecting books for a three-year-old.

#### Hypothesis

The hypothesis to be tested in this pilot study is as follows:  
A guide for the selection of books will aid mothers in the identification of a suitable book for their preschool children.

### Purposes of the Study

The overall purpose of this pilot study was to determine if a guide would aid parents in the selection of books for the preschool child. In addition to this overall purpose there were three subsidiary purposes. These are stated as follows:

- (1) to identify from the literature criteria which would be used to develop a guide to aid adults in the selection of books for young children.
- (2) to standardize the criteria for the guide which had been identified from the literature.
- (3) to test the effectiveness of the guide.

The design for this study was formulated to achieve the foregoing stated purposes, and the remainder of this writing will be devoted to a description of the procedure and findings.

## CHAPTER II

### IDENTIFICATION OF THE CRITERIA

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if a guide would aid parents in the selection of books for the preschool child.

Chapter II will include the identification of the criteria for the guide from the literature.

Arbuthnot (4), a well-known writer in the field of literature for young children wrote:

Adults have two major obligations to the child; first, to make keen judges of the children what distinguishes good literature from poor or second rate, and second, for adults to discover what literature appeals to different children at different age level. (p. 2)

Arbuthnot (3) recommended the following criteria for judging stories for young children:

1. The theme of the story must be suitable to the age and interest of the child.
2. The plot is the action of the story. The plot should be logical, plausible, and full of convincing action that leads to a satisfying conclusion.
3. There should be unity by a continual centering of interest on the theme. Unity is the development of the theme.
4. There should be a decent economy of incidents. Too many incidents confuse the young child.
5. The parts of the story should be in balanced relationship.
  - a. The introduction should be clear, provocative, and brief. The story should get underway briskly by presenting the characters, the scene, and launching the particular problems at the very beginning.
  - b. The development or body of the story should contain enough action, conflict, or suspense to leave the child breathless, or relieved or dissolved in laughter at the conclusion.
  - c. The conclusion should solve the problem, resolve the conflict, and leave the reader with a sense of completion and satisfaction.

6. The style of writing described as the music of prose, the easy fitting of words to mood, rhythm to emotion and the charm of prose, should be appropriate to the book.

7. The book should be ethically sound, not chosen to teach a certain ethical lesson, but completely sound in its morality.

8. The story should be true to human nature, or if the story is about animals, true to the nature of the animals portrayed.

A good story will not have all of these characteristics described above but it should have most of them. (pp. 65-72)

Arbuthnot, et al., (5) in another publication, raised the following questions that may be used as a guide when selecting children's books:

First, we asked, is the book good literature? That is, does the text stand up of itself, regardless of illustrations? Has it distinction of theme and style? . . .

Second, we asked, does the book make a significant contribution to the child's wisdom, or merriment, or appreciation of beauty? . . .

Finally we asked, does the book have child appeal? (p. 3)

Dalgliesh (13) suggested that we take into consideration the intelligence, interests and experience of the child for whom we are choosing the book. She stated that:

We need to ask ourselves the following questions:

1. Is the book suited to the mental age of the child?
2. Is the subject matter interesting to this particular child? Does he really enjoy it?
3. Is the content of the book worth-while? Will it stand reading and re-reading or is it a trivial book that will be looked at once, then put aside?
4. Is the content of the book childlike and desirable throughout?
5. Is the book well bound and durable?
6. Is it suitably illustrated?

A book should be artistic, but on the child's level, not merely pleasing to the adult eye. The pictures must have real meaning for children.

7. Is it well written?

If adults would take the time to read through the books that they buy for children a number of books would be thrown aside on account of careless, slipshod English, lack of anything that lifts the story above the ordinary, or actual "writing down" to the child. (p. 8)

Eakin (16) formulated a general criteria to evaluate books which is summarized as follows:



1. Literary quality - In addition to realism and consistency in characterizations, good literary quality depends on good plot construction. The plot should be logically developed, with a minimum of coincidence.
2. Quality of content - Of equal importance with the need for good literary quality is the need for good content in children's books. Children need books with substance, books that contribute to their well-being. The content of children's books should meet modern standards of social and ethical values . . . Family and age-mate relationship should be sound, healthy ones.
3. Suitability of style and content - The major aspects of the problems of suitability of style and content to the age level for which the book is intended are:
  - A. complexity of plot development should vary with the maturity of the reader.
  - B. concepts should be geared to the level of the child's development.
  - C. subjects that cannot be expressed in the language are handled best in forms other than the printed page.
4. Quality of format - The physical format of a book plays a role of importance. The size of type used and the page layout should be selected for their appeal to the age child who will come in contact with the book. Illustrations should be appropriate to the content of the text and should provide children with a wide experience in various art forms. (pp. x, xi, xii)

Two committees composed of nursery school teachers and parents for the 1959 National Association for Nursery Education Conference (31) set up the following criteria to judge books for the child under five:

1. simple stories based on familiar people and things.
2. large, clear pictures, preferably in bright colors.
3. stories based on action.
4. language that is alive and child-like.
5. simple humor, such as nonsense words or the reversal of the familiar order of things.
6. stories that clarify children's ideas and are not confusing or frightening.
7. books that extend the children's knowledge. (p. 1)

The Association for Childhood Education International Committee of 1955 (7) used the following criteria to judge the worth of books for children when selecting the books recommended in Children's Books--

For \$1.25 or Less.

1. a good story.
2. material which is factual and accurate.
3. readable type on good paper.
4. color which is tastefully used and has appeal.
5. pictures which illustrate the text and add to the enjoyment of the story. (p. 3)



Lambert (26) stated four standards for judging books when she wrote that: "books for children should meet certain standards besides interest . . ." These standards include:

1. simple and direct language because it is more desirable and interesting.
2. illustrations should be good.
3. the entire format should be attractive.
4. printed on paper that will stand the wear it will get. (p. 1)

In addition to these four standards, Lambert (26) stressed the importance of the adult knowing the interests of the child at the different age levels. She suggested the following for those who choose reading material for children:

1. Stories must be within the understanding of a child. There needs to be enough common experience to enable him to be able to live vicariously the situation in the story.
2. Stories need to be graphically presented and fast moving. Children want action; they prefer direct to indirect conversation. They like a great many pictures and a minimum of conversation.
3. Children enjoy stories of human experience that are at least partially familiar to them. They like to identify themselves with the hero or heroine, so that the type of character portrayed by this person in children's stories is important. (p. 214)

Tooze (34) stated that a book worth living with should do at least three things for anyone who reads it or may listen to it:

1. It should illumine experience. In the case of information this may be a factual description or functional explanation. Such illumination may go far beyond outward observation. For a child such illumination means the most, if it meets some experience of his own and builds thereon.
2. It should contribute to growth . . . books should widen horizons, lengthen the point of view, give height and depth to understanding, to awareness of human relationships, to keener insight and realization of what it means to live and grow in this world.
3. It should give a sense of relationship--place this experience in relation to the whole of experience. (p. i, ii)

The review of literature revealed nine categories into which all criteria could be classified.

Table I illustrates the nine criteria found in the literature and the number of authors or organizations supporting each criteria.

TABLE I  
 NINE IDENTIFIED CRITERIA TO BE USED  
 AS A GUIDE FOR BOOK SELECTION

Criteria	Names of Authors or Organization	Total Number
1. Interest	Arbuthnot, Lambert, NANE*, ACEI**, Eakin, Dalgliesh	6
2. Length	Arbuthnot, Lambert, Eakin	3
3. Content	Tooze, Arbuthnot, Dalgliesh, NANE, ACEI, Lambert	6
4. Style	Arbuthnot, Lambert, Dalgliesh, NANE	4
5. Illustrations	Dalgliesh, Eakin, Lambert, NANE, ACEI	5
6. Knowledge	Lambert, Tooze, Arbuthnot, NANE	4
7. Conclusion	Arbuthnot	1
8. Ethically Sound	Arbuthnot, Eakin	2
9. Physical Characteristics	ACEI, Dalgliesh, Eakin, Lambert	4

\*NANE - 1959 National Association for Nursery Education

\*\*ACEI - 1955 Association for Childhood Education International

## CHAPTER III

### DISCUSSIONS AND SUMMARIES OF THE NINE CRITERIA

The nine criteria which were identified through a review of the literature and presented in Chapter II will be discussed in detail in this chapter. At the close of the description of each criteria is a summary which later will be used as an interpretation of each specific criteria on the guide sheet. (Appendix D, p. 65)

#### Interest

Need for the Book to be Interesting. Eakin (16), Arbuthnot (4), and Larrick (28) and two organizations, ACEI and NANE, stressed the importance of interest as a basis for selection.

Eakin (16) stated concerning appeal or interest that:

. . . appeal is one of the most important and the most difficult of all areas of book analysis. Certainly books must have appeal for children or they will not be read or listened to, no matter how good they may seem by adult standards. The problem arises from the difficulty of identifying the elements that create appeal. It is important, however, when considering elements of appeal as a part of book selection, to keep in mind the less obvious appeal of these elements and also to remember that, although it is vital for a good book to have some appeal for children, appeal alone is never a vital criterion for book selection. (p. xiii)

Arbuthnot, et al. (5) agreed with Eakin on this point:

Finally we asked, does the book have child appeal? This appeal may be obvious and instantaneous, upon first reading or hearing, or its hold on the children may develop slowly, only after several hearings . . . This last point is so important and so continuously overlooked that we need to consider it in relation to the whole list. (p. 2)

Langford (27) stressed the importance of interest when she stated:

Above all, stories should be interesting and entertaining. The information which children gain from literature is important, but pre-school children learn only if they enjoy what they hear. Sometimes, adults are so intent on teaching children that they forget that learning can be a pleasant experience, that our main purpose is to encourage a liking for literature.

The criterion of interest indicates that stories should have good plots, good characterizations, and appropriate actions. Doubtless, children today, through conditioning by their experiences in diverse activities such as busy family life and television viewing, will demand these three elements more than children of a generation ago. Too often, adults try to force their own tastes in literature on children. It is disappointing to parents and teachers when children do not enjoy a book which brought special pleasure to them when they were young. Not only are children unique in personality and interests but their experiences are different from those of children of a few years ago. (p. 274)

Larrick (28) wrote, "Do not buy hastily and unwisely on the strength of stunning pictures. The text may be very dull." (p. 17) This implies strongly the need for a book to be interesting.

