

Table of Contents

Click on any of the titles to go directly to that section.

2 Joy School Policies

3 The Background of Joy School

6 Steps for Starting Joy School

Agenda for your Intro Meeting

9 Startup Checklists

Group Start Up List

Joy School Box

10 The Joys: Unit Organization

11 Preparing to Teach

Parent Meetings

Preparing Lessons

Setting Up Your Home

Supplies Needed in Every Home

Group Joy School Box

19 The Lesson Plans

Overall Information on Lesson Preparation

Lesson Plan Layout

Lesson Plan Outline

Gathering Time

Welcome Time

Lesson

Music and Movement

Free Play, Snack Time

Mellow Time

Arts and Crafts

Activities

Goodbye Time

Note to Parents

32 Discipline Tips

Sharing Toys

Raising Hands

Rules and Consequences

Issues with Your Own Child

Independence

36 Special Events

Birthdays and Excursions

Holidays and Optional Lessons

Joy School Policies

- **Each family participating in Joy School 2.0 must have an active Joy School 2.0 subscription to access the Joy School materials.** Once a family has enrolled in Joy School, they may use the materials with all the children within their household. Please be sure that all members of your group set up their subscription in Joy School properly and remember that sharing subscriptions with other families is not legal. Once you have subscribed, you will have access to the Joy School materials for as long as you maintain an active subscription.
- **Access to Lesson Plans and Music:** With the use of their personalized login and password, each participating family will have access to the online lesson plans and will access the Joy School music via online mp3 files that are part of each lesson. For your convenience, we've also included a full playlist of all songs for the unit on the main page for each unit.
- **Charitable Contributions:** A small percentage of every member's fees go to Eyrealm, a Public Charity, which helps needy children and parents around the world..
- Joy School has no affiliation with any particular church or religion.
- **Premise of Joy School:** The book *Teaching Your Children Joy* by Linda and Richard Eyre is the premise of Joy School and should be well read and understood by all Joy School teachers. It is available free at the link below. The Eyres' sequels, *Teaching Your Children Responsibility*, *Teaching Your Children Sensitivity*, and *Teaching Your Children Values*, are also helpful. These and many of the Eyres other books are now available online at eyresfreebooks.com.
- **Parent Involvement:** Joy School is designed to function best with both parents involved. While one parent will likely be taking care of most of the actual teaching of Joy School, it is important that the other parent keep informed about what is being covered at Joy School. Parent notes are provided to go with each lesson plan and it's great for both parents to read these notes and discuss what is being learned with their Joy School child. For parents that work during regular Joy School hours, we recommend having a Parents' Day every so often so that the non-regular-teacher parent can have some personal experience with their child's Joy School. (See Special Events section.)
- **Monthly Meetings:** Joy School groups that hold their regular monthly parent meetings are much more effective than those that forego the in-person meetings. Parent meetings can not only be informative and important in planning out the upcoming lessons, they can also be really fun and a great chance to build friendships.

- **Sharing Joy School:** All Joy School members are encouraged to share information about the program with friends and relatives. We have learned that the program “sells itself” to those who are interested in more active, involved parenting and to those who agree with the thesis that joy and self-confidence is the most important thing to teach preschoolers. If you love Joy School, please share it with your family and friends who could benefit from it!

- **The central belief of Joy School** is simply that children, while in their most impressionable years, need opportunities to enhance their natural capacity for joy which leads to more firm self-esteem and helps develop important social skills. This helps build a strong foundation for future academic and personal success. Joy School also believes that there are enormous benefits that come from parents teaching and working more closely with their own children.

The Background of Joy School

A Brief History of Joy School, by Linda and Richard Eyre

When we were raising our young children, we lived in the suburbs of Washington D.C., which was a hotbed of all kinds of preschool philosophies. From advocating early reading to learning math and science, we were getting preschool brochures every week that essentially said “get your child on our waiting list now or they will never excel in school or get into a good university.”

We didn’t like the pushiness of it. We thought kids deserved to have a real childhood, and we weren’t sure that a lot of early academics was the most important thing we could teach our preschoolers.

That question—“What is the most important thing we can teach our preschoolers?”—became a topic of conversation with other young parents in the area, and the answer that eventually emerged was “Joy!” We all realized that our real hope was simply to help our kids be happy, well-adjusted and confident, both in our homes and as they started school.

We began to work with some of our friends on the interesting task of “subdividing” joy into its many parts. We researched physical joys like the joy of the body and the joy of the earth, social joys like the joy of sharing and service and the joy of honesty and kindness, and mental joys like the joy of imagination and creativity and the joy of priorities and goal-striving.

What we found is that all of these joys could be broken down to their basics, and could effectively be taught to preschool children. We put our findings and methods into a book and before we knew it, *Teaching Your Children Joy* had become a bestseller. Apparently there were lots of parents who agreed that helping kids to be happy and confident was more important than giving them an academic head start.

My (Richard's) mother, Ruth Eyre, an early childhood education expert, took the book and laboriously formed it into an realistic and workable curriculum for preschoolers, and we opened the first Joy School in Logan, Utah in 1976. At this original Joy School, we were able to try out and perfect the curriculum while providing a stellar opportunity for preschoolers. The school was an immediate success and became the first of many forthcoming commercial Joy Schools.

But not every family wanted (or could afford) to send their kids to a commercial Joy School, and so the phenomenon of "Mother's Group Joy Schools" began. We invited moms to band together, rotate as teacher, and teach their collective children the Joy Schools lessons in their own homes. They paid a modest fee for the detailed lesson plans and loved being a Joy School teacher and having their best friends as the other trusted teachers of their children. For many years the lesson plans, music (on cassette tapes) and art materials were sent out through the mail.

Mothers' Group Joy Schools literally spread like wildfire, and tens of thousands of moms and kids became involved. Families saved money, parents got involved together, kids learned the various kinds of joy, and kindergarten teachers reported that Joy School children were emotionally and socially well adjusted and started school excited and ready to do well academically.

Through the years, although updates were occasionally completed, the Joy School lessons began to get a bit dated. Finally, in 2014, a comprehensive effort to create Joy School 2.0 began. We stayed heavily involved but our daughter and daughter-in-law, Saren Eyre Loosli and Aja Fegert Eyre who had both taught Joy School for years (and been Joy School students themselves back in the early days of Joy School), took the lead in getting the actual re-writes accomplished. They formed a Development Team with other experienced Joy School parents, including major contributors Anita Atkinson and Janelle Phipps. Over the next year and a half, lesson plans, stories, music, art, and parent's instructions were completely reformatted, updated and refreshed, while preserving the original goals and "feel" of Joy School. All music, art and materials were made downloadable, lesson plans were put together in a new "clickable" format (so that teachers could teach right from their phone or tablet and click to the music or illustrations while teaching) and by the 2015-16 school year Joy School 2.0 was ready for a new generation of moms, children, and families.

Now, with Joy School 2.0, it is appropriate and important to recognize five women without whom Joy School would never have come about:

- **Ruth Eyre**, the “matriarch” of Joy School and my (Richard’s) mother who spearheaded the original lesson plans and ran the original Joy School in Logan, Utah for 25 years
- The late **Corry DeMille**, the administrator of Joy Schools Worldwide.
- **Lia Davis**, at first Corry’s assistant and then her successor who edited and produced everything we did for so many years.
- **Wendy Murdock**, who wrote much of the Joy School music and performed virtually all of it (along with her children)
- **Andrea Burgon**, who illustrated the lesson plans and art projects.

And now we add to this list of creators two more: **Saren Eyre Loosli** and **Aja Fegert Eyre** as the developers of Joy School 2.0

May Joy School mean as much to your family as it has to ours and over 200,000 families throughout the world who have already participated!

