

EDUCATION BY PLAYS AND GAMES

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Education by Plays and Games by George Ellsworth Johnson

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GEORGE ELLSWORTH JOHNSON

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THE FIRST TOAD OF THE SPRING

Photograph by Dr. C. F. Hodge

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BY
GEORGE ELLSWORTH JOHNSON

McGrath Publishing Company

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NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARK ASSOCIATION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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PREFACE

The study of which this book is a revision was begun at Clark University and published in the *Pedagogical Seminary* in 1894. Since then the writer has been in very intimate and almost constant touch with children. His interest in child play, awakened years ago and kept active by observation and personal contact with children in clubs, play schools, school playgrounds, and the home circle, has been encouraged by numberless requests from teachers for the little study published ten years ago. Largely in response to these requests this revision has been undertaken. It is earnestly hoped that the book may help promote a wider and higher appreciation of play and of its value in education, and add somewhat to the sum of child happiness in the world.

The discussion of the meaning of play, of the relation of play and work, and of the history and application of play to education is by no means full. It can scarcely do more than give the point of view. The discussion of the periods of childhood is a bare summary, but is sufficient, it is hoped, to make clear their relation to the Course of Plays and Games. Of the course itself it may be admitted that it is perhaps too condensed. The whole study is valuable, if at all, mainly for its suggestiveness.

The games that are described in the course have been selected from a thousand or more. The reader should not lose sight of the fact that the variations of children's plays

are well-nigh infinite, yet the essential features are few. The games described cover quite fully the whole field many times, and are, it is believed, wholly adequate in number. The games selected are the older ones, as a rule, and an effort has been made to retain the older names. Most new games will be found upon examination to be modifications of old ones. The descriptions of games are brief, but they are full enough to give sufficient directions for playing. The essential features of the games have been kept prominent, and they are the groundwork upon which the ingenuity of the teacher can build to suit her peculiar needs.

The greatest omissions are in those portions of the course that suggest the informal plays for the different periods, as the constructive, nature, collecting, imitative, dramatic, and musical plays, puzzles, riddles, and the like. These might well require several volumes to present them fully, yet it is hoped that even here the course will prove very suggestive.

Attention should be called to the fact that, while some minor differences will naturally appear in the plays of boys and girls all through the course, practically no differentiation is intended in the games of boys and girls before the fourth period, and then in the rougher games only. While many of the games common to boys are generally not played by girls, the reason lies rather in custom than in any real differentiation of the sexes up to the close of this period, at about twelve years. Girls will instinctively avoid some games, but the attitude of the parent and teacher should be to extend the field of plays and games for girls throughout all the periods.

A word remains to be said in regard to the aim of the Course of Plays and Games. No one will make the error of supposing that the course is intended as a substitute for