



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Discipline

Slowing down the restless child

Children's behavior can sometimes get out of control, and whatever tactics you use to calm them down just don't work.

Here are a couple of suggestions for those times that may provide both you and your child with time and space to quiet down and regain control.

- Read to him. Is there a favorite book he loves to hear? Take the opportunity to sit close.
- Tell him stories about himself when he was younger and stories about yourself when you were his age.
- Keep a collection of colored chalk or magic markers that are used only on special occasions—such as “quiet time.”
- Remind your child that you love him. Tell him at least two good reasons why. □

Developmental

Spending time together

Most parents value spending time with their children. But all too often our lifestyle doesn't lend itself to “togetherness” Even when we plan special time with them, things don't always go smoothly.

Here are some tips for helping make the time spent together happy and productive for all:

- If you spend time at work during the week and your child spends the majority of time in school or at childcare, staying home and having an unstructured day during the weekend might be a better way to nurture a relationship than going to see a movie or going to the zoo.

A relaxing time doing what you all enjoy—which may be as simple as fixing pancakes for breakfast or going on a hike—may be the best use of your time.

- Do something with your children that you like to do. If you do something you enjoy, the pleasure is often contagious.

What about a game of miniature golf? Go swimming together. Play croquet.

- Sometimes let children join in your projects. The adult world is appealing to children.



After all, children want more than anything to be “big.” They also want to spend time with their parents.

For example, while you're making dinner, put a plastic tablecloth on the floor. Give your youngster a pan of water (not very deep) and some potatoes to wash with a vegetable scrub brush.

- Make a short list of four or five activities you can all participate in. Then let the kids choose the one they'd like most. This helps them feel like they are part of the family, and that their preferences are considered.

We need to manage ourselves to make time for what's important to us. But that isn't always easy. Kids are kids for only a short time. Building a strong relationship with them now means you can enjoy the rewards for a lifetime. □

Exploring the world of writing

A parent's positive approach to writing as a pleasurable activity can have rewarding results.

Just as you began talking to an infant who could not repeat anything recognizable back to you, you can provide a similar exposure to the art of writing.

Build on children's natural curiosity and encourage them to explore the world of writing. Tots marvel at the magic they can make with markers, chalk, and crayons.



Your reinforcement of such play will plant the seeds for writing to be an enjoyable activity. It says to your child that you value her attempts at this “grown-up” activity.

At first you may need to provide much direction and supervision—reminding your child to write only at her special place, such as at a desk or table, and not on walls.

In the beginning much of the learning also involves getting familiar with the implements—paper, marker, chalk, crayons. And you may need to correct bad habits: “No, we don't pound the chalk into little bits.”

Sometimes you'll have to fight an overwhelming sense that your child is just not getting the hang of this—“Oh, honey, you've scribbled on every page in this tablet in just five minutes!”

As the writing activities and tools become habitual and comfortable to your child, it will become a natural recreation throughout her childhood years.

Younger children can write a letter to a friend, a grandparent, or other relatives by cutting out pictures they like and pasting them on paper.

Children with cutting skills can cut out words from magazines, newspapers, or other printed material and paste them together. An adult can help hunt words if needed.

The letter isn't finished until the envelope is properly addressed, stamped, and mailed, with a return address affixed.

At three years old, a child will be content with her crayon and tablet as she sits in the grocery cart imitating the grocery shopper by crossing off items on a list.

At four, the child who has been offered writing play as a toddler will insist on a pencil and paper to scribble on while sitting in her stroller as you hike through the mall.

At five, the preschool youngster can't wait to begin her “writing work” in the car on a “lap desk” as you travel on your vacation.

Each child will respond in her own unique way to your encouragement in the grown-up task of writing. □

Learning to eat can be messy!

Toddlers who have been practicing with both finger feeding and holding a spoon are probably becoming pretty good self-feeders by now.

On the other hand, if you have been feeding Toddler and she is now about 18 months old, now is the time to encourage her to take over and do it herself.

You can expect an occasional mess—being a neat eater takes lots of practice!

Some toddlers will feed themselves certain foods but want a parent or caregiver to feed them others.

If this practice continues, it is possible that Toddler will build up some faulty eating habits—she will see the difference between the foods that she wants and the foods that you want her to eat.

In this period of self-assertion, such a practice can develop into a tug-of-war. In the future you may find that she may not have an appetite for your foods. So, to avoid this kind of confrontation, continue to allow your toddler to feed herself in spite of the mess she may make.