Interests of Three and Four-Year-Olds. What kind of stories is the three and four-year-old child interested in? Arbuthnot, et al. (5) answered this question in the statement, "If one man's meat is another man's poison, certainly one man's book may be another man's boredom. Nowhere are individual tastes more pronounced than in the field of literature." (p. 33)

Several studies have been done in an attempt to discover the child's interests at the different age levels. Gates, Peardon, and Sartorius (16) found that surprise was the greatest interest factor; liveliness appearing as second strongest, and animalness as third, humor as fourth, and conversation as fifth.

Terman and Lima (33) found in their study that before the age of five children are interested in jingles, in the picture books and simple story.

Cappa (11) reported that illustrations were the greatest interest element with story content next. Information, humor, surprise and refrain follow in the foregoing order.

Larrick (28) stated that:

The three and four year-old child likes stories and pictures that deal with nature, the weather, and simple facts . . . Animal stories are very popular with the three and four year-old. These children like stories about cats, dogs, and horses, and they are ready to hear more about the less familiar animals, such as camels, lions, monkeys, and elephants. They enjoy stories about machines, trains, and planes because they can recognize various automobiles and types of planes . . . The child's own world always holds his attention. (p. 14)

Weekes (35) continued to describe what is interesting to children by stating: "Before one can say with any degree of definiteness what is literature for a specific child one must know the child; his experiences, emotional and intellectual, his interest and his . . . tastes."(p. 5)

Fenner (17) partially answered the question that parents and teachers may well ask of any book for a young child, "Is the book interesting? The story must have a real point, or plot, simple, and sometimes just one point to be made, something to be worked toward and achieved." (p. 36)

Summary. From the foregoing authors in regard to the element of interest it may be stated that: The book should catch the child's attention in the first few sentences and hold his attention to the end. The three and four-year-old child likes plenty of action, suspense, and a logical plot in the story with an economy of incidence.

#### Length

Fenner (17) explained that as the attention span of the child varies with each individual, the length of the book may also vary.

Some children are ready for certain books before other children are. It depends a lot on the background and what reading and looking at books have been done earlier. Children who have been read to and shown pictures from the earliest moment are ready sooner to sit quietly and listen . . . (p. 36)

Adams (2) stated that, "The preschool youngster has a short attention span . . . Stories for the young child should be short, full of simple action leading to a satisfying conclusion." (p. 121)

Arbuthnot (4) and Lambert (26), as reported earlier in Chapter II, verified the fact that the book should not be too long nor too short and be simple for the child.

The investigator checked several times, with a stop watch, the length of time the three and four-year-olds in one nursery school would listen to stories and found most of them listened for a period of from five to fifteen minutes.

Summary. It may be stated concerning a desirable length of book that: The three and four-year-old child has a relatively short attention span. Most preschool children can listen for a period of from five to fifteen minutes. The book should not be too long or too short and simple for the child.

#### Content

Weekes (35) placed strong emphasis on the importance of content as a factor in selecting books for children. She wrote:

No book of course should be bought for its physical appearance alone; the content is the important thing, but a book which is satisfying both in appearance and content is likely to become a book of first choice . . . In the last analysis it is the content that will determine the strength of interest. (p. 39)

Langford (27) stated that the story content of the book should be such that the child will not be confused by the new or unfamiliar.

Children are intensely interested both in familiar situations and new ideas. The books should be appropriate for their level of comprehension. Although preschoolers have a vivid imagination, their imaginary concepts are based on objects and situations which have meaning for them and in choosing their books we should be aware of the limits of their comprehension. (p. 272)

Langford (27) explained that the preschool child should be limited in his choice of fantasy because:

1. Children are surrounded by so many real things that are interesting to them and about which they are eager to learn that the variety of story subjects which are true-to-life is large.
2. Not all preschool children will be able to interpret stories of a fanciful nature correctly, so misconceptions may occur inadvertently. Fantasy may be frightening to some children who are so inexperienced that they are unable to separate truth from fiction. Fairy tales are delightful at a later age of around eight years of age. (p. 272)

Arbuthnot (4) discussed realism in the following way:

Children have sought such realistic interpretations of their own everyday world as they could find . . . This would seem to indicate rather clearly the child's preference for stories of real life which are true to human nature and which give him real insight into the problems of growing up, of encountering different types of people, and developing standards of behavior that will stand the test of emergencies and difficulties. (p. 34)

Concerning fantasy Frank (18) has written:

A book should have integrity . . . The author must deal truthfully with his subject or his characters. A book that deals with life situations is one whose plot is believable and whose characters come alive in its pages. Characters must be human and their behavior must stem from understandable motivation . . . Some cruel realities are not for young children at all. Fantasy, too must be real. Fantasy is most effective when it comes close to the young children's experiences and imaginings . . . The young child wants the story in his book to reflect his everyday world because, familiar as it is to us, to him it is still something to wonder about . . . It has been questioned whether the fantasy of animals or inanimate things taking on human qualities may not be confusing to young children, and whether for that reason their reading should be confined to stories about real creatures and people, and things that could really happen. (p. 41)

Bacmeister (8) agrees with the previous five educators that the story content of a book should not be confusing to the child. She wrote:

It is important that the stories the child hears should be largely realistic for some time, rather than of the fantastic or traditional "fairy tale" variety. He will not be bored by them as some seem to fear, for all the world is new and wonderful to him. To a child there is more pleasure in familiarity than in strangeness. Besides, the whole charm of fantasy lies in the way it breaks all the rules of logic and probability, and that is obviously not fun until you know the rules. [The child does not know all the rules.] (p. 10)

Baruch (9) studied twenty-eight children from three nursery schools groups to determine whether preschool children could differentiate between reality and fantasy. Findings of this early study indicated that when the story was concerned with objects with which the child was familiar, whether fantasy or reality, the child's answers were more often correct and that where the fantasy element was based on the unfamiliar there were twenty times as many wrong answers given by her subjects.

Abu Nasr (1) in a similar study reported that:

When characters in stories are unfamiliar, as opposed to familiar, children have significantly greater difficulty differentiating between reality and fantasy . . . This does not mean the exclusion of fantasy from children's literature, because fantasy is an important part of the child's every day experience. This simply implies that the element of fantasy should be introduced to the child through a character that is familiar to him. (p. 38)

Mitchell (29) explained that fairy tales should not be included in the preschool child's literary experience because it does confuse them; not because it does not stick to reality but because it does not deal with the things with which they had first hand experience. (p. 24)

Read (32) wrote:

We have mentioned realistic stories as suitable for nursery school. The suitability of "fairy tales" and imaginative tales in general may



well be raised here. Folk and fairy tales formerly constituted almost the entire literary fare available to children along with the moralistic tale.

In selecting books today we are helped by the fact that we know more about children's development, including such facts as that rousing fear in them is damaging, that there is a readiness factor in learning, that children need help in understanding the world around them rather than in having it confused by things that are fanciful. These facts have changed our ideas about what constitute suitable books for children. We now feel that it is better to omit frightening elements from stories until the child has had time to develop secure feelings and confidence in his ability to meet the real world and to distinguish the possible from the impossible. This doesn't mean that stories for the child should lack action and suspense, but that terrifying elements should be left out. . . . Some children will, of course, be readier at an earlier age than others for folk tales, depending on their level of emotional development. The price of introducing such stories too early may be disturbed sleep and a child more timid than he need be in facing the new and unknown. Fanciful, unreal stories are better left until the child has had time to form a sound concept of what the real world is like. (pp. 54-55)

Freeman (19) states in regard to fantasy:

Perhaps we do not need to be too eager to offer fanciful stories to children. The real world is certainly sufficiently wonderful to stimulate the imagination of any preschool child. It is important that it be understood and that the child feel related to it. We need to look for books which will help him understand it better and which will do this with artistry and humor. (p. 40)

Summary. From the foregoing authors in regard to the story content of the book it may be stated that: The story content should be related to the familiar so the child will not be confused by the new or unfamiliar. All books do not contain an element of fantasy; however, when there is an element of fantasy present it should be related enough to real life situations and experiences so the child will not be confused with what is real and what is unreal.

#### Style of Writing

Langford (27) in reference to the style of writing stated:

Certainly the style of writing, reading, or telling should be appropriate to the subject matter. The use of words and sentence structure may be smooth and flowing or rhythmic and staccato. The book should be well written using good English throughout. (p. 273)

Adams (2) in her description of words the small child likes stated: "He likes words, and enjoys saying them over and over again. He likes them for their pleasant rippling sounds. He enjoys 'silly sounding' and 'catchy' words like 'Mopsy, Topsy, and Popsy.'" (p. 118)

Larrick (28) wrote concerning what children like as the style of writing:

Children love to play with sounds. Sometimes they hear words that imitate sounds, such as bow-wow and bumpety-bump. They like to repeat these words. Often they will say them over and over as though enjoying the music. Children like repetition of sound. There may not be much of a plot to the story, but the children love the story for its repetition. (p. 34)

Dalgliesh (13) agreed with the three foregoing authors in regard to style of writing when she stated: "A nursery child shows enjoyment of rhythmic sound and repetition of sound. We find that children enjoy sound in connection with pictures or experiences." (p. 14)

Weekes (35) stated:

A child's book must be well written in fine English, with wide latitude as to choice of word and phrase so that the master craftsman molds a form of fine proportion, with impartial emphasis throughout; each part, no matter how minute, as essential to the whole as one small stone is to a mosaic. . . . In form children's stories and verse should be simple, and devoid of "language for language sake." When the content permits there should be action, a dramatic quality rather than narration, but the content conditions the manner of writing or form. (p. 34)

Fenner (17) described words in books for children in the following way: "The words should be lovely, good to read aloud, meaningful, for children remember words and often use them themselves afterwards." (p. 36)

Summary. The style of writing of the book should be suitable for the child in the following ways: The sentence structure and grammar

should be correct. The three and four-year-old child seems to enjoy "catchy" and "silly" sounding words, as well as repetition and rhythm. The style of writing which includes "silly" sounding words would be appropriate; however, slang and dialect should be avoided.

