

Sullivan, Mo., Boy, 5, Has Mentality Double His Age

X Prodigies
Johnnie Warfield Reads Fluently and Does
Simple Arithmetic — High *Infant*
Intelligence Rating. 23 1931
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Special to the Post-Dispatch.

SULLIVAN, Mo., Jan. 23.—Johnnie Warfield, son of Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Warfield of this city, was born Nov. 21, 1925, yet he is 10 years and one month old. The paradox lies in the fact that the latter is his "educational" age, as shown by his score in a Stanford achievement test given him by D. E. Matthews, superintendent of Schools at Sullivan. If Johnnie could write script, instead of being able merely to print, he would be still older "educationally."

About Sullivan, and especially among the children, Johnnie is considered somewhat of a prodigy. He is somewhat envied, in fact, for he does not have to rely on his elders to read the comics to him, but easily reads them himself—and for his playmates.

Is Physically Fit.

Despite his unusual attainments for a child of his age, in being able to read fluently, and do ordinary arithmetic sums at the age of five years, Johnnie is not abnormal, for he enjoys his childhood sports as well as any, and even though he has read more than 100 books, he reads comics with zest, and is in good physical condition.

Mrs. Warfield has kept a close record of the boy's advance, the records showing that he began walking when 8 months and 10 days old. He learned his alphabet when 2½ years old, from a rubber ball with the letters on it. Thereafter he would spell out words and ask his parents what they meant. The questions were answered, for Johnnie's father, who is 68 years old, was formerly a rural school

teacher. His mother is 28.

Johnnie began reading when 4 years and 3 months old, and five months later, he was given an intelligence by Miss Johnnie Rethmeyer, elementary school principal, who found his mental age was 6 years and 2 months. Superintendent Matthews became interested the past summer when he heard the child reading to other children with a fluency equal to the average high school graduate. He followed his reading by explaining the meaning of what he read.

Reads Rapidly.

Since then Johnnie has borrowed many books from the superintendent, although books are a common gift to the child. Last month Matthews took him a copy of "Pilgrim's Progress" abridged for sixth grade reading, and despite the noise of other children playing nearby, Johnnie read 85 pages in 20 minutes, and when he finished the volume after several days discussed the characters familiarly.

During a visit to Matthews' home, Johnnie was handed a primer, the pages of which he began to turn as rapidly as he could. After 25 pages, Matthews called his attention to the fact that the story began in front, to which the child replied he knew it, having read that part. Matthews questioned him, and found that Johnnie had been reading and comprehending the matter as fast as he turned the leaves.

When given an intelligence test in December, his mental age was 9 years and 8 months, but he had advanced five months when given a test about two weeks later.

