

INTRODUCTION  
For PARENTS

## The Joy of Joy School

Welcome to Joy School! We hope this begins a lifelong focus on JOY with your children! Joy School is a truly remarkable preschool movement that has been around for more than thirty years and been used by at least a quarter million moms, families, and preschoolers. This updated edition is called Joy School 2.0, and preserves the timeless principles of Joy School while improving the methods, the format, and the delivery. To become more familiar with the whole Joy School movement, you may want to take the time to read the “Brief History of Joy School” that appears in the introductory manual.

These first two lessons and their accompanying activities have been prepared with the purpose of introducing the children to the routines and traditions of Joy School (both the worldwide traditions and routines and your own group’s new routines and traditions), allowing the children an eased entry into the home-based/cooperative preschool model, and teaching some of the songs that will be used throughout the year.

### Concept

Teach these lessons with a feeling of relaxed calmness. After all, the whole point of joy school is fun. The children will likely be nervous, especially if they have never attended a preschool or Joy School before. Your calmness will calm them.

Unlike the rest of the lesson plans, these lessons are meant to be done entirely and in order. Future lesson plans are set up so that you have choices and options, but these two should be followed exactly since many of the concepts, songs, and activities will be referred to in upcoming lessons.

It is recommended that the other parent-teachers attend one of the lessons. You may as a group decide to divide the attendees up, so some parents come to Lesson 0.1 and some come to 0.2, or have them all come to the Lesson 0.1. This really aids with continuity and consistency from house to house. It also helps ease the other parents’ apprehensions about their turn to teach future lessons.

Don’t be afraid to act silly, sing along, and “ham it up”! The children will love it, and you will find JOY in their delight and excitement about all you will be learning together! Have joy!

## Tips and Reminders

1. The lessons for this week are designed to help the children get acquainted with each other, learn each other's names, begin to know the joy of a preschool experience, and learn what is expected of them in terms of behavior.
2. Some children may be "leaving mother" for the first time and will be apprehensive about it. Some may need mother to stay a few minutes or (in extreme situations) to even stay the whole period. But usually it is best for the mother to tell the child goodbye and assure him that he will be doing lots of fun things and she will be back as soon as joy school is over. Children will usually stop crying as soon as mother is out of sight.
3. If your Joy School group has already been functioning for several months, or if this is your second or third year of Joy School, you will already have used the lesson plans in this manual, but it is wise to start each new school year with this introductory week for several reasons: Children love repetition. There may be some new children and mothers in your group who will need this orientation. The concepts taught in the Joy School lessons are not learned in "one easy lesson" but need to be reinforced over and over, not only in the Joy School group but in the home.
4. If this is to be the first preschool experience for the children in your group, we suggest that the mothers and children get together for an hour or so before the first school day and at the home of the mother who is to be the first teacher. Children are much less apprehensive about a new experience if they know a little about where it will be and who will be there. Show the children where they will play, where they will sit for stories, where the bathroom is, etc.
5. Be sure you have read completely the **Startup Manual**. It will be referred to often in this week's lessons.

## Lesson Overviews

The Joy of this unit should really be denoted as “The Joy of Joy School.” Have fun with these two short, fun, and important lessons.

### 0.1 The Joy of Joy School, Part One

This lesson introduces the routine for Welcome Time (decided on by your group, see Introductory Manual), introduces some of the “theme songs” for the year, such as “Oh Boy! I’ve Got Joy” and the “Rule Song”. You will also spend time helping the children to get to know each other.

### 0.2 The Joy of Joy School, Part Two

This lesson builds on the songs and routines taught in the last lesson, as well as has some games and activities to prepare the children for the upcoming Joy School days at other homes.

## By the End of This Unit...

Do not expect the children to be masters of long attention spans, to be without tantrums, drama, or arguments, or to sing and learn with the greatest of ease. But do not worry... those milestones will be reached. By the end of THIS unit, remember the purpose and premise of your efforts: to teach yourself and the children that JOY is our purpose and is available to us if we learn to appreciate it.

By the end of this unit, the children should know a few of the songs and should be familiar with the routines. Routines are incredibly important for children at this age: contrary to some popular philosophies, routine can actually FREE children, not restrict them. Especially for preschool children, routine gives them security. When children feel safe, they are able to think creatively and deeply, and they are able to expand their understanding. Routine is especially important for a cooperative home-based program like Joy School because the children will be learning at a new house every week. With an understanding of what will happen when they get there, regardless of the home or teacher, their fears will be calmed and they will be able to listen, learn, and expand. If you have a difficult child with a short attention span or other issues, remember that the kids will change and mature each month. You will usually see a marked improvement each month as they become comfortable with the routine.