



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Count 'em up

On a rainy day—or any other day when there's nothing to do—put together a list of questions kids can answer with a number. For example:

- How many windows are there in our home?
- How many shoes are there in your closet?
- How many beans (buttons, coins, pebbles, jelly beans) are there in this jar? (Not for kids under two.)
- How many socks are in your drawer?
- How many pillows are there in our home?
- How many hats or caps are there in our home?
- How far is it—in feet—from the front door to the refrigerator door?
- How many dogs (and their names) do you know?

Make up your own list of questions and adjust the difficulty to fit your audience. Provide a tape measure—or another appropriate tool—when needed. □

Parenting

Providing emotional support

Beyond satisfying a toddler's basic physical needs such good nutrition and providing a healthy, safe environment, her most important need as a toddler is for a dependable, affectionate relationship with at least one significant adult in her life.

This relationship provides her with the essential element of stability she needs as she moves onward toward higher stages of intellectual, emotional and social development.



It is the secure anchor she needs as she experiences waves of sometimes baffling new experiences.

When toddler can count on the faithful love of someone special—whether in success or in failure—her

feelings of trust and positive self-esteem are nourished and developed.

On the other hand, children who fail to develop this important bond become apprehensive and mistrustful of themselves and of others.

One of the great challenges of good parenting is in letting your child know she is loved without being either overly protective of her or overly intrusive into her own private world.

It involves being sensitive and responsive to her inner emotional needs, rather than imposing affection on her in ways she does not want.

This demands insight, flexibility and self-control on the part of the parent and, at times may seem almost impossible to accomplish.

Let's face it: It's impossible to be a perfect parent all the time. A more realistic goal is just to strive to be a good parent most—or at least, part—of the time.

Striving to be a good parent involves trying to find a balance—a happy medium—between letting your child go in order to experience independence and holding on to her with affection whenever she needs your emotional support. □

Tips for more effective discipline

Parents sometimes wonder about more effective discipline strategies. Here are ten tips:

- Focus on only one behavior or misbehavior at a time instead of bringing up old complaints.
- Make sure your child knows what behavior you expect.
- Make direct statements (“You spilled sugar on the floor”) instead of unclear statements (“Remember, I want you always to be a good girl.”)
- Be as specific as you can (“Don’t hit your brother”) and avoid vague directives (“Didn’t a just tell you to be nice to your brother?”).
- Be as brief as possible.
- Focus on the here-and-now instead of dragging up past history (“Haven’t I told you a thousand times not to ...?”).
- Be consistent in what you say and how you discipline. Don’t punish your child because you’re in a bad mood today and then allow bad behavior to slip by when you are in a good mood tomorrow.
- Keep your emotions under control. Never take your anger out on a child.
- Keep the tone of your voice as calm as possible without yelling or screaming at your child.
- Let your child know you love her even when you dislike her misbehavior instead of using sarcasm or hurting remarks (“You’re a dummy.”). She needs your love.
- Do compliment her when her behavior is pleasing. Do this often. □

Growing up is hard to do

As a child grows up during the preschool years, she may seem unpredictable and hard to understand. She may get very excited about an activity, only to leave it without explanation.

Sometimes you may have to tell her the same thing a hundred times. Still she forgets to do what you’ve asked.

She can be adorable one minute and whiny and pouting the next. And she may—for no apparent reason—begin to be afraid of all sorts of things which never bothered her before.

In other words, your child is experiencing some rough spots which are normal on her journey to growing up.

Your preschooler is no longer a baby. You have expectations of her taking some responsibility for herself. This is good.

Most of the time she probably is proud to be able to do things for herself.

But there are times when she wishes someone else would take care of her responsibilities. This shows up, particularly, if there’s a younger child in the family from whom less is expected.

Try to understand how your child feels. And let her know you understand her feelings: “You don’t want to put away your toys now. You’re tired, and you wish I’d do it for you. Let’s pick them up together.”

By putting yourself in your child’s shoes, you can help her get through the occasional rough spots in her life. □

Anger and fear

Angry outbursts are frequent during the second year. This is because toddlers are eager to make choices and exercise their independence. But they have neither the experience nor the skills to control their behavior.

One of the best ways to help a toddler through this period is to reduce tensions by meeting his needs while maintaining reasonable but firm control.

Allow him to choose between two options. For example, this shirt or that shirt? This banana or that pear?

Expressions of fear may also appear during the second year. The kinds of fear are broad—fear of the dark, fear of new experiences, coping with a stranger without the presence of a familiar presence.

Toddler may not be able to convey his fears verbally, but adult reassurance, in terms of affection, will certainly pay off.

At the same time, parents should try not to be over-protective since these fears are a normal part of growing up and Toddler must learn to cope with them. □

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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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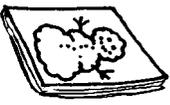
January, 2020

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday



1 New Year's Day.
Paul Revere's birthday.
Read about his exciting role in American history.

2 Think up your own Winter Olympics events.



3 What colors make up a rainbow? Read about it.

4 Read "The Mitten" by Jan Brett.

5 Tell your fellow family members what you like about them.



6 National Soup Month.
Try a new one.

7 Fill a jar with buttons, small candies, paper clips and other little things. Then everyone gets to guess how many "things" there are in the jar. (Not for kids under two)

8 Elvis Presley's birthday (1935).



9 Roll a ball and an orange. Do they roll the same? Why or why not?

10 When you wake up in the morning, very quietly listen for the sounds of birds singing outside. Is that music?

11 Amelia Earhart Day.
Read about this remarkable woman's accomplishments.

12 Do a picture puzzle together.

13 Wear something with dots on it today.



14 Get a seed catalog and see what you might grow this year.

15 Discuss what "peace" means.

Wear a hat for "Hat Day."

16 What's the temperature today: (check one)

_____ 10-29 degrees
_____ 30-59 degrees
_____ 59-90 degrees

17 Benjamin Franklin's birthday (1706)
Where can you see his picture?

18 English muffin pizzas for lunch.

19 What fits into what? What bowls, pans, cups do you have that nest inside of each other. Since it's Popcorn Day, put some in one or two of those bowls and eat up!

20 Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

21 Turn out the lights and "write" on the wall with a flashlight.

Fun

22 What's a badge? What do you do with it?

23 National Pie Day.
Eat some.

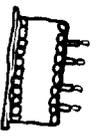
24 Plan an art craft for tomorrow.

25 Do that art craft from Friday.



26 Draw a picture using only red, yellow and green crayons.

27 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart born, 1756.
What did he leave to the world?



28 Christa McAuliffe Day.
Read her life story.

29 Talk about an incident that was so funny, you couldn't stop laughing.

30 Clap your hands together as you count to ten, then do it again.



31 Chinese New Year: Year of the Rat.

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment to improve the world."
—Anne Frank