



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Made-up riddles

Riddles that kids make up themselves are more fun than any other kind because they're personal and unique.

To encourage made-up riddles, start by announcing you're thinking of something and you have three clues to help guess what it is. Your clues could be size, color, texture, taste, smell, use, or form.

For example, you might say, "I'm thinking of something that is red, round and it bounces. What is it?" The child who correctly guesses the answer—a red ball—takes the next turn and makes up a new riddle.

Are the riddles too hard? Too easy? Too much alike? That's the nice part about made-up riddles—they can be tailored to fit the audience by adding or subtracting clues to make them easier or harder.

Best of all, everyone can take a turn—and you can make up riddles almost any time or in any place you find yourselves. □

Academics

Reading together

Here are some suggestions that will help you and your child get the most out of reading together.

1. Try to make reading time a fun experience, both for you and for your child. Choose a time for reading that is good for both of you.

Don't try to "impose" reading time—as though it were a daily duty—if you or your child are feeling tired.

2. Give your child your undivided attention while reading. If you have an answering machine for your telephone, use it. Also turn off electronics—cell phone, television, music players.

3. Become aware of the kinds of books your child enjoys the most. A trip to the public library will enable her to know more about the different kinds of books available.

4. Encourage your child to make her own choice of books. Ask her what she likes about the books she chooses.

5. Involve your child as much as possible in what you are reading. Here are some suggestions:

- **Point to pictures in the book** as you say a word or ask your child to point to objects she recognizes.

- **Get her to join you, if possible, in reading sentences** that are repeated. ("Run, run, as fast as you

can. You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread man!")

- **Ask her open-ended questions** about the story. ("What do you think will happen next?")

- **Help her to relate the story to her own experiences.** ("Has that ever happened to you?" "What would you have done?")

6. Help your child develop a sense of sequencing in space and time. ("What happened first, second, next?")

7. Relate the pace of your reading to your child's interest in particular aspects of the story.

Children often like to create their own "side-road" stories, becoming more fascinated with what happens along the way than with the story's ending.

Parents, on the other hand, are often the ones who are most eager to read the story's ending.

8. Let your child cuddle up beside you or sit in your lap while you read with your arm around her shoulder.

The warm, loving feelings you convey are as important to your son or daughter—and often even more important—than the content of the story you are reading. □

The very best gift of all

Marion is a mother, a nurse, and an aunt who knows all about kids. When she was about to visit her sister's family, she wanted to bring along a small gift for her niece.

So, for Susan, who is 2-1/2 years old, Marion bought a gift-wrapped tin of plastic bandages in several sizes. Her husband thought the gift was weird, cheap, and inappropriate, and he said so. Marion merely smiled.

Marion's sister and brother-in-law raised their eyebrows almost simultaneously when they saw their Susan unwrap the unusual gift.

Susan, however, was utterly delighted! First, she looked all over her own body for some place she could use a bandage on. She found a small scratch, and it seemed to qualify.

Then she put two on her doll. After that she sorted out the big bandages, the middle-sized one, and the little ones. And she asked Aunt Marion what kinds of cuts, scratches, bruises or sore spots each one ought to be saved for.

Over the next few days, the bandages obviously were her favorite playthings.

What Aunt Marion had known was that at 2-1/2, Susan's play would probably include lots of simple pretending based on the real and simple events of her own life.

So the bandages were a smash hit of a gift because they helped Susan to pretend to do something important that grownups do. And every bandage—big, middle-sized or small—became a source of fun and a learning experience. And that's the very best gift of all! □

Beginning to understand

We have no way of knowing what words mean to a child.

We can only observe what happens when she hears a particular word.

We know that a baby understands when she consistently responds with a definite reaction to our words.

For example, when a parent raises his voice and says "No!" in disapproval, the child stops the movement she is about to make.



But is she reacting to the word "no" itself, or to the pitch and rhythm of our voice?

Parents and caregivers tend to repeat the same words and sentences each time they talk to a baby. Before long she borrows your tone and even your rhythm and uses it in her imitations of you.

Showing your pleasure will encourage her to say more and say it better. Even if her repetitions are imperfect, her pitch will resemble yours.

In a study made of vocalizations of infants between six and eight months of age, it was possible to identify a Chinese infant because of his distinct speech patterns.

Another study demonstrated how quickly children learn to mimic intonation.

The researcher recorded the babbling and crying of two babies, 10 and 13 months old, under three conditions: when they were alone, in the presence of the mother, and in the presence of the father.

The results indicated that the pitch of their crying did not vary with any of the three situations.

However, the pitch of their babbling did vary. For fathers, the infants' pitch was much lower than was the pitch used for the mother.

Clearly the infants imitated the pitch associated with the adult's voice—high for female, lower for male. □

Something New!

"Grandma Says" is a twice-monthly special message that includes general parenting tips, words of encouragement, and children's book reviews.

