

DO WE KNOW WHEN A CHILD IS READY TO READ?

HARRIET SEAY BINION,* Edmond

Educators have become alarmed since statistics have been reported showing that twenty to thirty percent of first grade children fail annually because they did not learn to read. It is now generally agreed that the principal factors which make for reading success can be measured to a reasonable degree. These factors are: mental maturity of six or six and one-half years, wide and varied experiences, ability to assume a task and continue working through difficulty, ability to listen attentively to stories, to follow directions, and to sense ideas, an adequate vocabulary to express himself freely, correct enunciation, normal physique, and desirable social adjustment (Hildredth 1936, p. 148).

Dr. Roland L. Beck, Director of Demonstration School, Edmond, Oklahoma and the writer have prepared a reading readiness test that they believe will indicate to a reasonable degree whether a child is ready to read. This reading readiness test consists of twenty-three divisions. The determining factors involved are: development in observing likenesses and differences in position; ability to do problematic thinking; picture interpretation in associating past experiences to solve a new situation; association of family; discriminating and making choice; breadth of experience through ability to recognize pictures; visual discrimination; knowledge of things about them; recognition of pictures of animals common to pre-primers and primers; concepts of common things; ability to identify pictures of animals common in child experience in story books for small children; identification of pictures of objects; association of meanings with pictures of objects; ability to follow directions and to listen attentively; recognition of the number concept; recall of experiences; association of picture meaning and objects; recognition of differences in size; auditory perception; ability to do clear thinking, to think through and make a choice, to know and recall in proper order the sequence of a story, to perform a given task, and to test motor control by drawing around the hand; sustained attention to a task; coordination of eye and hand; problematic thinking (assembling the parts of a puzzle.)

An understanding of the informational and experienced backgrounds of children together with data on the child's readiness for the complicated technique of reading will enable the teacher to place the pupils in groups where their needs can be met. A chronological age of six or six and a half is not an index of a child's reading readiness, but a test that will determine the factors necessary for successful progress in reading will enable the teacher to know when intensive study in this subject should begin.

LITERATURE CITED

Hildredth, Gertrude, 1936. *Learning the three R's*. Philadelphia: Educational Publishers, Inc.

* Supervisor of Primary Grades, Central State College.