### Illustrations

Langford (27) described illustrations in the following way:

Illustrations in children's books are indicative of their worth. These should be appropriate to the subject matter and should be placed on the same pages as the part of the story which they illustrate. Pre-school children will be more attracted by simple, mass drawings than photographs, since the latter are likely to include distracting details. Illustrations for young children should be simple and uncluttered. This is obvious when we consider what we know about children's impressions as shown in their own creative products. For the same reason, only a few colors are necessary. These colors usually should be of rather intense hue and should be free of the shadings which are attractive to adults. (p. 275)

Larrick (28) wrote: "As the child sees lovely illustrations and hears rhythmical language of children's books, he is beginning to get satisfaction in the beautiful." (p. 14)

Fenner (17) stated:

Some children like best the pictures in books; not because they can read, but they naturally like illustrations. . . . Picture books are "awful nice" with their lovely illustrations, beautiful format, and amusing stories. . . . There must be pictures that appeal to a child, clear, bright, beautiful, and humorous. . . . The pictures must tell the story, for the little child and when the book has been read to him many times, he loves to "read" it back to himself. (p. 36)

Frank (18), elaborating on illustrations wrote:

Pictures should be chosen with a child's eye view. We want to cultivate their tastes with pictures that are artistically good and true. But for young listeners especially, the pictures in their books should be related to their own concepts and experiences. . . . Thus we will know that the pictures in the very young child's books will need to be simple and clear. Young children like to see their pictures whole; the artfulness of broken outlines or incomplete images does not register with the very young. Children frequently complain of such pictures that "the car is all broken" or that "the dog hasn't any feet."

It is vital in a picture book that the picture be on the same page or the page facing the part of the story which it illustrates. Pictures and text should be synchronized, not just approximately but in fact, so that Mother reads the text while the child reads the picture. . . . The very first books should have large uncluttered pages with preferably one picture to the page. But at three or perhaps older, they also treasure very little books with tiny illustrations. (pp. 81-82)

Frank (18) stressed the value of illustrations to a child's book:

Everything points to the fact that young children love color, especially the primary colors, and that the pastels, the mauves and subtler secondary colors are for more sophisticated eyes. Photographs and halftones are less likely to find favor with very young children, though a few exceptionally fine photographic books that picture their own familiar world are acceptable. (p. 82)

Heffernan (23) also wrote concerning the value of illustrations in children's books.

Fine illustrations build good taste in art. They train the eye in the appreciation of color, line, and harmony. Remembering again the significance of early impressions, it is important that children have access to many beautifully illustrated books. . . . The ideal picture book is one in which the text illustrations, and format are unified. The outside of the book gives some hint through illustration or color of what may be found inside. . . . Photographs, silhouettes, black and white illustrations, and very delicate colors do not seem so attractive to young children. This does not mean, however, that certain books using these illustrations are not fine. Some of them are liked very much, but on the whole, bright color is enjoyed more. (p. 122)

Dalgliesh (13) stated when writing about children's books:

Our choice of picture books, then, should be those that have large, brightly colored pictures full of action and clear enough to be easily understood. The subject matter of the pictures should be within, or close to, the child's experience and should reflect life as he sees it. There should be nothing that is unnecessarily ugly or terrifying. (p. 23)

Summary. These five authors have given support for the following generalization: If the book is to be suitably illustrated the pictures should be large, distinct and not blurred, appealing, and free from too much detail. The pictures should appear frequently enough to illustrate the story as it proceeds. If there is an element of fantasy present,

the picture should be related enough to real life situations and experiences; so the child will not be confused.

### Knowledge

Arbuthnot, et al. (5) wrote in answer to the following question:

"Does the book make a significant contribution to the child's wisdom or merriment, or appreciation of beauty?" that:

Some books broaden a child's horizons, give him new sympathies and understandings, deepen his insight into human relationships. Most good stories provide him with clear standards of right and wrong, show him the conflicts and the ethics of human behavior. . . . Other books provoke spontaneous and wholesome laughter. Still other books have the power of opening the child's eyes to the wonder and beauty of the world. . . .

Children are deeply interested in facts and like informational reading as well as many adults do. There are such excellent informational books available for children today in so many fields that no adult who guides children's reading can afford to be ignorant of them. (p. 10)

Frank (18) implied that the child's knowledge is often extended because a book may inform, persuade, convince, communicate ideas or arouse feelings. Frank (15) also, discussed humor stating:

The humor in young children's stories has to be direct and obvious, hinging on situations which are within the child's range of understanding. At this age they cannot understand incongruities, and mishaps they have not experienced. (p. 45)

Fenner (17) in regard to ways in which books broaden a child's knowledge stated:

Books broaden children's interests. They tell them about things they never knew could be: activities, different kinds of people, different occupations, different creatures. Books are a common language the whole world over. Book friends we have in common, quotations, expressions, and thoughts, can be shared by children all over the world. Books give children something to think about. They "make your mind" a pleasant place in which to spend your leisure time. (p. 18)

The Children's Bookshelf (12) a publication of the Children's Bureau,

United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare reported that books broaden a child's world:

Good books help to widen a child's horizon. They develop his sympathy and understanding and give him information on which his growing . . . can go to work. From being a self-centered baby, he grows toward an understanding of himself as a part of the great world. He reaches out in wonder, grasping bit by bit at the fringes of knowledge. (p. 3)

Summary. In answer to the question, Will the book extend the child's knowledge or give him some understanding of human behavior or of the world in which he lives? the foregoing authors have stated a book should contain some new information, or should encourage the child to think, and should give the child a new approach to something with which he is already familiar, or it may extend his knowledge of humor.

#### Conclusion

Adams (2) stated that, "Stories for the young child should lead to a satisfying conclusion." (p. 121)

Arbuthnot (3), concerning the conclusion of a child's book stated that, "The conclusion should solve the problem, resolve the conflict, and leave the reader with a sense of completion and satisfaction." (p. 65)

Summary. These two authors have interpreted the question: Is the conclusion of the story appropriate? The end of the story as well as entire story should leave the child with a pleasant feeling of completion and satisfaction. The child should not be left with fears and doubts.

#### Ethically Sound

Weekes (35) stated that:

Reading is the most accessible and most used medium through which indirect experience can be acquired. Since indirect experience has influenced the development of mankind there seems ground for the assumption that it can affect a change in the individual . . . Experience derived from reading may embody ideals, attitudes, standards, and ideas which may contribute to pride in and love of country, to morals and character. (p. 10)

Duff (15) described how books provide opportunity for "character education." She wrote that: "Books can demonstrate the operation of moral principles that give rise to distinction between right and wrong in human conduct." (p. 35)

Larrick (28) wrote:

As a child listens to stories, he is beginning to establish his pattern of values. His respect for other people is taking shape. His sensitivity is growing. His own satisfaction is making him a more secure person. And by his questions and his comparisons he is becoming a more creative thinker. (p. 17)

Browman and Templin (10) emphasized the importance of having ethically sound books when they wrote. "Without a doubt, a child's environment has an impact on his behavior and attitudes. The stories that we read to youngsters are also part of their environment." (p. 324)

Dalgliesh (13) stated: "It is not necessary for a story to incorporate an obvious moral. We want our stories to be ethically sound, to present the true and beautiful, and to exclude the wrong or undersirable." (p. 9)

Arbuthnot (3) as previously reported stated that: "The book should be ethically sound, not chosen to teach a certain ethical lesson, but completely sound in its morality." (p. 72)

Summary. The foregoing authors' statements in regard to the question, Is the book ethically sound? is as follows: The content of the story should be socially acceptable. The book need not teach a specific ethical lesson, but it should be completely sound in its morality.

## Physical Characteristics

Langford (27) discussed the physical characteristics of books for young children:

The format of a book usually indicates the cost of the book. Although it is not necessary that every book should last indefinitely, it is disconcerting to children if their favorite books fall apart. Books chosen for young children should be sturdily constructed with good paper and strong bindings. The general appearance of books is important to children. Frequently, this factor is the reason for the child's original interest in looking at the book or requesting that it be read to him. Since young children cannot read, it is good if some picture on the outside of the book indicates the subject matter of the story. (p. 275)

Frank (18) stated that the child should have some inexpensive books of his own.

Not all of a child's books should be so fine and costly that he cannot be permitted to take some favorites to himself, grubby hands and all. Washable linen books, if their pictures are clear and brightly colored, will satisfy the child's desire to take his book to bed with him. (p. 83)

Weekes (35) stressed the importance of the physical make-up of a book: "A study of children's reactions to the physical book warrants the assumption that all elements entering into the physical make-up of any book become factors in determining children's interest and attitude toward books." (p. 35)

The physical characteristics of a book is described in the Children's Bureau publication The Children's Bookshelf (12):

The physical make-up of a book makes more difference to children than grown-ups would guess. Even the color of the cover matters. Blue, red, and yellow--the bright primary colors--are the very little child's favorites, inside a book or out . . . Books should be stoutly put together; for although children can be trained to handle books carefully, anything that is going to be used as much as a well-liked book must be sturdy and durable. (p. 5)

The physical aspects of a child's book is elaborated on by Arbuthnot (5):



If a picture-story for the small fry is to last through many readings, it should be clothbound with sturdy covers and firm stitching. Stout books with substantial paper are a comfort to young children, who like to pore over their picture books by themselves if the pages are easy to turn and hard to tear. The size is another consideration. For the child under six, most books should not be too big or too heavy for him to handle by himself. But, oddly enough, he does occasionally enjoy a book that he has to stand over at a table, leaning on his elbows. The size of the type and the spacing and number of words to a page are also important in a child's book. (p. 33)

Heffernan (23) wrote specifically concerning the physical characteristics of books for young children.

The paper for picture books should be dull so as not to reflect light and should be strong so that it does not tear easily. . . . Most publishing houses meet these standards. It is to be deplored that binding for children's books which have so much use is not stronger. When books are rebound, they are usually more durable. A good average size for a picture book is 7 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches. Some small, some large, some tall books are greatly liked. (p. 122)

Summary. Authors writing to the question: Are the physical characteristics of the book acceptable? agreed on the following points.