Between the first and second years, many younger will give up certain foods, particularly vegetables. Accept her preferences and return to the rejected foods in a few weeks.

By pushing a temporary dislike on her, you increase the probability that the particular food may become permanently distasteful to her.

Toddler's preferences may result in an occasional lopsided meal, but from day to day or week to week her choices should even out to a well-balanced diet. □

Getting along with others

Your child gets her first lessons in how to relate to other people from your example.

She learns how to get along with others from the ways you and she relate to each other. She also learns from seeing how you get along with other people.

There are several ways in which she learns how to treat others and be treated by others in return:

- How you treat her;
- How she sees you treat others;
- How you allow her to treat you and others;
- How others allow her to treat them.

You'll see some of the effects of your "teaching by example" now. Other patterns, although laid down now, may not appear in her relationships until she's older.

She will learn ways to act with you now to try to please you and avoid your anger or disappointment.

She will pick up from you different ways to act with others who are more or less powerful than she is, which she will use when she's in conflict situations.

And, she will learn, from observing you, ways of treating her own mate and children which she will carry into these adult relationships. □



There's no easy way to be a parent

A young father was undertaking the daily nap-time struggle with his three-year-old son.

He reasoned, he coaxed, he threatened, he bargained, and finally, he backed down. With a sigh, he said to himself, "I wish there were an easy way."

As this little story indicates, probably one of the most difficult facts for many parents to accept is that there really is no easy way. There is no magic formula for turning children into cooperative, self-controlled social beings.

However much parents might wish to avoid the responsibility of being the limit-setter and rule-maker in every situation, this is what it means to be the parent of a young child.

In fact, once a parent has accepted this basic premise, life does become a lot simpler for both child and parent.

For the child, life is simpler because the heavy weight of being asked to make decisions that are beyond his developmental abilities is removed.

With the adult clearly in charge, the child is free to move about confidently in a world that has clear behavioral boundaries and expectations.

If limits and expectations are clearly drawn, they are accepted as real.

But if they are drawn with a shaky hand, there is uncertainty for the child about the rules of the game.

Then the child has the burden of continually struggling with the adult to find the limits of behavior.

For the parent who accepts the idea that adults must firmly guide the lives of young children, there is less frustration caused by skirmishes between two sides so unequal in judgment and experience.

We all want our children to grow up to be successful individuals, capable of running their own lives.

In the meantime, adults—who clearly have an advantage in self-control, thinking, and reasoning powers—must make the rules. □

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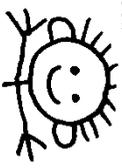
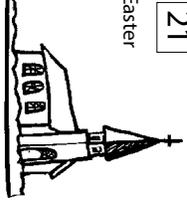
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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1 Your shoe's untied! April Fools!</p> 	<p>2 Sing one song three different ways, as if it were: 1. an opera 2. rock-n-roll 3. country western tune</p>	<p>3 Make a list of things that are: tall</p>	<p>4 What "things" come in pairs? Example: shoes</p>	<p>5 What's your favorite song?</p> 	<p>6 Go to the library and look for a storybook about a dog.</p>
<p>7 Learn how to sing rounds.</p> 	<p>8 Can you say the days of the week? Make it harder: Say them backwards.</p>	<p>9 Whose picture is on a nickel? Is this person famous? Why?</p> 	<p>10 What games can you play outside with others today?</p>	<p>11 Practice your ABCs. Do you know the ABC song?</p> 	<p>12 Empty wastebaskets.</p>	<p>13 What are your grandparents' "real" names?</p> 
<p>14 Palm Sunday</p>	<p>15 Will you need to wear a sweater or jacket outside today?</p> 	<p>16 Sing the song "April Showers."</p>	<p>17 Look for some pussy willow plants outside. (Look it up.)</p> 	<p>18 Wear something purple today.</p>	<p>19 Passover begins at sundown.</p> 	<p>20 Go for a walk and count all the dogs you see.</p>
<p>21 Easter</p> 	<p>22 Earth Day 2019: Protect Our Species Look it up!</p>	<p>23 Learn to sing: "Twinkle, twinkle, little star ..."</p> 	<p>24 Count all the robins you see outside.</p>	<p>25 Get a dictionary of your own. Have a dictionary lesson: Learn a new word: alphabet</p>	<p>26 Spell a word or two using stick pretzels.</p>	<p>27 Look for blooming flowers.</p> 
<p>28 Practice whistling (a lost art). Ask somebody what a lost art is anyway.</p>	<p>29 Tell a joke.</p>	<p>30 Count all the shoes in the house. (No boots)</p>				