Warm best wishes,

Handwritten signatures of Linda J. Eyre and Richard Eyre. The first signature is 'Linda J. Eyre' and the second is 'Richard Eyre'.

Linda and Richard Eyre

Steps for Starting Your Joy School

1. Be sure you have read this whole Joy School Start Up Manual.
2. **Talk to friends, neighbors**, acquaintances who have children your child's age. Most parents start thinking about preschool programs a few months before their child turns three or about six months before school starts, so it's important to start asking around before everyone is enrolled in other programs.

To make it easy for you, following is text you can copy, paste and personalize in an email to other parents you think might like to be part of your Joy School group:

Have you heard of Joy School? I've checked it out and it seems like a really great way to offer our children a really affordable and top-quality preschool experience. Over the past 40 years, the Joy School program has been used by over 200,000 families around the world and has recently been completely updated and enhanced. Joy School provides a group of 4-6 families with overall instructions and detailed lesson plans for two sessions of preschool a week (including music, crafts, stories and visual aids). Parents trade off teaching their collective children in their homes (so each parent in the group teaches every 4-6 weeks - depending on how many families are in the group). With Joy School, I love that parents get to be so involved in their children's preschool education, I love that my children get to be taught by my trusted friends, and I love the price.

But the best thing about Joy School is the focus of the curriculum. The Joy School curriculum is centered on the concept that the goal of preschool education should be to help children be happy, well-adjusted and confident and that developing their various capacities for "joy" will set children up for success in school and beyond. Each month, Joy School focus on a different theme - some examples include the Joy of the Body, the Joy of the Earth, the Joy of Sharing and Service, the Joy of Honesty and Communication. [You can read more details about the philosophy of the program and how it works by clicking HERE.](#)

Participating in Joy School and access to all of the lesson plans and materials costs just \$9.99 per month. With regular preschool costing about \$250 per month for tuition, I feel like Joy School is a pretty good deal!

I would love for you to be part of the Joy School group I am putting together. I think you and your child would be real assets to our group and that you would really enjoy participating in Joy School. Please reply by _____ to let me know if you're interested and if there are other families you can think of who may also be a good fit.

3. The curriculum is designed to work very well for **3, 4 and 5 year olds**. Children understand things and internalize things in different ways based on their age and maturity level, but most children in this age bracket will enjoy most activities suggested in the lesson plans. You can simplify activities for certain children and make them more intense for other children who need more of a challenge. Most Joy Schools have mixed classes of 3, 4 and 5

year olds and find that this works very well as children learn to help each other and follow the example of the older children in their group. Parents of very precocious 2 ½ year olds have found that their children are ready to start, however, being potty trained is a definite prerequisite.

4. The **ideal size** for a Joy School group is **four to six families/children**, but two or three children can work well too. Sometimes, one or two families join Joy School and then, when they have an established group that other children/parents can visit, their group expands.
5. It is easier to form a cohesive and lasting group when when all participants **live within a fairly close proximity**.
6. Most children participate in Joy School for **two consecutive years**, and many families end up teaching Joy School every year for many years as they have one child after another participate. After participating in one year of Joy School, moms and dads are better teachers, and the children are a year older. So Joy School keeps getting better and better for parents and children alike.
7. Once you have a few families, have each family **purchase their subscription** from valuesparenting.com. It works very well to simply send an email to all members of your group that includes the link to valuesparenting.com/joy-school.
8. **Each family** must purchase their **own subscription**. It is illegal and dishonest to share subscriptions. Joy School is priced to make it affordable, and the subscription fees not only cover the use of the curriculum, but also help pay for the considerable costs involved in maintaining the website, offering customer support, and providing continual program development. Also, when families pay their membership, they are usually committed, and commitment is vital to a Joy School co-op group!.
9. Set up a time to have an introductory **organizational meeting** with the parents in your group about a month before the school will start. You could also cover some of the initial setup details over email, such as the suggestion of a schedule, [\(Click here to download an editable sample year one schedule\)](#), assignments for who will make the Joy School House, calendar, weather chart and helper chart (See Lesson Plans section), gathering of everyone's information (address, phone numbers, birthdays, etc.) for a Contact List, and finding out schedule conflicts (such as school holidays for older siblings, family vacations, birthdays, etc.)
10. Before this first organizational meeting, make sure everyone has **read this start-up manual**, the two "Joy of Joy School: Getting Acquainted" lessons, and at least a couple lessons from Unit One or Two. This will make it easier to discuss your plans and questions together.

Agenda for your Introductory Organizational Meeting:

1. **Get to know each other a bit** (perhaps share what you're most and least excited about for Joy School).
2. **Briefly look over each of the key sections in this Start-up Manual together.**
3. **Decide which days** you will hold Joy School. Because of the prevalence of Monday holidays, it is generally better to avoid Mondays. Most Joy Schools hold class Tuesday/Thursday, Tuesday/Friday, or Wednesday/Friday. Usually, Joy School is held at the same house for both days in that week. If your group does not schedule Joy School that way, the teachers will need to coordinate within the weeks to cover activities and concepts that bridge the week's two lessons.
4. **Create a schedule** with all the parents' teaching days typed in, and distribute that along with the contact list ([Click here to download an editable sample year one schedule](#)).
5. **Create a contact list** with each teacher/parent's email, phone number, and address plus each child's name and birthday. It's easy to make a spreadsheet to record and print out this information by using Excel or Google Docs. You may also wish to assign someone to make an email list (using Google groups or Yahoo groups), a group text, a Facebook Group, and/or a Google Calendar where everyone can see the schedule of who's teaching when as well as keep track of special dates and activities for Joy School (it's super easy to create a Google Calendar - just Google it!).
6. **Decide who'll be making/finding/providing what for the Joy School Box.**
7. **Decide when you'll be holding your regular monthly Parent Meetings** (explained in the section on "Parent Meetings").
8. **Discuss any special circumstances** of parents (work schedules, worries about teaching, etc.) or children (allergies, behavioral issues, personality traits, fears, etc.).

Startup Checklist

- Every child's family has set up their Joy School **subscription**.
- Hold your **organizational meeting** (as explained in the previous section).
- Complete **contact list** for all children and parents
- Schedule** for the Semester with Lesson Plans and the location of each Joy School session ([Click here to download an editable sample year one schedule](#)).
- Welcome Time Routine** established (Instructions for this item and the next three are found in the Lesson Plans Section)
- Goodbye Time Routine** established (instructions included later on)
- Aids for Welcome Time** printed/created/bought (See *Joy School Box Checklist* below and instructions later on)
- Joy School Box** put together with Welcome Time aids, Joy Boy, Display Board, and shared Arts and Craft materials inside (See *Joy School Box Checklist* below and instructions later on)
- Choose one parent as the **Group Leader**. The Group Leader can change each semester if desired, or stay the same for the whole year.

Joy School Box Checklist and Assignments

Assign these items to parents and write their names in the space provided. Detailed instructions or the items in this checklist are offered later on.

- _____ Contact list (*laminated or in sheet protector*)
- _____ The semester's schedule (*laminated or in sheet protector*)
- _____ Welcome Time Routine (*printed and laminated*)
- _____ Joy Boy Puppet
- _____ Joy School House with children's photos and names
- _____ Calendar with stickable month names and dates
- _____ Weather Chart
- _____ Display Board
- _____ Basic arts and crafts materials
- _____ Helper Chart (*Optional*)
- _____ Illustrations of Joy School Rules from Lessons 0.1, 0.2
- _____ *Optional: Lesson "circle time" mat or blanket*
- _____ *Optional: Folder/binder for used printed lesson plans*
- _____

The Joys: How Units are Organized

At the beginning of the semesters, you'll want to hand out a complete schedule of when your school will be in session.