(1) durable binding (2) large print (3) a size easy for the child to handle (4) an attractive outside cover. In other words, the book should have a strong and attractive binding with pages of durable paper, large clear printing, and a size easy for the child to handle.

TABLE II\*  
THE NINE CRITERIA SHOWING AUTHORS AND ORGANIZATIONS  
AGREEMENT WITH EACH CRITERION

Criteria	Names of Authors or Organization	Total Number
1. Interest	Eakin, Arbuthnot, Langford, Larrick, ACEI, NANE, Terman and Lima, Cappa, Weekes, Fenner, Lambert, Dalgliesh	12
2. Length	Fenner, Adams, Arbuthnot, Lambert, Eakin	5
3. Content	Weekes, Langford, Arbuthnot, Frank, Bacmeister, Baruch, Abu Nasr, Mitchell, Tooze, Dalgliesh, NANE, ACEI, Lambert, Read, Freeman	15
4. Style	Langford, Adams, Larrick, Dalgliesh, Weekes, Fenner, Arbuthnot, Lambert, NANE	9
5. Illustrations	Langford, Larrick, Frank, Falgliesh, Eakin, Lambert, NANE, ACEI, Heffernan	9
6. Knowledge	Arbuthnot, Frank, Fenner, Children's Bureau, Lambert, NANE, ACEI, Heffernan	9
7. Conclusion	Adams, Arbuthnot	2
8. Ethically Sound	Weekes, Duff, Larrick, Browman and Templin, Dalgliesh, Arbuthnot, Eakin	7
9. Physical Characteristics	Langford, Frank, Weekes, Children's Bureau, Lambert, Heffernan	6

\*This table includes information from both Chapter II and III.

Table I, page 11, illustrates the nine criteria found in the literature and the authors or organizations supporting each criteria.

Table II includes authors and organizations from Table I plus additional authors supporting the nine criteria.

## CHAPTER IV

### PROCEDURE

The reader will recall that the overall purpose of this pilot study was to determine if a guide would aid parents in the selection of books for the preschool child.

Seven steps in the general procedure were followed: (1) the identification of the criteria for the selection of books from the literature (2) the development of a guide (3) the standardization of the guide by a group of nursery school teachers (4) the selection of the books for testing the guide (5) the selection of the subjects (6) the interview (7) the analysis of the data. Step one was discussed in Chapters II and III. Steps two, three, four, five, and six will be discussed in Chapter IV and the analysis of the data will be presented in Chapter V.

#### The Development of a Guide

When the criteria for the selection of books had been identified through a review of the literature, they were formulated into a guide. (Appendix D, p. 65) All the recommendations from the literature were reported for the nine criteria. (Chapter II, p. 7) These nine criteria were discussed in detail and summarized in Chapter III. The main characteristics of each of the nine criteria were summarized to be used as an interpretation for the guide. This elaboration of each

criterion was to aid parents, or whomever used the guide, to recognize appropriate books for preschool children.

Development of a Weighted Scale for the Guide. Before the nine criteria, which were nine characteristics of a book for preschool children, could be standardized, it was necessary to construct a weighted scale. The investigator recognized that the nine criteria would not necessarily be of equal value as a guide for the selection of books; therefore, seven nursery school teachers were asked to pass judgment on the nine criteria by assigning a percent weight to each in terms of the value they felt each merited.

A letter to the nursery school teachers gave directions for assigning weights to the nine criteria. (Appendix A, p. 52) Each nursery school teacher was requested to indicate the percent weight that she felt each criterion should be given. (Appendix A, p. 53) The teachers were free to distribute the percent weight as they wished as long as the final total for the nine criteria was one-hundred. The nursery school teachers were also given the opportunity to add any statements they felt should be included on the guide or suggest any revision of the statements that were not clear to them. No revisions were suggested, and no additions were made.

The percent weight assigned to each criterion by the teachers was totaled and the average became the weighted score for each criterion. This data may be found in Table III.

TABLE III

SUGGESTED WEIGHTS FOR THE NINE CRITERIA  
BY THE NURSERY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Criteria	Assigned Weights by Nursery School Teachers							Mean Weights
	A	B	C	D	E	F	E	
1. Interest	20	15	10	30	18	20	50	24
2. Length	5	5	8	5	15	10	10	9
3. Content	30	40	20	10	15	40	6	23
4. Style	5	5	10	5	10	5	5	6
5. Illustrations	20	10	15	25	10	5	5	11
6. Knowledge	5	5	10	5	6	5	8	6
7. Conclusion	5	10	10	10	8	5	6	9
8. Ethically Sound	5	5	10	5	8	5	6	6
9. Physical Characteristics	5	5	7	5	10	5	4	<u>6</u>
								100

Using the assigned weighted values of the nursery school teachers, the investigator in consultation with a university professor of early childhood education tested the scale on a number of books. Through this testing the assigned weight for the criterion of Content was found not to be large enough to separate the recommended books from the non-recommended books. For this reason the assigned percent weights were revised and presented to the same group of teachers one month later for their approval or disapproval. (The modification of weights for each criterion are shown in Table IV.)

TABLE IV  
THE REVISED WEIGHTS FOR THE  
NINE CRITERIA

Criteria	Mean* Weights (Percent)	Rounded Weights (Percent)	Revised# Weights (Percent)
1. Interest	24	25	15
2. Length	9	10	5
3. Content	23	25	40
4. Style	6	5	5
5. Illustrations	11	10	15
6. Knowledge	6	5	5
7. Conclusion	9	10	5
8. Ethically Sound	6	5	5
9. Physical Characteristics	<u>6</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Total	100	100	100

\*Assigned by the nursery school teachers

#Scores assigned by an early childhood educator and the investigator

#### The Standardization of the Guide

The revised scale (Appendix B, p. 56) was submitted to the nursery school teachers who were asked to Agree or Disagree with the revised percent weights for each criterion. (Letter of Instructions, Appendix B, p. 55) To further verify the teachers' judgments of Agree or Disagree, the teachers were asked to rate two books (one book that was recommended and one book that was not recommended) to determine if the percent

weight assigned to each criterion would rate books in harmony with their judgment of Acceptable or Unacceptable.

Table V shows the judgments of seven nursery school teachers and their suggested weight for the criteria where disagreement occurred. The weighted scores on column one, Table V are the same as the revised weights in Table IV.

TABLE V  
AGREEMENT AND DISAGREEMENT OF TEACHERS ON THE REVISED  
WEIGHTED SCORES FOR THE NINE CRITERIA

Criteria	Weighted Scores (Percent)	Teacher's Judgments							Total Agrees and Disagrees	
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G		
1. Interest	15	D40*	A	A	A	A	A	A	6A	1D
2. Length	5	A	A	D10	D10	A	A	A	5A	2D
3. Content	40	D15	A	A	A	A	A	A	6A	1D
4. Style	5	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	7A	
5. Illustrations	15	D10	A	D10	D10	A	A	A	4A	3D
6. Knowledge	5	D10	A	A	A	A	A	A	6A	1D
7. Conclusion	5	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	7A	
8. Ethically Sound	5	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	7A	
9. Physical Characteristics	5	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	7A	
Total								51A	8D	

\*D 40 means that the teacher Disagreed with the suggested weight and suggested a weight of 40 to be used for that criterion.

After tabulation of the nursery school teachers Acceptance or Rejection of the proposed percent weighting for each criterion, the investigator arbitrarily accepted the weighted value for each criterion when four of the seven teachers accepted the revised scale.

The revised weighted scores for the criteria were Accepted by the majority of the teachers, and the investigator used their value judgments in designing the final guide to be used by mothers of four-year-olds.

Assignment of Qualitative Terms to the Weighted Criteria. The percent weight assigned to each criterion was divided into five parts so that qualitative terms such as Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, and Unacceptable could be used in judging the books. (Appendix B, p.56) This method is suggested by Good and Scates (21) to be used in rating scales.

TABLE VI  
ASSIGNMENT OF QUALITATIVE TERMS TO  
THE CRITERIA

Criteria	Revised Weights	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
1. Interest	15	15	12	9	6	3
2. Length	5	5	4	3	2	1

Table VI shows how qualitative terms were assigned values in relation to the weighted percent for each criterion. The five qualitative terms are defined in the Letter of Instruction found in Appendix D, p. 64.



TABLE VII  
 PERCENTILE RANKING TO INDICATE THE CLASSIFICATION  
 OF BOOKS BY THE FIVE QUALITATIVE TERMS

Qualitative Terms	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>	<u>Unacceptable</u>
Percentile Ranking	100-86	85-66	65-46	45-26	25-0
Interval	15	20	20	20	25

The percentile classification presented in Table VII was made on the basis of total points of value that each qualitative term caused the book to merit. Since the nursery school teachers had placed higher value on the criteria Interest, Content, and Illustrations it was deemed valid to use these three criteria as a combined control for the assignment of books into the qualitative classification of Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, and Unacceptable. (Refer to Appendix B, p. 56 for the weighted scores.)

The point on a scale of 100 percent that would separate the "Good" books from the "Excellent" books was found by totaling the points under the "Good" classification for Interest, Content, and Illustrations plus an excellent rating in every other criteria. This procedure gave a score of 86. Thus the score of 86 or above was required for a book to rate Excellent. This made an interval of 15 points for the Excellent classification.

The classifications of Good, Fair, and Poor were given an interval of 20 points and the Unacceptable received 25 points.

A book which received a score of Unacceptable in the criteria of Interest, Content, and Illustrations and all other weighted points ranging from Unacceptable to Excellent, would never rate above the Poor classification.

This may seem like a subjective method, but actually this procedure was based on the high weighting that nursery school teachers placed on the three criteria of Content, Interest, and Illustrations.

#### The Selection of the Books

Before parents could be asked to test the guide it was necessary to select books on which they could pass judgment. The investigator and another person in the field of early childhood education rated twenty-eight books using the weighted value scale with the qualitative terms which the nursery school teachers had accepted to determine if the scale would separate the recommended books from the non-recommended books. (An example: a recommended book was "Angus and the Cat" and a book not on the recommended list was "Sleeping Beauty.") The basis for selection of these particular books was the availability of the books in the University Nursery Schools. The books were to be in good condition and on the recommended lists of ACEI (Association for Childhood Education International) and NANE (National Association for Nursery Education) and a brochure developed in 1956 by the Department of Family Relations and Child Development, Oklahoma State University. The books not on the recommended lists were purchased from numerous variety stores. This group of twenty-eight books is presented alphabetically in the Appendix C, p. 58.

