



Elan Esprit Preschool Games

September 2003

I would like to tell you a bit about the games we play with children.

When we accept a child for enrollment into Elan Esprit it is because we see the potential in the child and the interest in learning from the child. These children are ages 2 to 4. This is young-- they more often aren't cognizant of the value of knowing the alphabet, the use of math, or the joy of reading for oneself.

It is the job of our teachers to find the entry points to grab their interest enough for children to begin to accomplish various skills and knowings. No class group is always the same, so we are shifting the methods of getting the students attention constantly to match the existing group of students. This is where games often come in.

Here are some examples:

1. The students in a class are not following directions well, so are accomplishing less.

The game is (for a particular class period) do some work, clean-up, go potty, wash hands, push the chairs in, and then get a stamp.

2. Many of the students are not producing what they are capable of in class. They are being distracted by social banter and/or what the other students are doing.

The game is a special sticker for 10 pages of production.

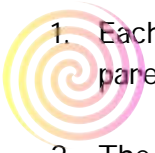
You will from time to time see charts on the walls reflecting these games. Parents should look for these, and then have the teacher explain the current game so you can be supportive of your child.

1. You finished book C, well done!
2. You completed 8 pages of work, great!
3. You got another sticker for 10 pages of work, great!
4. You traced all those lines, well done!
5. Can you teach me how to play this on the keyboard?
6. Would you read me your book after dinner? I love having you read to me!

Successful games:

For the students, these games are fun and produce results only so long as the games belong to the students. For these games to be successful there are a few basics, as parents, you should be aware of.





1. Each game is a choice for the student. This choice should be personal, not for the teacher, the parent, the grandmother, etc.
2. The student can choose to win or not win from hour to hour, day to day, or week to week. If the student does not win, a new decision can be made to win.
3. A great deal of patience is required from the teachers and parents to allow the children to choose what they will, change their mind and make another choice, perhaps change again, until they finally make a decision to really play the game to win.

The victory in really playing to win is that skills are gained, competence increases, confidence in self increases. As a result, the students rise up a notch in learning for themselves—learning what they have a purpose to learn.

The end of the game:

These games will usually end up a loss for the students if they are taken away from them. There are several reasons a child may choose to learn or play a game.

1. To please their families.
2. They are afraid to lose.
3. They don't want to get in trouble with teachers or parents.
4. They don't want to be thought less of.
5. They like the game, have a purpose to learn what is being taught personally, and have chosen to win.

Of course number 5 above is the only real win for the student. Force, worry, or stress from a source exterior to the student should not be present. The amount of love, care, friendliness, interest in the child, cannot go down based on the winning or losing of these classroom games.

Our students do move through our program at different speeds—some are faster in reading, some in writing, and others in music or math. This is usual. Any competition from a student is best if it is against oneself. For example, the student learned to write two letters then sets his sites on learning four letters. Not Johnny is writing four letters so why aren't you?

Children have a great deal of spirit—of life to them. We, at Elan Esprit, want to bring out this spirit, while guiding them to take on their education. This includes academic skills, communication skills, honesty, control of their bodies, personal skills and more.

If can sometimes seem that these lively spirits are best trained like puppies, but puppies they are not.

I know the job of a parent is tougher than that of a teacher and hope you will find some of the information above of use as parents.

Candy Mathews
Headmistress

