

(Ruth Prins is Director of Preschools in View Ridge and Magnolia for academically talented children 3-6 years of age. Ms. Prins is remembered as "Wunda Wunda" of northwest television and "Ms. Alphabet" of NBC, Los Angeles)

RX: ONE TEST

"Do we get to take a test today?" begged Julie eagerly. "Today's-the-day!" "Today's the day!" I replied. "Yeaaaaaaa" came from a dozen throats. "Oh boy! We get to take a test today!" Where were the sweaty palms and the knotted stomachs? The sudden headaches and quick waves of nausea? Not here!

Testing has its uses. It assists the teacher in assessing the child's learning position and subsequent needs. If the test is reviewed soon after being celebrated, it has definite learning value.

"Celebrated?" you ask. Why do you suppose children have all those ills associated with testing? Look at the words used in speaking of tests: we "administer" tests, tests are "taken," and one awaits "test results" with trepidation. Like pills and bladder infections.

In our testing, each child is privileged to have his own private cubicle. No one may peek into his private little place. Like cats, children revel in a private habitat if it's of their own choosing. Testing begins and after a relatively short time (and before fatigue sets in), pencils are put down, books turned over, and the privileged group troups out for raisins, slices of apple, juice, or (toward the end) a chocolate kiss or cookie. There are runs outside, stretch games inside, and always an atmosphere of a private party. "We," said Jimmy grandly as the test group returned to the test room and passed other children, "We are having a test and maybe you'll get lucky and have one tomorrow!"