There is no significance in the number twenty-eight for the books selected for this study. Time was the factor that limited the number of books that two raters could check; however, the investigator felt that with two persons rating the books independently with a relatively high percent of agreement that twenty-eight books were adequate to accomplish the intended purpose.

These two raters checked the books twice at a two weeks interval. The percent of agreement of the two raters was computed by the following formula: (24)

$$\frac{\text{Number of agreements}}{\text{Number of agreements plus number of disagreements}}$$

The intra rater reliability, as calculated by the above method, was .94 for one rater and .96 for the other rater. The inter rater reliability, as calculated by the same method, was .94 (Appendix E, p. 68).

These two persons rated the twenty-eight books with the criteria and their ratings placed the books into three classifications which were: Excellent, Good, and Poor. (One book fell in the classification of Fair, but it was eliminated since it was the only book for this classification.)

The investigator recognized that twenty-eight books would be too many to ask mothers to read and rate, therefore, by random selection four books were chosen from each of the three classifications into which the raters had placed them. This made a total of twelve books to be used in the final testing of the criteria by the teachers and the mothers. Bias selection was avoided by placing the names of the books on slips of paper for a disinterested person to draw from each of the

three containers titles of books that represented that classification. (The list of twelve books may be found in Appendix C, p. 59.)

### The Selection of the Subjects

Setting for the Investigation. The setting for this pilot study was a midwestern university city of approximately 25,000 population (Stillwater, Oklahoma). To provide opportunity for a representative sample, this small city was divided into four approximate sized areas so that the sample could be drawn from all socio-economic levels based on the method used by Keely (25) who studied television practices of four-year-olds in this same city. In Keely's study, residential boundary lines were recommended by an elementary school principal, who had worked on several school district survey committees, and who had been a school administrator in this university city for more than fifteen years. This division was not verified by any method, but for the purpose of this study the investigator did not deem it necessary to have these dividing lines verified by other persons.

Selection of the Possible Subjects. The sample for this pilot study was drawn from a total of 393 mothers who had a four-year-old child as recorded in the 1960 school census of Stillwater, Oklahoma. Children whose birth dates fell between June 1, 1956, and May 31, 1957, as recorded in the 1960 school census were included as possibilities of a mother to be contacted.

The selection of mothers of the four-year-olds was made on the basis that: (1) the mothers of the four-year-olds would provide a homogeneous group, and (2) the mothers of four-year-olds would have had

experience reading to both a three-year-old and a four-year-old for which the guide was constructed.

Final Selection of the Mothers. The names of the 393 children were placed into one of the four designated city areas according to their addresses. These four groups were further divided into boys and girls so that the final sample would have an equal distribution of boys and girls from each of the four areas in the city.

A total of sixteen of the names were drawn at random from each of the four areas. These sixteen names were divided into two groups. One group of eight mothers used the guide in rating the books (Group I) and the other group of eight mothers did not use a guide in rating the books (Group II).

Since no telephone numbers were included in the information from the school census, it was necessary to obtain the telephone number when a subject was drawn. A subject not listed in the Fall, 1960, telephone directory of this small city was eliminated and replaced by another subject drawn from the same area and the same sex group.

When a telephone number had been obtained for the subject, the mother was contacted. The investigator asked the mother the following questions: Are you the mother of a four-year-old child? Will you be willing to cooperate in a study which is to develop a guide to help parents in selecting books for children? If the mother responded affirmatively, a personal interview was scheduled in which information on the child and his literature experiences was obtained. The investigator delivered the books personally and at this time asked the mothers to read and rate the twelve children's books which had been selected for this pilot study.

A total of sixty-five names were drawn to obtain the final sample of sixteen mothers. Of those drawn, thirty-eight names were eliminated because they were not listed in the telephone directory; eight were not able to participate (working, lack of time, or not interested) and three were eliminated because their children were enrolled in the University Preschool School Laboratory, and the investigator felt these mothers might be influenced by what they knew was provided for this child at school.

Selection of the First Group of Teachers. Seven persons having academic training in preschool education were used in the first part of this study. This was the number of persons that were available and willing to cooperate. All seven of these teachers held Master of Science degrees in Preschool Education, or were near completion of this degree; and they had had previous experience in working in preschool education from two to fifteen years.

This group of nursery school teachers was used in the development of the weighted scale and the standardization of the guide list.

Selection of the Second Group of Teachers. Eight persons having academic training in preschool education were used in the rating of the books. They were the same teachers used in Group I with one exception. One of the teachers in Group I moved, and another teacher was selected to complete the number for Group II. The teacher was added to keep the number of nursery school teachers comparable to the number of mothers in Groups I and II.

Six of the nursery school teachers held Masters Degrees in Preschool Education and two were in the final stages of completing the requirements

for this degree. All eight of the teachers had at least two years teaching experience. No other data were obtained on the teachers except that they had all taught in a university preschool program.

### The Interview

Three steps were taken prior to the interview with the mothers:

(1) a face sheet was developed (2) the subjects were selected and contacted by telephone (3) the interview was scheduled. The interview was made in the subject's home.

Face Sheet. A face sheet was developed to record information concerning the child such as: the child's name, address, age, and telephone number; the parents' names, occupations, and educational backgrounds; and the names, ages and position of other persons in the home. Several general questions about the opportunities and use of preschool books for the child were also included on this face sheet. These questions related to the time of day, frequency, and length of time the parents or other family members read to the child. (Appendix D, p. 61)

The investigator, at the time the books were delivered, gave verbal instructions to the mother in addition to what was in the Letter of Instruction. (Appendix D, p. 64) The face sheet was also completed during the interview.

The eight mothers (Group I) that used the guide sheet were given the letter containing the instructions which they were to follow in evaluating the book. (Appendix D, p. 64) The mothers were asked to read each book carefully and then to rate the book by checking one of the five classifications on the guide list which expressed their judgment of that criteria of the book. (Appendix D, p. 65)

The eight mothers of Group II were asked to check the books without a guide and their instructions were to rate each book by carefully reading the book, and then rating the book by writing in the appropriate space on the check sheet their evaluation in terms of Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Unacceptable. (Appendix D, p. 66)

The data from the teachers, Group I mothers, and Group II mothers, were collected over a period of approximately one month interval. The books were in the mothers' possession from one to three days with most of the mothers having the books in their home an average of two days.



## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data were analyzed to achieve the overall purpose of this pilot study by: (1) tabulating the scores for each book rated by the teachers and the mothers of Group I, (2) converting the teachers' and Group I mothers' ratings to a comparable score for the Group II mothers. (3) comparing the ratings of the teachers', the Group I mothers', and the Group II mothers, (4) summarizing the data on the face sheet.

#### Conversion of Scores to Qualitative Ratings

The rating score for each book which placed it in a classification of Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Unacceptable was determined by totaling the scores for each criterion for the teachers and Group I mothers. The scores were then converted to a qualitative rating, so they could be compared with Group II mothers' ratings which had been assigned one of the five qualitative terms. (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Unacceptable.)

#### A Comparison of the Three Groups' Ratings

To facilitate an examination of the data furnished by the three groups the total number of persons classifying a book Excellent, Good, Fair, or Poor were placed in Table VIII.

In this pilot study the investigator was looking for evidences of strengths and weaknesses which could be used in the redesigning of a

TABLE VIII

TWELVE SELECTED BOOKS FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD RATED BY TEACHERS,\*  
GROUP I MOTHERS,\*\* AND GROUP II MOTHERS#

Classifications	SLEEPING BEAUTY	THREE LITTLE ANIMALS	HOW THE CAMEL GOT HIS HUMP	LITTLE BLACK SAMBO
	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters
	T* G <sub>1</sub> ** G <sub>2</sub> #	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>
POOR	Excellent      2 3	Excellent	Excellent      1 2 1	Excellent      1 8 6
	Good            3 2	Good            1 4 7	Good            3 3	Good            2
I	Fair            2 1	Fair            1 4 1	Fair            1 2 3	Fair            3
	Poor            7 1 2	Poor            5	Poor            4 1 1	Poor            4
	Unacceptable 1	Unacceptable 1	Unacceptable 2	Unacceptable
	KATY AND THE BIG SNOW	FLIP AND THE COUS	CAPS FOR SALE	CIRCUS BABY
	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters
	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>
GOOD	Excellent      3 3 2	Excellent      4 4 1	Excellent      3 5 1	Excellent      2 2 2
	Good            4 2 2	Good            4 3 4	Good            5 3 5	Good            5 6 6
II	Fair            1 2 2	Fair            1 3	Fair            2	Fair            1
	Poor            1 2	Poor	Poor	Poor
	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
	KIKI LOVES MUSIC	CURIOUS GEORGE RIDES A BIKE	PAUL, THE POLICEMAN	ANGUS AND THE CAT
	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters	Ratings      Raters
	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>	T G <sub>1</sub> G <sub>2</sub>
EXCELLENT	Excellent      4 4	Excellent      4 6 3	Excellent      6 5 3	Excellent      7 8 1
	Good            4 2 5	Good            3 1 4	Good            2 2 2	Good            1 4
III	Fair            2 2	Fair            1 1 1	Fair            1 2	Fair            3
	Poor            1	Poor	Poor            1	Poor
	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable	Unacceptable

future study which would be done concerning the development of a guide which would aid parents in the selection of books for the preschool child.

The following points seemed to be evidenced from the data presented in Table VIII:

(1) The teachers tended to rate the books more often in the classifications of Excellent or Poor. That is the group of teachers tended to rate the books on the recommended list high and the non-recommended books low.

(2) Two-thirds of the Group I mothers' ratings, with the guide, were more like the teachers' ratings than Group II mothers' ratings, without a guide, for the same book. The difference between Group I and Group II might have been significant if the sample had been larger. Certainly with this limited sampling a conclusion is not warranted; however, the evidence seems to justify subjecting these criteria to a larger sample that would be representative of a true parameter.