There are sample Joy School schedules available here: [\(Click here to download an editable sample year one schedule\)](#). However, since most schools across the country and world are increasingly varying their schedules, these are just a general overview to help you tailor a schedule to your group's unique needs. You can highlight, copy and paste the information in the sample schedule into a new spreadsheet on your computer and make adjustments to coincide with your group's schedule and/or the public school schedule for your area. Most parents appreciate when their preschool children and school age children have the same vacations.

Here is an overview of the number of lessons included in each unit:

Intro Unit:	Getting Acquainted	2 Lesson Plans
SEMESTER ONE (30 Lessons, 5 Optional Lessons/Programs)		
Unit 1:	Joy of the Body	6 Lesson Plans
Unit 2:	Joy of the Earth	6 Lesson Plans
Unit 3:	Joy of Honesty and Communication	6 Lesson Plans
		<i>Optional: Halloween</i>
Unit 4:	Joy of Service	6 Lesson Plans
		<i>Optional: Thanksgiving</i>
		<i>Optional: Rest Home Visit</i>
		<i>Optional: Family Party</i>
Unit 5:	Joy of Goals and Order	6 Lesson Plans
		<i>Optional: Get Reacquainted</i>
SEMESTER TWO (34 Lessons, 1 Review, 1 Graduation Day)		
Unit 6:	Joy of Confidence	8 Lesson Plans
Unit 7:	Joy of Wonder	6 Lesson Plans
Unit 8:	Joy of Imagination and Creativity	6 Lesson Plans
Unit 9:	Joy of Family	6 Lesson Plans
Unit 10:	Joy of Uniqueness	8 Lesson Plans
	End of Year Review and Graduation	2 Lesson Plans

Preparing to Teach

If you do not consider yourself to be an experienced teacher, or particularly comfortable and natural with children, don't worry: **The lesson plans are written in small time increments with lots of helpful details and tips so you can follow them easily.** Remember that every idea, story, activity, etc. is pre-tested . . . We know it works! On the other hand, if you are an experienced teacher, feel free to innovate, adapt, and use your own ideas along with the ones given.

Parent Meetings

First, really take the time to go through each of the main topics in this manual and a few of the lessons together with your **Parents' Group at an initial Organizational Meeting (see suggested agenda under "Starting Your Joy School")**. It's nice to have some experienced Joy School parents in your group, but it is also fun to have a group of new and fresh Joy School parents. Work out your questions and concerns before the Joy School year, and continue to keep an open dialogue to facilitate help and better teaching and experiences throughout the group.

Moving forward, it is very important for Joy School groups to hold a **monthly parents' meeting** where they discuss the upcoming Unit(s), plan who will teach when, and talk about concerns and delights. Excellent information and instructions for these meetings is included in each Unit Introduction.

Before coming to each parent meeting, all parents in a group should carefully and completely read each **Unit Introduction**. Then, during the meeting, the group leader can quickly go through each of the main topics in the Unit Introduction, using that as an agenda. In addition, parents should discuss who will be teaching when for that month and discuss any issues including behavior issues with individual children.

During this meeting, parents can also discuss what supplies are called for in the lesson plans and cooperate in gathering those supplies. Many needed items may be things that some parent has in her home and is willing to "donate to the cause," or some parent may have a book or art supply that is called for and can save another parent the trouble of trying to locate one.

It's great to at least occasionally include both parents in these Parent Meetings so that they can be in-the-loop even if they are not regularly teaching.

We suggest you hold your parent meetings for an hour or so some evening before starting each new unit. For many groups finding an hour in the evening once a month for Parent Meetings can be quite challenging. But most groups find a way! It generally works best to pick a regular day and

time (i.e. every fourth Tuesday at 8:30pm, after babies are asleep, one parent stays home with sleeping children while the other goes to the Parent Meeting and reports back to the parent who doesn't attend). Some groups also come together a half an hour before or after one lesson a month. If you can't get together in person every time, you can do a Google Hangout or conference call (freeconferencecall.com works great!).

In addition to a monthly Parent Meeting, many groups create a closed Facebook group or Yahoo group that only their group can view and/or communicate regularly via a group email. Plus it's helpful for many groups to create a shared Google Calendar where they can all see who is teaching when, etc.

Preparing Lessons

You'll **access all your Joy School Lesson plans via Valuesparenting.com**. To get to the lesson plans, you simply use the username and password that you received when you registered and paid for your subscription.

Some parents print out their lesson plans and keep them in a binder, some parents access everything online while teaching, and some parents do a combination, perhaps **printing the front OUTLINE for the lesson**, but going to the electronic copy on a phone, laptop or tablet to read the stories and follow along with the song lyrics. **NO MATTER WHICH WAY you access your lesson** during Joy School, be sure to prepare enough ahead of time so that you do not need to stare at your paper/electronic device while you are in front of the children.

More detailed information on preparing and presenting lessons is found later on in the section entitled "The Lesson Plans."

Setting Up Your Home

You'll want to decide on a place in your home where you will regularly:

- **Make art and crafts projects**, do [Play Clay](#) and have snacks, such as at your kitchen table or a play table if you have one.
- **Present the lesson**, such as on a couch where children can sit up comfortably and listen. This area should be near where you can put up or create a display area of some sort: many lessons have pictures in the supplement to help tell the stories. These pictures can be held up or you can pin the cut-outs provided in the lesson plans onto a bulletin/cork board board or use blu-tac (poster-tac) to stick them to a TV screen as you tell the stories in the lesson.
- **Sing the songs and participate in Mellow Time**, such as an open area where children can move freely and/or where you can have each child sit on a carpet mat or sit on a marked circle on a large sheet that you spread out (details below).

- **Have Free Play Time**, such as your child's room or a playroom. **Tip:** in advance of your students' arrival, put away any toys in your play area that could create a big mess, that will be too hard for your child to share if your child is in the group, that kids will likely fight over, or that just aren't appropriate for this group of children. It usually works best if there are just a handful of toys and activities set out for the kids to choose from during free play time. You can rotate which toys are available every month or so and this keeps children excited about the toys available. See further details in the next section.
- **Have Outside Time**, such as your backyard or a nearby playground.
- **Note:** We know there are Joy School moms in urban areas who manage to operate in about 50-70 square feet of total space! Playgrounds are usually close but not in the back yard. Hooray for them as they somehow manage to make things work!

Supplies Needed in Every Joy School Home

In addition to the areas explained above, each home where Joy School will be hosted will need to have:

- ❑ **MP3 Player/Computer with Speakers/Tablet or phone that can play music loud enough for children to hear** - For playing the Joy School songs directly from the MP3's in the lesson plans. You'll also want to download the songs for each unit and create a Playlist on your mobile device with the year's/unit's songs that you can play as children arrive at Joy School, use as you're teaching the lessons from a print-out if you choose to print the lessons, and play in the car as you go about your business so your children have added exposure to the songs.
- ❑ **Indoor toys:** You'll want to offer a variety of toys and perhaps rotate the toys that are available during free play time so that children don't get bored with what's available. You can use toys you already have in your home and augment your selection by buying toys at garage sales or thrift stores. We suggest you stay away from noisy battery-operated toys as they raise the noise level in your home, run out of batteries, lessen the amount of imagination children need to use to play, get broken and often become a source of contention between children.

