

Ruth Prins is well-known as WUNDA WUNDA of the Northwest and MS. ALPHABET of NBC Los Angeles. She is director of the View Ridge and Magnolia pre-schools.

FAIL-SAFE

by Ruth Prins

Atomic bombs? Diplomatic bobbles? No. This kind of fail-safe is a child's dodge to avoid repetition of what he felt to be a failure: "fail-and-be-safe."

Ray had tried. Once. Failed. Now he was lodged firmly behind a wall of feigned indifference. A game had --for him-- turned into a competition. Ray was used to being first. He was larger, stronger, could read better, and figure better than his peers. Suddenly he was confused. When the music stopped everyone sat down as quickly as he could. But others sat down more quickly. As they pointed out! Ray was appalled. He definitely wasn't first. Others who had been late sitting to cue were ~~leash~~ laughing and saying, "Let's try it again!" Ray said, "I'll watch." As occasions occurred on other days for the game to be played, Ray studiously avoided the issue. He found tasks in other classrooms. He suddenly was very helpful at cleaning up. When openly invited to join he said off-handedly, "I'll help decide who's last."

This was no adjustment but a cry for help. Successful learning is important; so is successful failure. Billy liked to compete too.

"Do you like to lose, Billy?"

"No," truthfully answered Billy. "I like to win. It makes me happy when I win; it makes me sad when I lose...but I just try again 'cause next time I might do better and when I lose

