



EQUIPPED WITH a big blue basket, a flannel board and a friendly smile, Chapter 1 teacher Heather Smith brings preschool to selected four-year-olds through home visits. Above, Ann Morrozoff helps Smith head to the next stop.



MANY OF SMITH'S PORTABLE LESSONS are built around themes. Here she shares a story about the weather with Miranda.

SUPPLEMENTS IN-SCHOOL PROGRAM

Home-Based Teacher Prepares 4-Year-Olds For Kindergarten

BY SUSAN USHER

Four-year-old Miranda thinks it's great that a teacher comes to her house once a week, giving her undivided, one-on-one attention for at least an hour.

She usually watches for "Miss Heather" at the window and greets her at the door, eagerly peeking inside the big blue laundry basket in Heather Smith's arms.

The Chapter 1 home-based pre-kindergarten teacher works with Miranda and other four-year-olds in the Waccamaw, Bolivia and Supply school districts—the number served varies, depending upon where each child lives and the travel time involved.

Unlike some classroom teachers, she not only hears about but meets their parents, their pets and their favorite playthings.

"She gets real excited about 'Miss Heather' coming each week," says Miranda's mom, Ann Morrozoff. "It gives her something to look forward to and something to talk with her brother about when he comes home from school. Hopefully when she starts kindergarten she'll have a head start."

Jonathan is in fourth grade at Supply Elementary School, where Smith's office is located.

A typical weekly session with a student includes three to five different hands-on activities designed to equip students with the skills they need to be ready for kindergarten.

"I want them to be able to see words and letters and to know they mean something, and I want them to learn to be excited about school," said Smith, a first-year teacher who graduated from West Brunswick High School and UNC-Charlotte.

"At the end of the year I want to give each of them a tour of the school they'll be attending next year, so they won't be scared, so they'll be like little leaders when they start school. I'll let them see the school and introduce them and their parents to the principal."

Working with those objectives and others in mind, Smith tries to capitalize on students' curiosity and personal interests.

"I find it's better to sit and talk, to let them lead with what they are interested in. There's a lot of going outside and learning from their environment."

"If I notice a child is frustrated with an activity, I just throw it out and do something else," she said.



ERNIE of Sesame Street fame gives Miranda plenty of practice zipping zippers, snapping snaps and buttoning buttons.

Lessons are personalized for each child, based on needs identified in the "DIAL R" screening test that assesses motor skills, concept and language. The assessment determines which students qualify for the pre-kindergarten service.

Most lessons are also built around a theme, perhaps planning a birthday party or the weather. That makes it easier to get youngsters involved in learning situations that flow naturally from one activity to another, and it helps determine what goes in "Miss Heather's" big blue basket of supplies.

Working in the home with children "is good for me," she says, offering pluses every teacher doesn't have. "It has helped me get to know parents, and I get to work with the children individually. I get to see their home life and their interests."

Smith works not only with the youngsters, but with their parents as well. It's personal contact and help most parents, including Ann Morrozoff, eagerly welcome.

"They provide a lot of resources that help me with her," said Morrozoff, gesturing toward Miranda, who is

totally absorbed in a weather-related activity with Smith, matching teddy bears dressed for various kinds of weather with the appropriate setting.

Each week Smith leaves a packet of parent-child activities to work with until her return. The packet typically includes board manipulation games with easy-to-read, easy-to-follow instructions—"whatever I have or whatever I think they need to work on," she says.

Also, parents receive a copy of their child's individual education plan, a calendar with suggested activities they can do together each week, Chapter 1 and pre-kindergarten program newsletters and other resource materials.

Families are also enrolled in the Book-It program, which encourages parents to read books aloud to their children. In January students and parents who had read their books were treated to a meal at a local restaurant.

"I have a really great group of parents," says Smith. "I can count on them to do anything I ask for them to do for the next week."

Parents also visit the Chapter 1 Parent Resource Center at Supply Elementary School regularly to borrow books and other materials they can use with their children, take their children to story hour at the library and participate in periodic outings and workshops.

Chapter 1 Pre-kindergarten started last year with school-based programs at Union Elementary and Lincoln Primary schools, a response to concerns about many area children not having the skills they need when entering school for the first time.