It's good to have toys in each of the four following categories and just put out one or two sets of toys from each category at a time. Nice, but not necessary, items for toys for indoor free play time include:

- ❑ Building toys like legos (large for smaller children, smaller for older children), waffle blocks, magnetic building toys (Magformers are always a big hit), K'nex or Kids K'nex construction toys, Lincoln Logs, large foam or cardboard building blocks, small building blocks

- ❑ Toys for pretend play; dolls, doll beds and other dolls accessories, super hero figurines, dress up clothes for girls and boys (thrift stores can be a great source for this), play food and play kitchen dishes and utensils, cars, trucks, trains (avoid play swords, guns, etc. that invite rough play during free play time)
 - ❑ Puzzles including mostly sturdy wood ones that feature colors, shapes, etc.
 - ❑ Music toys. Drums made out of ice cream bucket and wooden spoons, microphones, recorders, bells. Shakers can be made by adding different fillers such as popcorn kernels, rice and pasta to empty yogurt containers or small jars and sealing the lids on with tape. Be creative. It is best to bring these out at a certain “music time” spot and then put away when that period is finished otherwise your Joy School could get very noisy.
- ❑ **Outdoor toys:** As with indoor toys, it’s nice to rotate what is available from time to time. You can frequently find great buys on these sorts of toys at garage sales and thrift shops. Great toys for outdoor Free Play time include:
- ❑ Ride-on toys – tricycles, push bikes, wagons, big wheels, etc.
 - ❑ Climbing and balancing toys – jungle gyms, a balance beam made of a 2x4 between two sturdy upturned buckets (no more than 6 inches or so off the ground), slides (such as simple plastic ones found at yard sales or thrift shops)
 - ❑ Swings – you can build your own using a tire and a tree or purchase a swing set
 - ❑ Sandbox, gravel box, water table or rice table with little shovels, rakes, trucks, bulldozers, boats, etc.
 - ❑ Large soft playground balls
 - ❑ Sidewalk chalk, water in plastic containers and old paint brushes (kids can “paint” on anything and when it dries, it disappears)

Group Joy School Box

Each group should have a **box** (a plastic tote with a snap-on lid works great, many groups like using a flat bin/tote that will fit under a bed) containing the supplies that all teachers will need and that is passed along to the next parent teaching.

Discuss who would like to find/create/provide which items in your initial meeting, set a deadline, keep track of costs and divide them up evenly once everyone is assembled. PRINT the checklist in the previous section to help you keep track.

The box should contain:

1. A list of your **Welcome Time routine** and **Goodbye Time routine**
2. **Joy School House** ([Click here](#) for instructions)

An example of one group's Joy School House

(One parent was a woodworker so they were able to make an extra sturdy house, but laminated poster board works great as well! Credit: Abigail Adams Wiest)



3. **Semester Schedule** so you know who is teaching when ([Click here to download an editable sample year one schedule](#))

4. **Checklist for helpers** so the children have equal turns and the next parent teaching will be able to see who helped last time. [Click here](#) for an example of a Helper Chart.
5. **Contact information** for all the children: birthdays, phone numbers, emergency contacts (collected at your initial parent organizational meeting explained previously)
6. Pictures of the **School Rules** from *Introductory Unit: Joy of Joy School Lessons*. [Click here](#) for the pictures to print out and laminate.

An example of the rules printed, laminated, and ready to include in the Joy School Box (credit: Janelle Phipps):



7. **Calendar** ([Click here](#) for calendar instructions.)

An example of one group's calendar (Credit: Abigail Adams Weist.)



Please remember that the Joy School 2.0 lesson plans can only be legally used by registered members of Joy School 2.0.

8. Weather Chart ([Click here](#) for weather chart.)

An example of one group's weather chart (credit: Janelle Phipps):



8. **General supplies** (a package of construction paper, some white printer/copy paper or newsprint for drawing, crayons, markers, glue, paper, child-scissors. It works great to buy inexpensive plastic pencil boxes and put crayons in one, markers in another, enough child-safety scissors for each child in your group in another, etc.). Some lessons require special materials other than these basic things that would be in the Joy School box (you'll want to check your lesson plans for any needed supplies before you do your shopping).
9. Your **Joy Boy puppet** (any sort of hand puppet will do, see details later on)
10. Your **circle-time mat** or spots: You can easily make a circle time mat by taking a large plain-colored sheet or old large blanket and marking/sewing on some different colored shapes to mark where each child would sit. Sitting in a circle and listening is much easier for children if they know right where to sit. Be sure that each designated spot for sitting is spaced far enough away from the adjacent spot so that children won't be too crowded.
11. *OPTIONAL:* **Binder** of printed-out lesson **Outlines** that each teacher can add to, plus an accordion file of visual aids each parent makes to go with her lesson (organized by unit so they can be easily found and used the next year). It helps to have your Outline, with notes, in the box so the next teacher can see what activities you did and which songs you learned.

The Lesson Plans

Overall Information on Lesson Preparation

Before beginning to prepare your lessons, it's important that you understand the "joy" you are trying to teach. As well as reading the Unit Introduction and attending your Parent Meeting, it really helps to read the corresponding chapter in *Teaching Your Children Joy*. It will help you to help the children to actually feel the joy you are teaching

As you prepare each lesson, we suggest that you briefly read the lesson(s) through once, then go back through, perhaps **with the printed Outline in hand**, and make notes about which activities you will include in the lesson. Write in your time frame estimates on the outline. plan how and where you will conduct each activity. Begin to gather and prepare the necessary supplies well ahead of time. Be well prepared and your teaching turn will be a more joyful and worthwhile experience for both you and the children. There is an oft-quoted saying, "If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail."

In the beginning, it may take you about an hour to prepare each lesson but over time, your prep time may become about 20-30 minutes per lesson. Some lessons will unavoidably take more preparation time than others. On particularly "high preparation" lessons or lessons that seem a bit overwhelming to a parent in charge of them, two parents may want to "team up" to prepare and present the lesson.

→ *It is important for you to realize that the lesson plans offer more material than what you will normally need. We do this intentionally so that groups can have a variety of options and can choose those that will work best for their group.. Be **as flexible or as rigid** as you feel is best for the children and parents in your own group. The time frame particularly should not be followed exactly. If your group is happily spending longer than is designated in a craft activity (for example) do not interrupt them to finish so you can be on schedule. If children are focusing on and enjoying an activity let them go along with it. Children will learn more this way and have a more positive experience.*

When it's your week to teach, you may want to **prepare both lessons for the week** at the same time so that you can see how the two lessons will work together. Many teachers find that it works well to have a set time early in the week to do their week's lesson planning. You may want to set aside an hour or so when you can be somewhat uninterrupted. Then the day before your second lesson of the week, spend a few minutes reviewing your plans for that lesson so it will be fresh in your mind.

Joy School is designed to not need many materials beyond that which you would already have in your home but there will be some lessons that require a quick shopping trip for some inexpensive items you may not have on hand (or a call to another Joy School parent in your group to see if they have what you need!). Try to prepare well in advance. Even if you already have the materials, have them **gathered and ready** before the Joy School day begins.

Again, keep in mind that **you don't have - and generally SHOULDN'T TRY - to do everything in the lesson plans**. As you read over the lesson plans, you'll quickly recognize which activities will be most successful with your own particular group of children and you'll see that some activities would require materials you don't have (which is why there are always two art activities to choose from) or wouldn't really work with the children in your group. Feel free to use the additional ideas provided in each lesson plan and/or substitute your own ideas that go with the lesson, adding in your favorite books, crafts and activities that reinforce the theme.

