Characteristics of Young Children
By James Hymes

♥ They are not good sitters.

♥ This isn’t their natural pose. They have too much energy and are always on the go. Sitting only for short periods. That is why nursery schools aren’t set up like regular classrooms.

♥ They are not good at keeping quiet.

♥ They like noise! They need to talk; they don’t need quiet to learn.

♥ They are shy. They like people but in small doses. They work better in smaller groups. They need 1 to 1 contact with the teacher and other children, as well as time and space to be alone if they wish.

♥ They are highly egocentric. They are intensely interested in themselves at this point in development. They are learning to love themselves. Teacher’s attitude towards them is important. Guide for curriculum–involve them.

♥ They want to feel big, proud and important. They need to be successful. They blow their own horn to convince themselves of how important they are. They come face to face with frustration and limitations so often that success tastes sweet. We don’t need to teach them how to lose; they are too often losers. Competition has no place here.

♥ They have their own private dream world. They are the master in this fantasy world. Make-believe serves developmental purposes, early intellectual processes, and early understanding. Its their protected port.

♥ They are very tender. They have great love needs which must be filled by parents and teachers. They need physical, as well as verbal signs of love. Little signs of rejection hurt them. If they feel unloved, they act naughty. Class must be warm and gentle.

♥ They are beginners. You must be patient and tolerant because they are “mistake prone.” They err because of uncertain coordination, and strong emotions. They are uninformed, inexperienced, and haven’t learned all of life’s lessons. Repetition is necessary.

♥ They are hungry for stimulation. They need a chance for wide exploration with all of their senses. They need both an indoor and outdoor classroom.

♥ They are earthy, practical, and concrete-minded. They learn best by first-handed experiences rather than words. Must begin at the beginning.

♥ They are acquiescent. They try hard to please. With only a little praise, they are in the teacher’s palm; you have to try hard not to manipulate them. The wise teacher offers choice.

♥ They are illiterate. The child shouldn’t be forced to read at an early age. Capitalize on what they can do.