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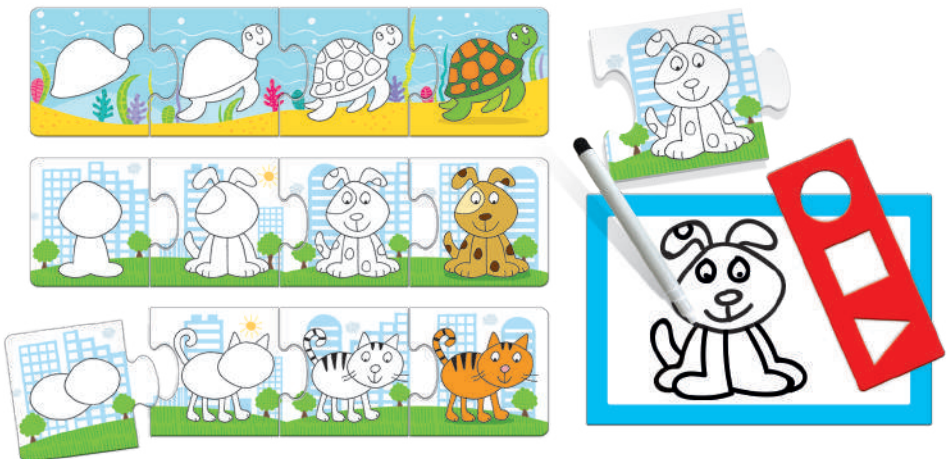
STEP by STEP DRAWING SCHOOL

With this original game, children can exercise their sense of observation and learn the first techniques of drawing. At the same time, they can recognise lovable animals and classify them on the basis of the environment in which these live, thus developing logical thought. This is a teaching device that truly exalts the different types of intelligence in children by means of a series of practical and reflective experiments, starting from the observation and perception of shapes and colours.



THE OBSERVATION AND RECOGNITION OF ANIMALS

The perceptive processes are at the basis of the development of intelligence. Wholesale perception will certainly determine less limited learning. For this reason, it is advisable to have the game begin with observation activities involving images depicted on the painted animals, which we will present to the children while carefully pronouncing the names of the former. For all practical purposes, we can use the cards as flash cards and follow the Montessori method of the "3 times" in order to favour recognition of the animals and of their outside appearance, as well as to teach the children how to pronounce their names. We therefore show the animals one at a time, and say to the children, "This is a dog." "This is a cat!" "This is an elephant." "This is a giraffe!" We then attract their attention to the characteristics of each animal: the colour of their coat, the shape of several parts of their bodies. For example, we make them notice the giraffe's long neck, the squirrel's bushy tail, and so forth. At a later moment we check their learning by asking them, "Give me the dog!", "Give me the cat!" "Show me the tortoise!" And lastly we ask them to recall the names of the animals by showing them the individual cards and asking them, "What is the name of this animal?" "And this one?" We let the children play in an independent and natural manner, while respecting the learning times.



WE BUILD THE SEQUENCES

When the children recognise the animals and know how to pronounce their names, they are ready to assemble the sequences and to learn the first drawing techniques in this way. We let the children play completely independently, thanks to the self-corrective inserts. If necessary, help must be limited to several simple suggestions without our replacing the children in the individual actions. For example, we have them position the individual cards of each sequence on the game board with the side with the drawing facing upwards. We then encourage them to compare the features of the cards of the incomplete sequences with those of the cards depicting the complete animals. We call their attention to the details of each animal, the shape of the body, and the details of the head, the tail and the ears. In this way the children feel themselves guided in assembling the 3 sequences, and refine even more their perception of the animals' bodies, which is necessary in order to have practise in the drawing activity.

Once the sequences have been assembled, we can also have the children think about the places from which the animal comes, by forming 5 groups of two: sea animals, forest animals, and animals from the farm, the savannah, and the city (i.e. pets).



LET'S DRAW!

To make the feature more secure and to accustom the children to using the erasable pen in an always more uninhibited way, we can have them practise first with the guide-stencil. We have them reproduce geometric figures and repeat the activity several times, thus making them realise certain rhythms. Only when the activity using the stencil has been carried out in a secure manner can we ask them to reproduce the figures by means of free drawing. We always use the erasable pen and the small blackboard as educational on a sheet of paper. Subsequently and lastly, we ask the children to draw the animals. We introduce one sequence at a time and invite them to reproduce them by imitating the form/ shape. We always keep at our disposal, for the sake of comparison, the last card with the complete animal: it will be useful in recalling the shape that was memorised during the preceding activities. Each time that a child has completed a part of the drawing we can reward him or her by adding another card to the sequence and then ask him or her to realise the subsequent passage.

All the activities will be found to be that much more effective the more the transitions are gradual and respectful of the learning times of each child without any forcing. When they have reached reasonable security with the erasable felt-tip pen, they themselves will be the ones to ask to experiment with the techniques learned with the use of A-4-size sheets of paper, a pencil and a felt-tip pen. In this case, in fact, the drawing can be completed by colouring them with felt-tip pens or with pastel colours.