Step-by-Step Instructions on Lesson Preparation

1. AHEAD OF TIME, **find the books** (if needed for that lesson) from the library or bookstore that you may need for your lesson.
2. Access the lesson plan online.
3. Print out the front **Lesson Plan Outline**, or the whole lesson.
4. **Take notes** on your Outline as you read through the lesson
5. **Listen** to and follow the lyrics for all of the songs so that you are familiar with them.
6. Access the links, illustrations, etc. that you need during the lesson. **Print out illustrations** you will be using.
7. **Cross out** activities you do not plan on using
8. Write in your **estimated time** frame
9. Write in your **planned snack, play time notes**, and other notes.
10. Gather the needed materials
11. Have Gathering Time and Welcome Time materials set up before the children arrive (and any other materials you'll be needing prepared and close at hand).
12. **Teach the lesson**
13. **Take notes** as you teach as to what worked, what you didn't use, and anything else that may be helpful to for the next teacher, or even next time this lesson is taught. Keep your Outline or lesson in the Joy School Box binder.
14. **Comment online** about your experience with the lesson. The Joy School Curriculum Development team loves suggestions! Please use the "Contact Us" links at the bottom of the website.

Lesson Plan Layout

The Joy School 2.0 layout is a bit different than the Joy School Modules of the past. Many of the activities, stories, music, and games are still there, but the order of activities for each Joy School session is now consistent (as laid out in the next section). We've found that children do much better with a generally consistent routine at Joy School. Also, **each section of the Lesson Plan Outline is clickable; if you click on Music and Movement, for example, your browser will scroll directly down to that item.**

Although the lesson plan and outline are structured in this same order every day to help provide continuity and dependable structure for the children, FEEL FREE to occasionally change things around according to your group's needs. You may want to go to an activity or outdoor game after the lesson, or you may want to sing songs at the end of Joy School instead of the beginning. **Much more important that the order of delivery is the presentation of the concept.**

Key to Symbols in Lesson Plans

Each lesson plans uses the following standard symbols:

- A bullet like this indicates something that you should say to the children.
- An arrow indicates a helpful tip you may want to keep in mind to help that activity go smoothly.
- ★ A star indicates the materials that will be needed for that activity.
Text highlighted in yellow indicates a link to a song or illustration you'll need at that point in the lesson plan.

Sections of Every Joy School Lesson

1. Lesson Plan Outline

Most parents print out at least the Lesson Plan Outline, even if they plan to teach from a lesson plan displayed on an electronic device. The Outline will help you keep track of time and be able to engage more with the children instead of flipping through physical pages or scrolling through electronic pages to remember what comes next. On the printed Lesson Plan Outline sheet, you can make notes as you read through the lesson and write your estimated time.

As you can see in the example below, a typical 2.5 hour Joy School session will not allow you to complete all of the activities and the parent teacher will have to decide what is most important to include and what should be left out. A group with longer Joy School days might do more of the

activities, have longer Free Play time or Snack Time, or have a second Free Play time after Arts and Crafts.

As you prepare lessons online, you'll see that you can click on any activity on the lesson plan outline and you'll jump right down to the details on that activity.

Here is a sample lesson plan outline, ready for use in teaching a lesson:

Lesson 2.6 Care of Our Earth			
<i>Time frame</i>	<i>Segments</i>	<i>Options</i>	<i>Est. Duration</i>
9:00-9:15	Gathering Activity	Nature Books and Songs Review	15 min
9:15-9:30	Welcome Time	House, song, weather, date, rule, song	15 min
9:30-9:45	Lesson	Conserving Natural Resources	15 min
9:45-10:00	Music and Movement	Story: Earth Ernie <i>Print out illustrations.</i>	10 min
		Song: Take Care of the Earth	5 min
		Song: Willie Winkie	20 min
10-10:25	Free Play Time	Put out puzzles, CLEAN UP timer	30 min ^{25 min}
10:25-10:45	Snack Time	Grapes, apples and yogurt dip Natural products like POPS, grapes, honey	20 min
10:45-10:50	Mellow Time	Book: <u>The Great Trash Bash</u>	10 min
		Fingerplay: <u>Where Animals Live, others</u>	5 min
10:50-11:10	Art Time	<u>Leaf Rubbings</u>	20 min
		Litter Picture	20 min
11:10-11:25	Activity Time	<u>Discussion: Natural or Man-made</u>	5 min
		<u>Game: Won't be Wasteful</u>	10 min
		Outside Play: Clean-up Excursion	30 min
11:25-11:30	Goodbye Time	Remind kids abt Sharing Time next week	10 min

2. Gathering Time

This activity is meant to help center and focus the children immediately upon arrival at your home. Instead of chatting with the other parents as they drop their children off, it is better if you immediately engage with the children in a casual activity that also leads into the day's lesson. Most Gathering Time activities give you an opportunity to be on the floor, at the table, or on the sofa with the children, giving them individual attention as they arrive one-by-one. Start this Gathering Time with your own child and ask for their help with including other children as they arrive.

3. Welcome Time

This routine needs to be established by your group at the beginning of the Joy School year. You should print out a copy of this routine, laminate it or put it in a sheet protector, and place it in the Joy School Box. Here is a **sample** Welcome Time routine, but please make a routine with your group that you will all enjoy and stick to:

WELCOME TIME ROUTINE (SAMPLE)

1. Open each child's window on the Joy School House, have him or her stand up, and loudly and happily say in unison, "Welcome, Child's Name!"
2. Sing: Oh Boy, I've Got Joy!
3. Talk about the Date and Weather Chart
4. *OPTIONAL* introduce a letter of the day (you'll watch for things that start with this letter throughout your time together that day)
5. Joy School Rule Song
6. Brief and enthusiastic introduction of what you're going to do together that day

Joy School House

Every Joy School group should have a "Joy School House." It is a key to easy and can really help with behavior. It consists of a large, two dimensional posterboard/cardboard house with a window for each child. The window is a card-board flap that can be opened. Behind each window is a picture of each child. When the child gathers for Welcome Time each day, he should be called forward to open "her/his window."

If he/she breaks school rules or becomes unruly during the day, the teacher says, "Oh, it doesn't sound like you really want to be part of Joy School today. We'd better close your window."

We have found that three- and four-year-olds will do almost anything (even pay attention and act pleasant) to "keep their window from being closed."

[Click here](#) for Joy School House Instructions. See photo in previous section.

Calendar, Weather Chart, and Choosing Helpers

Children enjoy the recognition that comes from being the one (the helper) who is chosen to put up the date on the calendar, or to identify the weather on some form of weather chart, and to help pass the water at snack time.

Each group should have one calendar and one weather chart that is used by all the teachers. A checklist of the children's names should be kept with the weather chart and calendar to make sure that each child gets equal turns to be the helper.

When a lesson plan says, "Choose helpers" it means to choose a child to put up the date and another one to adjust the weather chart.

For the weather chart, you can say to one of your helpers, "Look out the window. What kind of weather do you see? Snow? Rain? Sun? Wind?" Then the child adjusts the chart accordingly. This is a good time to talk about what weather means - that rain might mean we need to do more inside things or be sure we have boots and/or umbrellas when we got out, that sunshine means it's good to wear sunscreen, etc. As children observe and talk about the weather, they feel more connection to the world around them and understand more about cause and effect. ([Click here](#) for the weather chart included in the previous section)

Say, "What day is it today? What is the name of this month? Does anyone know what number this is? It's Thursday, September 10th." Then the child puts the date number on the calendar. Doing the calendar at each Joy School session helps children learn the days of the week and months of the year as well as practice their numbers. If there are elements of the calendar that are different colors, it's great to also focus on learning colors as part of calendar time. ([Click here](#) for calendar instructions included in the previous section)

If you like, you can help children learn the days of the week by singing the following simple song with them, inserting the correct days, while doing your calendar time (sung to the tune of "Oh My Darling Clementine").

"Today is Tuesday, today is Tuesday, today is Tuesday all day long, Yesterday, it was Monday and tomorrow will be Wednesday."