(3) The mothers in both Group I and II tended to rate the books that were not on the recommended lists higher than the teachers rated them; however, these books were seldom given a rating of Excellent.

(4) Books that fell into the classification of Excellent and Good were more often rated lower by Group II mothers, without a guide, than Group I mothers, with a guide.

#### Comparison of the Two Raters and the Teachers

The two raters had classified the twelve books by using the criteria standardized by the first group of nursery school teachers, as Excellent, Good, and Poor. These two raters had an agreement of .94. The nursery school teachers ratings of the twelve books tended to place the books

into the same classification as the two raters. (Example: the two raters classified "Sleeping Beauty," "The Three Little Animals," and "How the Camel Got His Hump" in the Poor classification; the majority of the nursery school teachers placed these three books in the same classification as shown in Table VIII.)

#### Summarizing the Data on the Face Sheet

Data on the face sheet completed by the mothers of Group I and Group II is summarized in Appendix D. These data were collected in an effort to have information that would aid in further study of children's literary experiences. Since much of the data were unrelated to the overall purposes of this study it is not presented in the analysis of the data.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, FINDINGS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This pilot study was concerned with developing a guide for the selection of books and determining if such a guide would aid parents in the identification of suitable books for the three and four-year-old children.

In addition to the overall purpose there were three subsidiary purposes: (1) to identify from the literature criteria which could be used to develop a guide which would aid adults in the selection of books for preschool children, (2) to standardize the criteria for the guide which had been identified from the literature, (3) to test the effectiveness of the guide.

The sample was sixteen mothers of an equal number of four-year-old boys and four-year-old girls selected at random from four socio-economic areas of a midwestern university city of approximately 25,000 population. Eight of these mothers, Group I, rated the books with the aid of the guide which was developed and standardized in this pilot study by a group of nursery school teachers. Eight of the mothers, Group II, rated the books without the help of a guide.

#### Findings

The findings of this pilot study were:

(1) The nursery school teachers tended to rate the books on the recommended list high and the non-recommended books low.

(2) Two-thirds of the Group I mothers' ratings were more like the teachers' ratings than were the Group II mothers' ratings for the same book.

(3) The mothers in both Group I and Group II tended to rate the books that were not on the recommended lists higher than the teachers rated the non-recommended books.

(4) The mothers of Group II, who did not use a guide, more often rated the recommended books in a lower classification than the mothers in Group I who used the guide.

(5) The eight nursery school teachers who rated the selected books tended to place the twelve books into the same classification as the two raters had placed them.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

The investigator recommends that this pilot study be continued by subjecting the guide developed in this study to a larger sample; so the data could be treated statistically.

The following recommendations are made for a redesigning of this study:

(1) The weighted percents for each criterion should have further verification.

(2) The sample to be used for testing the criteria might well include fathers and other adults, as well as mothers. High school boys and girls could also be included as subjects.

The intention of the investigator was never to generalize from this small sample, but to make a contribution to the solving of an overall problem: The need for the development and standardization of a guide which would aid parents in the identification of suitable books for preschool children.

The investigator feels that the identification of the criteria from the literature and the basic work on the weighted scale will make a contribution to any person who feels motivated to continue this study.

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APPENDIXES

## APPENDIX A

## LETTER TO NURSERY SCHOOL TEACHERS

Dear Nursery School Teacher:

I am in the process of developing a weighted scale for evaluating preschool children's books and need your help in placing value on the nine criteria included on the guide.

The compiled information from the criteria will form the bases for judgment in developing the weighted scale. The following criteria are the recommendations found in the literature, but educators have not placed a degree of value, or weighting on these criteria when recommending them as guides for the selection of books for preschool children.

Will you please help me by giving your judgment on the nine criteria?

## DIRECTIONS FOR ASSIGNING A WEIGHTED SCORE TO THE NINE CRITERIA

1. Please read the nine criteria on the attached page.
2. Please indicate the importance you place on the criteria by weighting it in terms of a percent.
3. Please check to be sure that the percent weight you have indicated for the nine criteria totals 100.
4. Please add any statement you feel should be included on the guide-list.  
Additional statements:
5. If any statements are vague please make suggestions for revision.  
Suggestions for revisions:

## A GUIDE FOR SELECTING BOOKS FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD (THREE AND FOUR-YEAR-OLD)

1. Is the book <u>INTERESTING</u> ?	PERCENT
<p>The book should catch the child's attention in the first few sentences and hold his attention to the end. The three and four-year-old child likes plenty of action, suspense, and a logical plot in the story with an economy of incidence.</p>	
<p>2. Is the book of a desirable <u>LENGTH</u>?</p> <p>The three and four-year-old child has a relatively short attention span. Most preschool children can listen for a period of from five to fifteen minutes. The book should not be too long or too short and simple for the child.</p>	
<p>3. Is the <u>STORY CONTENT</u> of the book such that the child will not be confused?</p> <p>The story content should be related to the familiar so the child will not be confused by the new or unfamiliar. All books do not contain an element of fantasy; however, when there is an element of fantasy present it should be related enough to real life situations and experiences so the child will not be confused with what is real and what is unreal.</p>	
<p>4. Is the <u>STYLE OF WRITING</u> of the book suitable?</p> <p>Sentence structure and grammar should be correct. The three and four-year-old child seems to enjoy "catchy" and "silly" sounding words, as well as repetition and rhythm. This style of writing which includes "silly" sounding words would be appropriate; however, slang and dialect should be avoided.</p>	
<p>5. Is the book suitably <u>ILLUSTRATED</u>?</p> <p>The pictures should be large, distinct and not blurred, appealing, and free from too much detail. The pictures should appear frequently enough to illustrate the story as it proceeds. If there is an element of fantasy present, the picture should be related to real life situations and experiences so the child will not be confused.</p>	
<p>6. Will the book <u>EXTEND THE CHILD'S KNOWLEDGE</u> or give him some understanding of human behavior or of the world in which he lives?</p> <p>The book should contain some new information, or should encourage the child to think, and should give the child a new approach to something with which he is already familiar, or it may extend his knowledge of humor.</p>	
<p>7. Is the <u>CONCLUSION</u> of the story appropriate?</p> <p>The end of the story as well as the entire story should leave the child with a pleasant feeling of completion and satisfaction. The child should not be left with fears and doubts.</p>	
<p>8. Is the book <u>ETHICALLY SOUND</u>?</p> <p>The content of the story should be socially acceptable. The book need not teach a specific ethical lesson, but it should be completely sound in its morality.</p>	
<p>9. Are the <u>PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS</u> of the book acceptable with: (1) Durable binding (2) Large print (3) A size easy to handle (4) An attractive outside cover.</p> <p>The book should have a strong and attractive binding and pages of durable paper, large clear printing, and a size easy for the child to handle.</p>	

APPENDIX B

Dear Nursery School Teacher:

Thank you for your help in developing a weighted scale to be used in selecting books for the preschool child. Your recommendations helped me to assign a percent weighting for each proposed criterion.

I again need your help to further verify the percent value of each weighted score as they are now assigned to each criterion.

Lola Wettig

DIRECTIONS

1. Please read each question and the description of the question on the attached sheet, "A Guide for Selecting Books for the Preschool Child," (Three and Four Year-Olds) and Agree or Disagree with the assigned weight.
2. Please rate two books to determine if the score assigned to each criterion can be used to classify books according to EXCELLENT, GOOD, FAIR, POOR, or UNACCEPTABLE.



## A GUIDE FOR SELECTING BOOKS FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD (THREE AND FOUR-YEAR-OLD)

	R A T I N G S				
	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
<p>1. Is the book <u>INTERESTING</u>? The book should catch the child's attention in the first few sentences and hold his attention to the end. The three and four-year-old child likes plenty of action, suspense, and a logical plot in the story with an economy of incidence.</p>	15	12	9	6	3
<p>2. Is the book of a desirable <u>LENGTH</u>? The three and four-year-old child has a relatively short attention span. Most preschool children can listen for a period of from five to fifteen minutes. The book should not be too long or too short and simple for the child.</p>	5	4	3	2	1
<p>3. Is the <u>STORY CONTENT</u> of the book such that the child will not be confused? The story content should be related to the familiar so the child will not be confused by the new or unfamiliar. All books do not contain an element of fantasy; however, when there is an element of fantasy present it should be related enough to real life situations and experiences so the child will not be confused with what is real and what is unreal.</p>	40	32	24	16	8
<p>4. Is the <u>STYLE OF WRITING</u> of the book suitable? Sentence structure and grammar should be correct. The three and four-year-old child seems to enjoy "catchy" and "silly" sounding words, as well as repetition and rhythm. This style of writing which includes "silly" sounding words would be appropriate; however, slang and dialect should be avoided.</p>	5	4	3	2	1
<p>5. Is the book suitably <u>ILLUSTRATED</u>? The pictures should be large, distinct and not blurred, appealing, and free from too much detail. The pictures should appear frequently enough to illustrate the story as it proceeds. If there is an element of fantasy present, the picture should be related to real life situations and experiences so the child will not be confused.</p>	15	12	9	6	3
<p>6. Will the book <u>EXTEND THE CHILD'S KNOWLEDGE</u> or give him some understanding of human behavior or of the world in which he lives? The book should contain some new information, or should encourage the child to think, and should give the child a new approach to something with which he is already familiar, or it may extend his knowledge of humor.</p>	5	4	3	2	1
<p>7. Is the <u>CONCLUSION</u> of the story appropriate? The end of the story as well as the entire story should leave the child with a pleasant feeling of completion and satisfaction. The child should not be left with fears and doubts.</p>	5	4	3	2	1
<p>8. Is the book <u>ETHIC/LLY SOUND</u>? The content of the story should be socially acceptable. The book need not teach a specific ethical lesson, but it should be completely sound in its morality.</p>	5	4	3	2	1
<p>9. Are the <u>PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS</u> of the book acceptable with: (1) Durable binding (2) Large print (3) A size easy to handle (4) An attractive outside cover. The book should have a strong and attractive binding and pages of durable paper, large clear printing, and a size easy for the child to handle.</p>	5	4	3	2	1

