



Exploring the Knobless Cylinders

Love of Silence and Working Alone

The nature of the young child following natural and normal development is one that loves silence and working alone. Until children enter into a different stage of development, around the time that they lose their first tooth, this love of silence and working alone remains. The desire to be out in the community and working with others are characteristics of the elementary aged child. These elementary aged qualities, in many ways, remain for the rest of our lives.

The young child is working on self-mastery of skills and “sharing” or doing an activity with other children may frustrate and hamper the child’s personal development. Young children appreciate quiet and are thrilled to hear the smallest sounds in silence—the drip of a faucet, a bird’s chirp through a closed window, the rustle of paper in a breeze.

Love of silence. The young child is in a period of development of refining the senses, along with language, movement, social relations and understanding order. The child’s sense of hearing is learning to differentiate among a multitude of sounds, and the child delights in learning to name each sound.

Three, four and five-year-olds enjoy the game, “What’s That Sound?” To play, gather up ten or so items that you can

manipulate to create a noise, for example, clicking a pen, moving the teeth of a comb, crumbling a piece of paper, tapping a fork on a table, flicking a fingernail against a glass, opening and closing a clothespin, etc. Invite your children to turn their backs to you. Tell them you’re going to make a noise and they should guess what it is. Make sure the room is quiet as possible, with television and radio turned off. Make three or four sounds and have the children guess. Ask them to turn around and repeat the sound activities with the children watching so they’ll be able to decide for themselves if their guesses were correct. Do another three or four sounds including any sound that was not guessed previously. After this game, children are usually calm and ready to do another quiet activity.

Love of working alone. Working alone connotes that there are others nearby, but the child is working on an activity alone, without interruption or interference of others. Working alone allows the child to think and analyze the activity in a way that suits his or her specific learning needs. The child loves being able to work through an activity without being told what to do by others.

My clearest memories of being a two-year-old are of quietly working alone. Try as I might I

cannot conjure up an image of my parents in these memories, though I am certain they were in the next room. One memory contains a quiet room in the afternoon and the sun is coming low and golden through the windows. I pour a drink from a bottle into a glass and then pour the liquid back into the bottle, over and over again. In my memory I feel a deep sense of satisfaction as I repeat the activity and don’t spill a drop. At some point, the activity feels complete, and I eat some crackers and drink from the glass I’ve poured. This is one of my happiest memories, sitting by myself in the quiet doing something that most adults would have stopped. Goodness, I might have spilled and made a mess!

We need to be alert and protect a child’s love and appreciation of silence and working alone. They are signs of healthy and natural development.