Also, at this time, choose a child to be the "snack helper". Be sure to mark on the checklist the children who had a turn to be helpers that day. ([Click here](#) for an example of a Helper Chart

3. Lesson

This is the main “meat and potatoes” of the Joy School day, and thus it is placed at the beginning of the day while the children are fresh and attentive. It generally works best if you teach the lesson mostly as written, following the **bullet point** scripts quite closely. (In all lesson plans, everything indicated with a regular black round bullet is something you should say to the children.)

Sharing Time

About once a month, the Lesson calls for a “Sharing Time” or “Show and Tell”. Tell the parents ahead of time via phone, text or email, that you will have a Sharing Time during the next lesson. That way, the children are prepared with something they have brought from home. Some groups omit Sharing Time altogether, except where it is called for specifically in relation to what is being taught as in the day they will bring pets. You’ll need to determine what works best for your group. We recommend that if you do sharing time, you put up the special things that the children bring so that other children aren’t tempted to touch or play with them, causing distraction or contention.

Children’s Answers in Lesson Time

Sometimes it can be hard to keep children on track when teaching these lessons. Here is an example with a helpful tip:

- When asking children a question, you may or may not get much response from the children and some of their answers may not be the ones you are looking for. No child should have to feel that his answer is wrong. Try to work whatever he says into part of a correct answer. Example: “What does it mean when we say we must obey a rule?” If the child says, “We don’t hit,” you can say, “Yes, if the rule says to never hit or kick or push, and we don’t hit, then we are obeying that part of the rule. We are doing what the rule says, aren’t we?”
- If a child says something that is completely off the subject, say, “All right, John, but right now we are talking about rules. Do you know what obey a rule means?”

With practice you can learn to guide the children to the correct answers and to help each child to feel confident in participating. As you ask the children the questions in the lessons, allow them ample time to think about and answer the questions but don’t leave long, awkward silences. Instead, repeat/rephrase the question (many times, the children weren’t totally paying attention the first time you asked!). Respond to each answer, giving them positive feedback about their ideas. Be patient and do not lead the children’s answers too much but help them along as they need it.

Puppets and Puppet Shows

- Don't worry about your dramatic ability. No matter how amateurish the show is, the children will probably love it and will give their full attention. The more silly and dramatic you are, the better they listen!

Joy Boy Puppet: Many lessons will call for the use of a puppet whom we affectionately call "Joy Boy". This puppet visits the classroom often to help reinforce concepts that are being taught. He can only "speak" in a very quiet whisper so he "talks" into the teacher's ear and she tells the children what he says. Joy Boy should be a hand puppet that you may want to decide on as a group as he will travel with the box. He can be a bird, a lion, whatever puppet someone in your group has that everyone feels good about using as "Joy Boy."

Other puppets: Some lessons will call for puppet shows using parent, father, teacher, children. You can use actual puppets or you can use dolls, stuffed animals, or action figures your children may have.

Puppet Show Stage: For a puppet stage you could use the back of a sofa or an overstuffed chair, or a small blanket stretched between two dining room chairs (you kneel behind).

- The puppet that is "talking" should be moving slightly, while the other one is still. This helps the children to know which one is talking and to more easily follow the story.

Stories

When reading from a picture book, always hold the book in a position where all the children can see the pictures. **Know the story well enough so you can read it easily** and can look frequently into the children's faces. It is often helpful to point to the character who is talking or to the part of the picture that you are reading aloud. For stories without pictures that are written out in the lesson plans or for flannel board stories, have the ideas in your mind so you don't need to read. It is better to miss a few parts than to be looking in the book instead of at the children. You will lose their attention if your eyes are on the printed page. Don't memorize, just tell the stories in your own words with all the dramatic effect and sincerity you can muster.

Feel free to dramatically tell the story using props (action figures or dolls or stuffed animals work great) or costumes if you like. You may be surprised how much this captures their attention and really helps the story's message to sink in.

4. Music and Movement

This is often a favorite time at Joy School. Advance preparation is the key to leading and teaching the music, movements and action poems included in the lessons. Choose to do one, two or all of the choices available. **Children love singing and being sung to and the Joy School music really helps reinforce what the children are learning and a meaningful and memorable way.** Don't worry if you are not a good singer. They won't care. And the recorded songs will be right there to help you along.

Songs and Action Poems

When you introduce a new song or action poem, sing or play it to the children first and discuss any words or expressions they may not understand. Then have the children sing it with you (and with the recorded music if the speed of the music works for your group). Don't go too fast. Repeat it two or three times so they can at least partially learn it.

It is good to keep a few songs and action poems in your personal repertoire. For example, if you are moving from a craft activity to story time, and the children are getting distracted, you can go sit over in the spot you are having the story and start singing a Joy School song or doing one of the action poems. The children will want to join in and come sit.

It would be a good idea to learn the songs and action poems from previous lesson plans that haven't been in your lesson plans. No doubt the children will know them and love to hear and do them over and over again.

Listen to the music all you can around your home and in your car. All the songs are easily downloadable and can be loaded on your phone or tablet so you can take them with you in the car.

5. Free Play

Although it should be supervised, free **play time should be generally unstructured**. Give the children parameters, such as *where* and *with what* they should play, but otherwise, just keep an eye on them and help them use the skills you talked about in the Joy School lesson.

There will doubtless be time when children need a little help solving a dispute, but give them a minute or two to try to work things out themselves before jumping in. When you do need to intervene, you can say "I see that you are having a hard time with _____. I know it can be hard but at Joy School we always take turns/share/play nicely/use kind words. What do you think we can do to solve this problem?" If this approach doesn't work, you can remind the children that if they cannot behave like Joy Schoolers, they will need to close their Joy School window until they are ready to behave properly.

At the beginning of your Joy School, you may find that children need a little help learning how to interact in fun and productive ways with each other. You may find that you need to sit right with them to help them see how to play with certain toys, how to invite other children to play something they want to play, how to take turns, how to let other kids take the lead sometimes in their play, etc. You may find that it works well to mostly observe but occasionally offer some helpful suggestions to get them on the right track.

Free play time can be the hardest activity to put a time limit on - especially for children who are used to each other and really enjoy playing together. Children learn so much from creative playtime and socially interacting with peers. Keep your play time as flexible as you need. Many groups will make Joy School longer and have longer free play time in the middle or at the end to give the children a large amount of unstructured free play with or without activities set up.

However when it is time to finish a **warning of "five minutes until free play time is over"** will help the children finish up their game and mentally prepare themselves for the next activity of the day. After you have given the "five minute warning" it will be no shock when the bell rings (either on your phone or kitchen timer). This will be a good "rule" for the teachers to all discuss at your first parents meeting.

Having the stability from house to house with the same basic rules and parameters for free play time will help the children feel more comfortable and secure.

Clean Up Time

Cleaning up after each activity (particularly free play time) will help the children to learn responsibility and will keep your Joy School functioning more smoothly. Having a cleanup song you sing will help the children to enjoy it more or beating a clock to see how quickly toys can be put away (You can use the "Cleanup" song by Barney or the Joy School song

called "Order" - found in the unit on the Joy of Goals). Apps such as Lickety Split have timer functions for cleaning up.

6. Snack Time

Toward the end of Free Play Time, have the designated Snack Time helper come help you set up the snack in your designated Snack Time area of your home.

Of course, you want to be cautious of allergies and choking hazards when choosing a snack. You should also take care to provide healthy snacks for the children. In your initial parent organization meeting, you'll want to discuss with all the parents in the group what sorts of snacks everyone feels comfortable with. We suggest that you avoid anything with any added sugar or sweeteners. Giving the children food with added sweeteners or sugar or certain food colorings can make your Joy School day perhaps a little more emotional, rambunctious, and haphazard. Processed foods with added coloring, hydrogenated oils, and sugar like store-bought crackers, granola bars, sweetened yogurts, etc., should be used sparingly as they are often more expensive and don't provide the nutrition that growing little bodies need.

