

EDUCATION FOR RECREATION IN KANSAS

by

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All of us are very much concerned, directly or indirectly, with the individual and collective problems of living. The entire educational system has been built on the basis of training for better living and the richer appreciation of life itself. The school has an important duty to perform in the training of youth to canvass the great variety of resources open to them and to choose intelligently for an enriched life.

Our schools now recognize that leisure is a vital part of modern life and that it will become increasingly important from time to time. What the boy and girl of today will do with his or her leisure time in the future, depends on how adequately the children in the classroom become acquainted with these resources about them and how well they develop their senses of values and judgments for wise discrimination between the good and the bad.

The American Physical Education Association has taken a very definite step in the education for leisure time by enlarging the scope of the Physical Education Program to include not only Health and Physical Education, but a broader and newer field, known as "Recreation".

The program of Recreation, whether it be in the school or in the community, should not be only a program of appreciation of the higher life values, but it must be a performance program. Action is essential and it follows that the schools must necessarily enlarge their scope of opportunities for practice through the contacts in the classroom, on the playground, athletic field and gymnasium, and in the performance of the regular school tasks.

It is conceded that many opportunities for performance can be presented on the pleasure basis or through the recreational approach. Play is a natural phase in the life of every normal child and should receive the same emphasis that is given to the mental growth for a balanced character physically, mentally, and morally.

Youth needs joyous adventures in recreational activities that allow them to run, to swim, to dance, to explore, to create things of beauty with their hands, and to express themselves in self-satisfying ways in their daily living.

Training for leisure time can be approached by participation on the pleasure basis in physical education, music, arts and crafts, drama, nature activities, hobbies, and other recreational activities, as well as by such subjects as civics and the social studies. Physical training and games have a very definite value in the training for cooperative community living. Man lives in social groups and since physical activities are forms of behavior, the recreational values are multiplied if the enjoyment of the individual is shared by the group.

Participation in recreational arts and crafts will develop not only the skills of the hand, self-reliance, dependability, perseverance, inventiveness; but also will provide the boy and girl with definite leisure-time attitudes that will carry over into adult living.

Music, if approached on the recreational basis, cannot be stressed too much because as an activity it is so closely related to so many aspects of life, and it is always within the reach of every person as a form of beauty in itself.

Recreational drama presents another form of splendid opportunity for genuine enjoyment for individuals or groups by allowing for the self-release of emotional urges.

The same values can be pointed out for activities in the field of nature through such activities as hiking, collecting, camping, exploring, which bring genuine pleasure to the individual and also encourage him to learn more about the plant and animal life about him for practical use in his daily living.

It has been said that the proper place for much of this type of training should be centered about the home rather than the school. Such is probably true, but due to the fact that the modern home does not and cannot in every instance meet these problems