To receive your free issues, go to:
www.GrowingChild.com/
 FreeGrandmaSays
 and enter your e-mail address.

You can review a current issue at: www.blog.growingchild.com/the-joy-of-parenting

When parents and grandparents disagree

If there are disagreements between generations about childrearing, there are several things to consider:

- How important is it? If children seldom see their grandparents, a simple conversation about different rules at different houses may suffice.

If there are major differences and children spent a lot of time with grandparents, the situation will have to be addressed.

- Many new parents are understandably insecure in their decisions about rearing children. An authoritative grandparent may make it hard to stand up for one's own beliefs.

- Some grandparents who were strict with their own children prefer to simply "enjoy" the grandchildren, including whims and undermining discipline.

- Grandparents who've struggled to raise their own children may see different childrearing methods as disapproval of their own practices or a repudiation of their values.

When differences of opinion about children are impossible to resolve or in cases where there are problems of sickness such as untreated alcoholism or a severe mental disorder, hard choices must be made.

It is hard for grandparents and grandchildren to be cut off from each other, but there may be no other solution.

In some cases, however, visits may be made with the parents or a responsible third party present.

Often differences between generations are the product of misunderstandings and faulty

communications.

A frank discussion of the parents' philosophy of child rearing can often lead to a sharing of ideas.

Between the two extremes of response—suffering in silence or denying all contact—there is usually a meeting ground.

- Parents should discuss between themselves their philosophies, goals, and plans for their children.

Disagreements should be ironed out before approaching grandparents.

- If there is a particular child development book you are consulting, provide a copy for the grandparents.

- Decide whether there is one specific area of disagreement, such as television viewing or going to church, or if there is a strikingly different philosophy.

- Meeting without the kids on neutral ground may lend itself to a productive discussion.

- Whether you are the parent or the grandparent, state your case, then *listen*. The other generation may have some good ideas. □

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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

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Disobedience: What not to do

Every parent faces a disobedient child, but a parent's reaction can set the tone for dealing with misbehavior.

"Most of the time children won't want to or can't tell you why they've misbehaved," said child psychologist, Peter Stavinoha. "The importance of the situation lies with how the parent reacts."

He suggests three simple guidelines, that can help parents effectively deal with disobedient children.

First: Don't lecture. Lecturing a young child gives opportunity for arguments or repeat occurrences.

Children often won't or can't talk about their unacceptable behavior. However, a swift, meaningful consequence makes for clearer learning.

Second: Don't use excessive warnings. Multiple warnings of consequences build delay in a child's response.

If a child is given repeated warnings, she learns that she doesn't have to act right away.

The warning of negative consequences should hold firm on a second command.

Finally: Don't dole out long-term punishment. Make the punishment immediate because if it drags on for a long time, the child may not correlate the punishment with a specific incident.

Also, if a child misbehaves while being punished for one reason, finding a second punishment gets more difficult for the parent. □

December, 2015

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



1

An advent calendar is a good way to learn about days, numbers and time. Make or buy one.

2

Make up a "What If?" story, such as: What if you could fly?



3

What games can you play outside today?



5

Roll a pine cone in peanut butter and put it outside for the squirrels.

6

Hanukkah begins at sundown.



7

Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 1941.



8

Play "I spy."

9

Draw a Christmas picture on a small paper plate. Add your name, the date, put a string through the top, and hang it on the Christmas tree.

10

Count four things:
4 eggs
4 windows
4 noses
4 buildings

11

Is it warm enough to play outside? What's the temperature?

12

Donate canned goods and paper products to a charity. Talk about why this is a good thing to do.

13

Warm up some apple cider for a tasty treat.



14

Monkey Day.

Have a costume party with a small prize for the best monkey!

15

"Dashing through the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh ..."
What's a sleigh? Find out.

16

Check out the weather conditions in your area. Then look at a bigger map: Where is it snowing in the United States today?

17

Sing some Christmas and holiday songs.



18

Bake Cookies Day!

19

When you're out shopping, close your eyes and listen. What do you hear?

20

National Fruitcake Day.

21

Play with a shape sorter. Learn the names of the different shapes and say them as you drop in the shape.

22

Winter begins.



23

Have a mini-holiday ball at your house with parents and kids eating, playing music and dancing. You'll need to dress up, too!

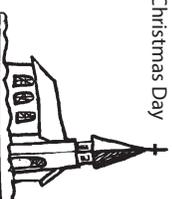
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Christmas Eve



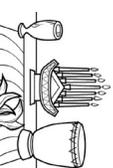
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Christmas Day



26

KWANZAA begins.



27

Play a favorite board game.



28

If you have snow, walk outside and look at your footprints.

29

Practice whistling "Jingle Bells."

30

Waffles for breakfast

31

New Year's Eve
Stay up a little bit later.