We suggest you choose raw and natural foods as much as possible - apples, pears, carrots, celery, cucumbers, bell peppers, nuts, raisins, smoothies, etc. Cut up produce so it is easy to eat for the young children. To make these raw foods more fun and perhaps more enticing to those not used to eating them very much, you can provide a healthy dip, such as hummus or yogurt. For the sake of health and your furniture and carpet, flavored/colored drinks and juices aren't a good choice. Water is best.

When the children see that their friends eat these healthy foods and enjoy them, they will want to try them to. This is probably the only social eating experience these children have outside of their family, so it is important that they see their friends eating healthy, whole foods. The children will usually be hungry enough to eat what you provide for them: you do not need to cater to their individual wants. Certainly, don't force them to eat something they are not comfortable with. Simply encourage them to try everything as they can't know if they like it without trying it first. You'll find that the positive peer pressure of eating healthy foods together in Joy School can help many children to develop a liking for healthy foods! And in the end, if they don't want their snack, they can eat when they get home.

Occasionally, snack time ideas are provided on the Lesson Outline. These are just suggestions and by no means do they HAVE to be used.

You may find that it works well to teach a part of the lesson you didn't get to earlier or tell a story while the children eat. Children often listen well when their mouths and hands are busy eating.

7. Mellow Time

This activity portion of the lesson is meant as an opportunity to **let the children rest, listen, and regroup**. For some of the **younger groups**, you may want to just have this as a “quiet, listen to soft music” or even “nap time” portion of the day, and then read one or both of the stories or poems in the lesson plan. For **older groups**, you may skip the quiet, nap-time portion and just read the stories or books.

Books

We suggest that you **check out several books from the library in advance of the week you'll be teaching**. The Unit Introduction of each new Joy School Unit has a booklist to look up at your local library, but you may find some excellent additional book ideas by talking with your local librarian about the Unit's theme. Make the books available for the children to use during free play time. Teach the children how to handle books properly.

The specific books used in the lessons have been carefully researched and tested over many years of Joy School. **HOWEVER, if you cannot easily find the book listed, ask your librarian or bookseller for another recommendation.** YOU DO NOT HAVE TO USE the book listed, or any of the books on the Unit Introduction. They are just recommendations. The books listed are usually available at Amazon.com or other sources online if you want them as a permanent part of your library (and often you can get them used at a very good price).

8. Art and Crafts

Before beginning a creative art project, it is wise for the teacher to demonstrate first, showing how to use the different materials (scissors, markers, glue brushes, paper punches, paint, paper, etc.) and some of the things that can be done with them (including any rules or cautions). For some art projects, it can be very helpful to make an example in advance so the children can catch the vision for the finished product. Then, as far as possible, let each child do his “own thing.”

A few projects, of course, will need to have more specific instructions, but usually children should be allowed to use their own creativity. Sometimes little or no instructions are necessary. When you do give instructions, do it before they receive their materials and begin the activity, then assist them only where necessary. Accept the child's comments about his creation without indicating to him that it looks like something else. You might say, “Tell me about it,” instead of, “What is it?” Be sure to put each child's name on his or her work.

If possible, provide a place where each child's artwork can be displayed until it is time to go home. Stretch a string or small rope across a room and hang pictures with clothespins, lay work out on a table or shelf, pin on a bulletin board or stick it to the wall near the front door with masking tape.

9. Activities

Although this section is listed last on the Lesson Plan and Outline, you may find it appropriate to include some of these activities throughout the day. As with the other sections, the Activities section usually includes more activities than you will want to do or will have time for. Carefully choose the activities that will work best with your situation and your group.

Some activities may include making food or other lengthy activities, so if you choose to do those activities, make sure you leave enough time so that you don't feel you need to rush the children.

Generally, it works great to hold most of these activities OUTSIDE, as weather permits. Even the activities that include discussions and stories could be held outside by sitting the children on a blanket or at an outdoor table.

10. Goodbye Time

Like Welcome Time, this should be a **routine established by your group**. Some groups like to sing again one of the songs learned that day. Some groups like to sing one of their favorite songs, such as "Oh Boy! I've Got Joy", or "I Love the Earth". Other groups just like to bring everyone back to the circle to remind them what they learned that day, to hand out the Notes to Parents and Art Projects, and prepare the children for the next lesson/week.

Whatever your group decides, be sure to follow the same routine every time and make it last only about **five minutes**. That way, when parents come to collect their children, they will be prepared to leave.

Notes to Parents

Every day of Joy School there is a note to send home for each child to his parents. These notes consist of a concise summary of the Joy School's activities that day, along with a suggestion or two for expanding and reinforcing that joy at home. The best way to get the notes home is to "attach" the notes to the child's back with a wide strip of masking tape or tape them on top of their backpack or bag if they brought one.

It is a good idea to read the "Note to Parents" to the children just as they are about to leave. Tell them you want their mom and dad to learn what they're learning in Joy School and that the note will help them to understand. Some groups copy and paste the text from the note into an email to all the parents rather than printing the notes but for most groups, the printed note works well.

It's important that all parents take the time to go over the note with their children each day after Joy School. Dinner time can be an especially good time for the whole family to learn about what the child did in Joy School that day with the note as a guide for what to talk about.

If your group has a private Facebook page (a great and easy thing to set up), this can be used to write more personalized notes and also attach photos of the day.

Discipline Tips

Sharing Toys

A kitchen timer or mobile phone app can be set to ring in "2 minutes" when it is time for one child to give up a toy that another would like to use. Say, "In 2 minutes, when the bell rings, it will be Adam's turn to use the truck." Apps like *Lickety Split* and other timer apps can help with this.

Raising Hands

A lot of noise and confusion can be avoided during group activities by **teaching children to raise their hands** instead of just speaking out or jumping up and shouting, "Me, me" or "I will." When you are choosing helpers or asking questions or having discussions, etc., say to the children, "I will choose (or call on) someone who is sitting quietly and raising his hand." Then proceed to do just that. You may need to say to a child, "I can't call on you because you are not sitting down (or not raising your hand)" or, "I called on Jenny because she was raising her hand quietly." If any child has a particularly hard time remembering this method, be sure to watch closely and do call on him or praise him when he does remember.

Rules and Consequences

Children need limits and they need help in learning to live within those limits. During the first week of school, several Joy School rules will be introduced and it is helpful to include a review of rules as part of your "Welcome Time" for at least the first couple months of Joy School.

As suggested previously, having the child shut the window on their Joy School House while they have a brief moment to think is encouraged as the best form of discipline. To finish off fixing their mistake by having the child apologise or do whatever is necessary to right their wrong behavior is a good way to help them learn to make better choices. Doing this is a loving and encouraging way will have the best effect with children

Add rules as necessary. Anyone is more likely to obey rules that they have helped to make than rules that are just imposed on them by someone else, so when there seems to be a pattern of problematic behavior going on, guide the children into suggesting rules that you think are necessary. The rules must be understandable and reasonable. Make sure the children understand the consequences of disobeying each rule (consequences should be related to the rule and help fix the problem that happens when the rule is broken).

After the rules are firmly established with the group, you may only need to say, "You are breaking a rule" in order to correct a child's behavior. Sometimes you can just begin singing a certain part of the "Rule Song" (from the first lesson) to correct the behavior of the group. Pictures of six rules that would fit most Joy School groups are included in the supplement to the first lesson and can be passed around in the Joy School box so that each teacher can refer to them as necessary. Color them and mount them on cardboard to be used throughout the school year.

At your monthly parent meetings, it works well to discuss any discipline issues that have arisen during the previous month and talk together about any new rules and consequences that might be appropriate.