## APPENDIX C

## LIST OF SELECTED BOOKS

Title of the Book	Authors
1. Angus and the Cat	Marjorie Flack
2. Ask Mr. Bear	Marjorie Flack
3. Baby Susan's Chickens	Jean Horton Berg
4. Caps for Sale	Esphyr Slobodkina
5. Curious George Rides A Bike	H. A. Rey
6. Flip and the Cows	Wesley Dennis
7. How the Camel Got his Hump	Rudyard Kipling
8. Johnny Maple Leaf	Alvin Tresselt
9. Katy and the Big Snow	Virginia Lee Burton
10. Kiki Loves Music	Charlotte Steiner
11. Little Black Sambo	Helen Bannerman
12. Little Red-Riding Hood	Old Folk Tale
13. Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel	Virginia Lee Burton
14. Mike, the Milkman	Jene Barr
15. Millions of Cats	Wanda Gag
16. My Daddy is a Policeman	Carol Denison
17. Policeman Paul	Jene Barr
18. Sleeping Beauty	Old Folk Tale
19. Timothy Turtle	Alice V. Davis
20. The Circus Baby	Maud and Miska Petersham
21. The Little Fireman	Grace Skaar
22. The Little House	Virginia Lee Burton
23. The Man in the Manhole	Juniper Sage
24. The New Puppy	Golden Book
25. The Poky Little Puppy	Golden Book
26. The Rabbit Story	Alvin Tresselt
27. The Three Little Animals	Margaret Wise Brown
28. The Three Bears	Robert Southey

THE TWELVE BOOKS USED BY TEACHERS,  
GROUP I MOTHERS AND GROUP II MOTHERS

Title of Books	Authors
1. Sleeping Beauty	Old Fairy Tale
2. How the Camel Got His Hump	Rudyard Kipling
3. Little Black Sambo	Helen Bannerman
4. Three Little Animals	Margaret Wise Brown
5. Katy and the Big Snow	Virginia Lee Burton
6. Caps for Sale	Esphyr Slobodkina
7. Kiki Loves Music	Charlotte Steiner
8. The Circus Baby	Maud and Miska Petersham
9. Flip and the Cows	Wesley Dennis
10. Angus and the Cat	Marjorie Flack
11. Curious George Rides a Bike	H. A. Rey
12. Policeman Paul	Jene Barr

APPENDIX D

## FACE SHEET

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years of education completed: (Please circle number.)

Grade School 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

High School 1 2 3 4

College 1 2 3 4 5 Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Advanced Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_

Other Family Members:

Name Age Relationship to Child

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(Please fill in or check the following blanks.)

1. Child is read to:

\_\_\_\_\_ daily \_\_\_\_\_ several times daily \_\_\_\_\_ weekly \_\_\_\_\_ several times weekly

2. When is the child's usual time for stories?

\_\_\_\_\_ morning \_\_\_\_\_ afternoon \_\_\_\_\_ evening

3. Approximately how long is the period when reading to the child?

\_\_\_\_\_ 5 minutes \_\_\_\_\_ 15 minutes  
 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 minutes \_\_\_\_\_ longer than 15 minutes

4. Do the parents read to the child? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Do other adults read to the child? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ If so, whom \_\_\_\_\_

5. Approximately how many books does the child have read to him at each storytime? \_\_\_\_\_

6. Approximately how many books does the child own? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Source of books: \_\_\_\_\_ gifts \_\_\_\_\_ parents \_\_\_\_\_ public library

8. Do the parents borrow books for the child from the public library?

Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Does the child go to the library with an adult?  
 Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Does the child help select the book? \_\_\_\_\_

9. What books are most often read to the child? \_\_\_\_\_

---

## DATA FROM THE FACE SHEET

I. Occupation of Mothers of Groups I and II

15 full time Homemakers

1 Homemaker and Waitress

II. Educational Status of the Mothers

	<u>Grade School</u>		<u>High School</u>		<u>College</u>	
	Less than 8 years	Com- pleted	Less than 4 years	Com- pleted	Less than 4 years	Com- pleted
Group I Mothers	0	0	0	1	5	2
Group II Mothers	0	1	1	2	2	2

III. The information for the nine questions on the face sheet to which the sixteen mothers supplied information is summarized in the following way.

1. The responses of the sixteen mothers in relation to the time the child was read to was:

1 daily, 8 several times daily, 4 weekly, 3 several times weekly

2. The number of mothers reported that the child's usual time for reading was:

6 in the afternoon, 10 in the evening

3. The Number of mothers responding to the questions: Approximately how long is the period when reading to the child? were: 2 five minutes, 2 ten minutes, 6 fifteen minutes, and 6 longer than 15 minutes.

4. Fourteen mothers responded Yes and two mothers responded No in regard to the question: Do the parents read to the child? The other persons that read to the child were: brothers, sisters, grandmothers, aunt, and babysitter.

5. The mothers reported a range of from 1-4 books, in answer to the question: Approximately how many books are read to the child at each story time.

6. Approximately how many books does the child own? To this question the mothers reported a range of 1 to 50 books, with most of them reporting between 15 and 20 books.

7. The number of mothers that checked the source from which the books were secured was: 10 gifts, 12 from parents, 7 used the public library.

8. Twelve mothers responded Yes and four mothers responded No in regard to the three following questions: Do the parents borrow books for the child from the public library? Does the child go to the library with an adult? Does the child help select the book?

9. The mother's responded to the question: What books are most often read to the child? were:

1. Child Craft was listed 5 times

2. The following books were named once:

Golden Books:

Wizard of Oz

Shaggy Dog

Scuffy the Tugboat

Mr. Bear's House

Sunny the Bunny

Farmer Jones

Billy Whiskers

Peter Rabbit

Religious Stories



LETTER AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR JUDGING THE  
BOOKS (TEACHERS-MOTHERS GROUP I)

Dear Parent of a Four-Year-Old:

I am in the process of developing a guide which could be used by parents to rate books for preschoolers. This guide needs to be tested by a group of parents who will rate the twelve books provided.

Below are the directions to help you use the guides which are to be found on the attached sheet, "A Guide for Selecting Books for the Preschool (Three and Four-Year-Old) Child."

Your help and cooperation in this research is appreciated. You will be sent the results of the study late in the summer.

Sincerely yours,

Lola Wettig

DIRECTIONS

1. Please read each book carefully.
2. Please read each question and the description of the question on the attached sheet, "A Guide for Selecting Books for the Preschool Child." (Three and Four-Year-Olds.)
3. Please rate each book by placing a check mark in the space provided which most nearly represents your judgment of this characteristic of the book.

EXAMPLE

RATING SCALE

<u>EXCELLENT:</u>	<u>GOOD:</u>	<u>FAIR:</u>	<u>POOR:</u>	<u>UNACCEPTABLE:</u>
means the criterion is <u>completely</u> exemplified.	means the criterion is exemplified to a <u>high</u> degree.	means the criterion is exemplified to a <u>moderate</u> degree.	means the criterion is exemplified to a <u>low</u> degree.	means the criterion <u>is not</u> exemplified in any way.

## A GUIDE FOR SELECTING BOOKS FOR THE PRESCHOOL CHILD (THREE AND FOUR-YEAR-OLD)

## R A T I N G   S C A L E

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Unacceptable
<p>1. Is the book <u>INTERESTING</u>? The book should catch the child's attention in the first few sentences and hold his attention to the end. The three and four-year-old child likes plenty of action, suspense, and a logical plot in the story with an economy of incidence.</p>					
<p>2. Is the book of a desirable <u>LENGTH</u>? The three and four-year-old child has a relatively short attention span. Most preschool children can listen for a period of from five to fifteen minutes. The book should not be too long or too short and simple for the child.</p>					
<p>3. Is the <u>STORY CONTENT</u> of the book such that the child will not be confused? The story content should be related to the familiar so the child will not be confused by the new or unfamiliar. All books do not contain an element of fantasy; however, when there is an element of fantasy present it should be related enough to real life situations and experiences so the child will not be confused with what is real and what is unreal.</p>					
<p>4. Is the <u>STYLE OF WRITING</u> of the book suitable? Sentence structure and grammar should be correct. The three and four-year-old child seems to enjoy "catchy" and "silly" sounding words, as well as repetition and rhythm. This style of writing which includes "silly" sounding words would be appropriate; however, slang and dialect should be avoided.</p>					
<p>5. Is the book suitably <u>ILLUSTRATED</u>? The pictures should be large, distinct and not blurred, appealing, and free from too much detail. The pictures should appear frequently enough to illustrate the story as it proceeds. If there is an element of fantasy present, the picture should be related to real life situations and experiences so the child will not be confused.</p>					
<p>6. Will the book <u>EXTEND THE CHILD'S KNOWLEDGE</u> or give him some understanding of human behavior or of the world in which he lives? The book should contain some new information, or should encourage the child to think, and should give the child a new approach to something with which he is already familiar, or it may extend his knowledge of humor.</p>					
<p>7. Is the <u>CONCLUSION</u> of the story appropriate? The end of the story as well as the entire story should leave the child with a pleasant feeling of completion and satisfaction. The child should not be left with fears and doubts.</p>					
<p>8. Is the book <u>ETHICALLY SOUND</u>? The content of the story should be socially acceptable. The book need not teach a specific ethical lesson, but it should be completely sound in its morality.</p>					
<p>9. Are the <u>PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS</u> of the book acceptable with: (1) Durable binding (2) Large print (3) A size easy to handle (4) An attractive outside cover. The book should have a strong and attractive binding and pages of durable paper, large clear printing, and a size easy for the child to handle.</p>					

## LETTER AND INSTRUCTIONS TO MOTHERS OF GROUP II

Dear Parent of a Four-Year-Old:

I am in the process of collecting information from parents that will help in forming a guide for the selection of books for preschool children.

Because you are the mother of a four-year-old you have been chosen to participate in this study.

Please read the twelve books which I have left with you. Beside the title of the books, which are listed below, write the word Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, or Unacceptable as you feel the book merits. You may list as many as you feel under each classification; that is if you feel all the books fall into one classification feel free to place them there.