"We feel the earlier we can reach the child, the more we can reduce the remedial instruction needed later," said Chapter 1 Director Patricia W. Ward.

"In February," she recall, "we still had so many children on the waiting list we tried to come up with another way of serving them, and we didn't have the space at school. We started the first home-based program at

Lincoln last year, and parents loved it."

"We like the school-based model, but the home-based allows us to work with the parent and child."

In addition to Smith's three-school home-based teaching circuit, 16 students each are being served again this year through school programs at Lincoln and Union. At Lincoln two teachers share responsibilities, offering a school-based program Tuesday through Thursday and working on Mondays with a different set of children in a home-based program.

The program fills a gap in services. Before, if a parent couldn't afford a private preschool program and didn't qualify for Head Start or exceptional children's services, "there was nothing for them," Smith said.

Early screening by the program also spots potential hearing or speech problems. Smith has already referred two students to the school system speech therapist—great early help, she says, reinforcing the concept of pre-kindergarten.

Results of the early contacts with parent and child are promising.

Last year, the home-based program at Lincoln continued from February through the end of the school year, then they joined students in the school-based program for four weeks on the school campus in June for additional learning experiences.

The students had been tested before entering the program and were tested at the end.

"We didn't know what to expect," said Ward. "When we got results we were amazed. We could see a lot of difference. We want to look at it again after an entire year."

Spots are available now in the local program. Interested parents of four-year-olds are encouraged to contact Ward at 754-9282 or 457-5241 for information about eligibility screening.

YOU LOOK GREAT!

Your Optician Must Be

Optical Gallery

New Selection of Designer Frames from

GUCCI Christian Dior AVANT-GARDE OPTICS, INC.

WE ARRANGE EYE EXAMS.

50% OFF Clip & Save

YOUR CHOICE OF ANY FRAME IN STOCK
With Lens Purchase. Coupon must be presented at time of purchase. Not good with any other special offer. EXPIRES 3-31-94

OPTICAL GALLERY

Across from Sandfiddler Restaurant, Hwy. 130, Shallotte
CALL TODAY 754-4680

Valuable Coupon

AT BED LAND

CHOOSE YOUR COMFORT, SIZE & PRICE RANGE

BED SETS—PRICED TO SELL AS SETS—INDIVIDUAL PIECES AVAILABLE AT SLIGHT INCREASE—MANY MORE MODELS TO CHOOSE FROM

BUDGET FIRM TWIN Ea. Pc. \$39 Full, ea. pc. \$59 Queen, Sets \$169 King, Sets \$249	MEDIUM FIRM INNERSPRING TWIN Ea. Pc. \$49 Full, ea. pc. \$69 Queen, Sets \$189 King, Sets \$289	SEALY QUILTED FIRM #1 NAME IN BEDDING TWIN Ea. Pc. \$69 Full, ea. pc. \$89 Queen, Sets \$259 King, Sets \$359	FIRM 312 COIL 10 YR. WARRANTY TWIN Ea. Pc. \$69 Full, ea. pc. \$89 Queen, Sets \$249 King, Sets \$329
EXTRA FIRM 15 YR. WARRANTY TWIN Ea. Pc. \$89 Full, ea. pc. \$109 Queen, Sets \$299 King, Sets \$369	LUXURY FIRM 15 YR. WARRANTY TWIN Ea. Pc. \$99 Full, ea. pc. \$129 Queen, Sets \$349 King, Sets \$449	SEALY PLUSH OR FIRM TWIN Ea. Pc. \$129 Full, ea. pc. \$169 Queen, Sets \$419 King, Sets \$599	DOOR BUSTER FREE Video Chair Rocker Retail. \$49 Free with \$399 purchase Limited Quantity

HEADBOARDS starting as low as **\$29.95**

BUNK BEDS SOLID PINE STURDY AS LOW AS **\$98**

DAY BEDS MANY STYLES AS LOW AS **\$59**
Sides and backs only

BED LAND®

MATTRESS DISCOUNTERS

Shallotte, Across from Hardees
Open Mon thru Sat 9-5 • 754-2370