The first time the children visit each house, it's important for the parent at that house to explain any specific rules that they have in their family/for their home. For example, let the children know if they need to regularly take off their shoes when they get to your house, where they should put their coats when they come in at your house, which rooms are off-limits, what they aren't supposed to touch, etc. One of the benefits of Joy School is that children learn how to respect other people's rules and homes.

Where possible, ignore minor misbehavior and frequently give sincere praise for good behavior. Most misbehavior is an attention-getting device. If a child gets more attention for one kind of behavior than for another, he is likely to continue that action.

If a reminder of the rule, a reminder that their Joy School House window might need to be closed, or the actual closing of the window isn't sufficient to help with behavior, brief isolation from the group is often the best form of discipline when a child misbehaves. If you can, provide a place where the child can sit alone for a 3-5 minutes (out of sight of the other children but where you can check on him frequently). Tell them they can rejoin the group when they are ready to behave and obey the rules.

To be effective, rules and consequences must be consistent. Inconsistency can confuse the child and they will not understand what is expected. All the parents in a group should

discuss forms of discipline and try to reach an agreement as to what kinds of misbehavior should be ignored, which behaviors will not be tolerated, and what forms of discipline to use. Then be consistent. Knowing what is expected helps a child to feel secure.

A child also needs to feel loved by his teachers. Try to show genuine and sincere love for each child in your group. Remember that the child who is the hardest to love is the one who needs your love the most. When you discipline a child, always make sure that they know you still think they're great but you can't let them do what they were doing because it ruins things for them and others.. Make sure they understand that it is the action you dislike, not the child themselves. - "I think you are wonderful and I really care about you but I also really care about Mary and about the rules and it's not OK to hit Mary." Also make sure they understand why they need to receive a consequence. For example, if the child has been put in a brief time out, you can say, "Before you come back to the group, I need you to tell me why you needed to spend a little time by yourself here." If they can't tell you, you tell them.

If a child has had to have their window closed or has needed to spend some time in time out during a Joy School session at your house, it's important to explain what happened to the child's parent. This can be done at pick up if there is a way to do so privately (so that the child is not shamed in front of other children or parents) or it may be necessary to call the parent after Joy School is over. All parents in a Joy School group should have the understanding that it's important and helpful to share information about children's behavior at Joy School with their parents. Of course, reporting on a child's behavior should be done in a loving and non-judgemental way.

Issues With Your Own Child

Most Joy School parents experience the hardship of their own child misbehaving when Joy School is hosted at their home. This happens for a number of reasons, but just know that it is normal and will generally subside after a few rotations at your home. On the days that you have the group in your own home, your own child may resent sharing their toys, books, room and even (or maybe, especially) their own parent. They may also resent the time their parent must take to prepare for the lesson. If this happens, they may show resentment by being selfish with toys, demanding attention from you, acting whiny or clingy, becoming withdrawn or overly emotional, being uncooperative, or other forms of misbehavior.

It is a good idea to talk with your child about your upcoming turn to teach. Talk with your child about what will happen, what you expect, and what the child should do if they are feeling anxious, sad, or angry. It is an especially good idea to do some role play activities about what might happen, how to handle sharing toys and belongings (and mom), and how the day will go. You and your child will quickly look forward to the days where Joy School is at your home.

Additionally, some of the following suggestions may be helpful in helping your child come to really enjoy having Joy School at your home.

1. Involve your child in the plans and preparation for the lesson. Perhaps they could decide what will be served for snack and help prepare it. There may be some things they could do to help prepare for the art activity. Maybe they could choose which music will be used at rest time. As you read through the lesson plan, think of ways to involve your child.
2. Teach the songs and action poems to your child in advance and then let your child be your "helper" in teaching them to the other children.
3. Let them help to set out the toys and books and other materials that will be used for free play time, both outside and in. Make comments such as, "I think all the children will love your new puzzle and since you can do it so well, maybe they will need your help," or "Won't it be fun to play this game with your friends!"
4. Let your child be the one to answer the door and greet each of the other children as they come.
5. If the lesson calls for a flannel board story, your child might be the one to put up the pictures if you have gone over the story with him or her ahead of time. (But while giving your child extra responsibilities, be sure that other children get a chance to be helpers as well - for weather, calendar, snack, etc.)
6. Help your child feel it is special to have friends come to school in your home and have their parent be the teacher.

Independence

Encourage children to do everything they can for themselves. Show them how to pull their coat sleeves right side out, how to put on their shoes, how to put away the toys and crayons properly, etc., instead of doing everything for them. Express confidence in their ability to do things and build them up as they learn to do new things.

Special Events

Birthdays

A child's own birthday is, to him or her, the most special of special occasions. When a child in your group has a birthday during the school year, help them to share the joy with their school friends on the school day nearest the actual birthday. Some children's birthdays will come during the months that school is not held, or perhaps before they join the Joy School group. In that event, let the child and their parent choose a day to celebrate the child's "un-birthday." (Explain to the children that an un-birthday is a "pretend" birthday.) Each child should have an opportunity to celebrate either a birthday or an un-birthday during the school year (but not both). You may use the following suggestions for making the day special for the "birthday child", or come up with your own as a group.

1. Early in the day's schedule (the first time the children come together as a group), sing Happy Birthday to them. It is fun (if you can) to keep the birthday a secret from the other children until this song is sung.
2. Present the child with a birthday crown, badge, or other wearable homemade item that your group decides upon at the beginning of the year. Make them all at the same time so that the parent teacher is not having to try and make one at the last minute. It could say, "Today is my Birthday," or "I'm four years old now" or some such thing. It is best to be consistent and do the same thing for each child's birthday.
3. At snack time, let the child share a treat with his classmates. This treat could be in place of the regular snack or in addition to it. The "birthday child" should be allowed to pass out their own treat. Then, the children could all join in singing the regular "Happy Birthday" song.

Be sure to check with the child's parent in advance to make sure of the date and to see if they would like to send a treat. Very small treats are best. Depending on what a child brings, you may want to have them save it to pass out as the children leave to go home.

Treats work equally as well if the “teaching parent” that day provides the treat. The simpler the better. Children are just as delighted with a graham cracker which they can spread with a thin coating of frosting or a few M&M’s as they are with an elaborate cake or rich sugary treats. As an alternative, the birthday child could bring a small gift to give the other children (fun pencils, stickers, something like that).

4. It might work well for your group to make a card, small gift, crown/badge for each child at the beginning of the year and to put these in envelopes in the Joy School box with the child’s name, birthday, and Joy School day that the birthday will be celebrated written on the front. These should be kept out of sight from the children, but it will help with the consistency of the birthday celebrations.

Excursions

Whenever you take a group of children for a walk or an excursion, a good way to keep them together is to have a light-weight rope for the children to hold onto. The teacher holds onto the front end and another teacher (or a responsible child) holds onto the other end, pulling it back slightly to keep the rope taut. It is helpful to have knots tied in the rope (every two feet or so) for the children to hold on to, This will keep the children spaced equally so they won’t be stepping on each other. Instruct the children to hold onto their knots (on alternating sides of the rope) and to not let go until they have permission from the teacher. In this way, one adult can keep several children together as they go from place to place. And the kids think it’s really fun!

Holidays and Optional Lesson Plans

Because Joy School is held throughout the world, some groups will have more of an inclination than others to hold the Optional Holiday Lessons and Optional Getting Reacquainted Lesson at the beginning of Unit 5. Your group’s use of these lesson will depend on timing, cultural and religious traditions, and scheduling constraints.

If you do use the lessons, find a way to fit them in *without* replacing other lessons in the Unit. This may mean you need to start a week earlier, or have an extra Joy School day one week, etc.

Above all, ENJOY your Joy School experience with your group and with your own precious child! We wish you the very best and we’re here to help any time.