Sincerely yours,

Lola Wettig  
Graduate Student in Family Relations  
and Child Development Department

Title of Books

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Angus and the Cat              | _____ 10. Paul, the Policeman     |
| _____ 2. Caps for Sale                  | _____ 11. Sleeping Beauty         |
| _____ 3. Circus Baby                    | _____ 12. Three Little<br>Animals |
| _____ 4. Curious George<br>Rides a Bike |                                   |
| _____ 5. Flip and the Cows              |                                   |
| _____ 6. How the Camel Got His Hump     |                                   |
| _____ 7. Katy and the Big Snow          |                                   |
| _____ 8. Kiki Loves Music               |                                   |
| _____ 9. Little Black Sambo             |                                   |

## APPENDIX E

## THE TWO RATERS EVALUATION OF TWENTY-EIGHT BOOKS

Title of the Book	Rater I		Agree- ment	Rater II		Agree- ment	Agree- ment of Rater I and II
	1st.	2nd.		1st.	2nd.		
1. Angus and the Cat	89	88	A*	94	94	A	A
2. Ask Mr. Bear	86	89	A	94	93	A	A
3. Baby Susan's Chickens	97	95	A	92	92	A	A
4. Caps for Sale	78	79	A	84	80	A	A
5. Curious George Rides A Bike	88	92	A	86	86	A	A
6. Flip and the Cows	99	96	A	99	99	A	A
7. How the Camel Got His Hump	33	36	A	33	33	A	A
8. Johnny Maple Leaf	69	65	D**	72	72	A	A
9. Katy and the Big Snow	81	76	A	81	82	A	A
10. Kiki Loves Music	85	84	A	80	80	A	A
11. Little Black Sambo	40	42	A	46	50	A	D
12. Little Red-Riding Hood	39	43	A	46	42	D	A
13. Mike Mulligan and His Steam Shovel	82	81	A	85	85	A	A
14. Mike, the Milkman	91	94	A	90	89	A	A
15. Millions of Cats	34	34	A	49	55	A	D
16. My Daddy is a Policeman	90	89	A	95	92	A	A
17. Paul, the Policeman	93	94	A	94	92	A	A
18. Sleeping Beauty	40	41	A	40	40	A	A
19. Timothy Turtle	86	85	D	86	86	A	A
20. The Circus Baby	74	73	A	73	73	A	A
21. The Little Fireman	62	64	A	62	64	A	A
22. The Little House	68	70	A	77	84	A	A
23. The Man in the Manhole	72	73	A	78	77	A	A
24. The New Puppy	95	94	A	94	93	A	A
25. The Poky Little Puppy	67	69	A	67	71	A	A
26. The Rabbit Story	86	88	A	96	95	A	A
27. The Three Little Animals	39	40	A	40	41	A	A
28. The Three Bears	39	37	A	39	36	A	A
Total							
			26A			27A	26A
			2D			1D	2D

\*A Means Agree

\*\*D Means Disagree

APPENDIX F

The Nursery School Teachers' Evaluation  
of the Twelve Books in Percent

Title of Books	Raters								Total Score	Average Score	Classifi- cation
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H			
1. Sleeping Beauty	40	23	39	41	44	40	40	35	302	38	Poor
2. How the Camel Got His Hump	28	21	55	43	89	33	33	21	323	40	Poor
3. Little Black Sambo	32	65	47	39	98	50	40	33	372	53	Fair
4. Three Little Animals	42	24	73	38	63	41	39	28	320	40	Poor
5. Katy and the Big Snow	84	96	71	93	83	82	81	87	677	85	Good
6. Caps for Sale	82	97	80	70	72	80	78	91	650	81	Good
7. Flip and the Cows	94	84	86	72	100	99	99	69	703	88	Excellent
8. The Circus Baby	80	100	77	51	92	73	74	81	628	79	Good
9. Angus and the Cat	90	100	89	95	100	94	89	80	737	92	Excellent
10. Curious George Rides a Bike	92	82	73	55	68	86	88	90	634	79	Good
11. Kiki Loves Music	86	100	87	88	100	80	85	69	695	87	Excellent
12. Paul, the Policeman	90	93	82	96	99	92	93	80	725	90	Excellent

Group I Mothers' Evaluation  
of the Twelve Books in Percent

Title of Books	Raters								Total Score	Average Score	Classifi- cation
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H			
1. Sleeping Beauty	77	72	57	98	92	36	85	59	576	72	Good
2. How the Camel Got His Hump	68	53	87	51	92	31	67	77	526	66	Good
3. Little Black Sambo	99	87	97	97	100	96	86	96	758	95	Excellent
4. Three Little Animals	49	70	66	84	73	46	60	63	511	64	Fair
5. Katy and the Big Snow	75	96	96	61	75	41	86	50	580	73	Good
6. Caps for Sale	96	77	98	98	99	75	91	80	714	89	Excellent
7. Flip and the Cows	91	92	67	84	99	96	74	58	661	85	Good
8. The Circus Baby	99	80	82	70	100	77	70	80	588	82	Good
9. Angus and the Cat	88	95	96	96	92	100	95	100	762	95	Excellent
10. Curious George Rides a Bike	99	94	100	63	99	99	95	80	729	91	Excellent
11. Kiki Loves Music	84	93	84	63	100	92	92	57	665	86	Excellent
12. Paul, the Policeman	100	100	92	70	100	74	100	39	675	84	Good



Teachers Weighted Scores Converted to  
Qualitative Classifications

Title of Books	Raters								Total	Classifi- cation
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1. Sleeping Beauty	U	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	7P, 1U	Poor
2. How the Camel Got His Hump	U	F	P	E	P	P	U	P	2U, 4P, 1F, 1E	Poor
3. Little Black Sambo	F	F	P	E	F	P	P	P	3F, 4P, 1E	Poor
4. Three Little Animals	U	G	P	F	P	P	P	P	1U, 5P, 1G, 1F	Poor
5. Katy and the Big Snow	E	G	E	G	G	G	E	E	4G, 4E	Good and Excellent
6. Caps for Sale	E	G	G	G	G	G	E	E	5G, 3E	Good
7. Flip and the Cows	G	E	G	E	E	E	G	E	4G, 4E	Good and Excellent
8. The Circus Baby	E	G	F	E	G	G	G	G	5G, 1F, 2E	Good
9. Angus and the Cat	E	E	E	E	E	E	G	E	1G, 7E	Excellent
10. Curious George Rides a Bike	G	G	F	G	E	E	E	E	3G, 1F, 4E	Excellent and Good
11. Kiki Loves Music	E	E	E	E	G	G	G	E	3G, 5E	Excellent
12. Paul, the Policeman	E	G	E	E	E	E	G	E	2G, 6E	Excellent

Group I Mothers' Weighted Scores Converted to Qualitative Classification

Title of Books	Raters								Totals	Classifi- cation
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1. Sleeping Beauty	G	G	F	E	E	P	G	E	1P, 2F, 3G, 2E	Good
2. How the Camel Got His Hump	G	F	E	F	E	P	G	G	1P, 3G, 2F, 2E	Good
3. Little Black Sambo	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	8E	Excellent
4. Three Little Animals	F	G	G	G	G	F	F	F	4F, 4G	Fair and Good
5. Katy and the Big Snow	G	E	E	F	G	P	E	F	1P, 2F, 2G, 3E	Excellent
6. Caps for Sale	E	G	E	E	E	G	E	G	3G, 5E	Excellent
7. Flip and the Cows	E	E	G	G	E	E	G	F	1F, 3G, 4E	Good
8. The Circus Baby	E	G	G	G	E	G	G	G	6G, 2E	Good
9. Angus and the Cat	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	E	8E	Excellent
10. Curious George Rides a Bike	E	E	E	F	E	E	E	G	1F, 1G, 6E	Excellent
11. Kiki Loves Music	G	E	G	F	E	E	E	F	2G, 2F, 4E	Excellent
12. Paul, the Policeman	E	E	E	G	E	G	E	P	1P, 2G, 5E	Excellent

Group II Mothers' Weighted Scores Converted  
to Qualitative Classifications

Title of Books	Raters								Totals	Classifi- cation
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
1. Sleeping Beauty	P	E	E	P	G	E	F	G	2P, 1F, 2G, 3E	Good and Excellent
2. How the Camel Got His Hump	P	G	G	F	F	G	F	E	1P, 3F, 3G, 1E	Good
3. Little Black Sambo	E	E	E	G	E	E	G	E	2G, 6E	Excellent
4. Three Little Animals	F	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	1F, 7G	Good
5. Katy and the Big Snow	P	P	F	G	E	G	E	F	2P, 2F, 2G, 2E	Equal
6. Caps for Sale	G	G	F	E	G	G	F	G	2F, 5G, 1E	Good
7. Flip and the Cows	G	F	G	G	F	F	E	G	3F, 4G, 1E	Good
8. The Circus Baby	G	E	G	G	G	G	E	G	6G, 2E	Good
9. Angus and the Cat	G	G	G	F	F	F	E	G	3F, 4G, 1E	Good
10. Curious George Rides a Bike	E	G	G	E	E	G	G	F	1F, 4G, 3E	Good
11. Kiki Loves Music	F	P	F	G	G	G	G	G	1P, 2F, 5G	Good
12. Paul, the Policeman	G	F	P	E	E	G	E	F	1P, 2F, 2G, 3E	Excellent

VITA

Lola Wettig

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GUIDE FOR THE SELECTION OF BOOKS FOR  
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born at Valley Falls, Kansas, May 29, 1935, the  
daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Wettig (father deceased).

Education: Attended grade school in Valley Falls, Kansas,  
Nortonville, Kansas, Canton, Kansas, and White City, Kansas;  
graduated from White City Rural High School, White City,  
Kansas, in 1953; attended Kansas State University, 1953-1955;  
received the Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics  
from Oklahoma State University in 1957 with a major in Home  
Economics Education; completed requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science in Family Relations and Child Development  
in August, 1961.

Professional Experience: Taught home economics in the Cleveland  
High School, Cleveland, Oklahoma, 1957 to 1960; Graduate  
Assistant in the Department of Family Relations and Child  
Development at Oklahoma State University, 1960 to 1961.