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TOWARD INDEPENDENCE

AN ABSTRACT OF

A THESIS

**PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
OF WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE COLLEGE**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
MASTER OF SCIENCE**

**by
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This study was an attempt to encourage the development of independence in seven-year-old children.

Children need to become independent of adult direction for their own emotional well-being. Our democratic society demands citizens that are capable of thinking and acting on their own.

Second grade is a transition point between the teacher-dominated first grade and the fairly independent work of the third grade. Second grade seems to be the logical point at which to encourage the development of independence in young children.

Before the study was begun, a survey of the literature was made in order to determine the most useful and appropriate materials to use in this program, as well as to gain an understanding of the physical, mental and emotional growth of the seven-year-old child.

The program itself was begun very slowly, using a number of manipulative materials familiar to the children, and, as time went on, more complex and abstract materials and activities were introduced to the program.

It was the author's plan to progress slowly until the children could manage independent work in reading, science, research, art techniques and all the other academic areas covered in the second grade. It was hoped that the children would develop self-confidence and a sense of personal identity

as they progressed during the year.

By the middle of the year, the children were well on their way to working on their own in many areas and a growth of confidence and self-satisfaction was noted. By June they were mostly able to handle themselves quite capably and use fairly large blocks of time to good advantage without a great deal of teacher direction.

An appraisal of the program indicated that the maturity of the children was perhaps the chief key to success in a program such as this. Careful planning of materials, time and the program itself is demanded of the teacher, as well as her enthusiasm and belief in this type of program.