



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

## Household Hunt

Instead of searching for difficult, obscure objects as in a scavenger hunt, draw up a list of simple items that can be found in and around your home.

For example, the list might include: a tennis shoe or tennis ball, a feather, two marbles, a cracker, three buttons, one tee shirt, a container of peanut butter, a napkin, and so on.

Depending on the number of players, the kids can be organized as teams or individuals can have their own lists.

List items can be as difficult or as easy to find as necessary for kids' ages—and for safety purposes.

Set a time limit by using an egg timer or an alarm clock that will announce the end of the game.

Kids may want to put together a list of items for the adults to find as well! □

## Social Skills

### Do kids act up on purpose?

Do you ever wonder if your child is deliberately trying to upset you emotionally? Many parents are concerned that their child has developed the knack of “driving them bonkers.”

Here's an example. Dad and 3-1/2-year-old Nancy are learning about her new toy xylophone. Dad shows Nancy how to make different musical sounds and they take turns hitting the notes. They both laugh and smile a lot together.

Then it's time for Dad to go do something else in the house. After he leaves, Nancy discovers she can use the xylophone mallet to make new and different sounds by hitting some pots and pans within her reach on the floor. She is fascinated with the variety of new noises she can make.

Soon Dad reappears and with great self-control, calmly asks her to please make less noise. But, by now, Nancy's fascination with the sounds she can produce is far more compelling than her desire to please her dad.

The next time Dad appears, his face looks angry. In a loud voice he shouts: “Stop making so much noise!”

Dad leaves and for a few moments, Nancy hugs her favorite doll. Then she spots another pot she hadn't noticed before. She started to hit it, very softly at first, then more and more loudly. This is an experiment that holds her interest. What will the outcome be?

Will Dad reappear to give her more attention again? After all, any attention—even scolding—would be better than no attention. Will she locate still another pot—or object—that will make still another new sound? Sure enough, Dad appears at the door again.

We are not told the ending of this story. It could be a sad ending. Or it could be a reasonably happy one. That will depend more on Dad's behavior than Nancy's.

After all, as an adult, Dad has more experience in living. He has had more opportunities to learn how to control his own behavior. And he can read articles and books that help him better understand Nancy's behavior.

Nancy, on the other hand, isn't old enough to study the behavior of adults. She has to learn the hard way—by trial and error. Through trial and error she will learn about life, including the limits of tolerated behaviors that adults in her life will set.

Nancy is still just a small child, learning new skills every day from her encounters with people and objects. To demand absolute quiet behavior at this stage of her life would inhibit her desire to learn and to explore.

Inevitably, some of her learning experiments in social relationships will have the appearance of willful “bad” behavior. Those are the ones most demanding of a parent's patience, understanding and love. □



## Discipline with kindness and respect

Around three years of age, children are able to understand an explanation of right and wrong.

Younger children may know the difference but have difficulty understanding how discipline is related to their misbehavior.

A three-year-old, however, is able to understand the relationship between her misbehavior and the form of discipline you choose to impose.

Keep this in mind the next time you reprimand your three-year-old. Think about how you would feel if you were in her shoes.

Would you feel hurt, misunderstood, or angry if people treated you the way you are treating her?

Or would you feel they understood your point of view even though they weren't pleased with what you had done?

If someone yelled at you or made you feel bad because you'd misbehaved, what would you learn?

Would you learn to commit acts for which you were punished when you thought you could get away with it?

Would you learn to hide the truth from your parents in order to avoid punishment?

Wouldn't you prefer that she learn not to do something because she understands why it's wrong rather than from fear of punishment?

A good rule would be to treat children of all ages as you would like to be treated. □

## Love with no strings attached

Unconditional love means that you love your child with no conditions. You love him today and tomorrow, and you will continue to love him in spite of the fact that his behavior is unacceptable sometimes.

You can show unconditional love by hugging your child. Listen to his heartbeat. Tell him specific things you like about him or his behavior. "Thank you for your helping your brother up the steps—I like to see you being kind to him."

Tell him how much he is loved. It doesn't have to be big words or long sentences. Just a simple "I love you" can do wonders for a child's self-image.

If your child knows you love him, he has the freedom to grow. Knowing he is secure and loved will give him the confidence to try something new, to try harder to meet your expectations for him.

Your child needs to know he is loved even though his behavior may not always be lovable.

You may at times discipline him for negative behavior and at other times praise him for positive behavior, but you can love him all the time.

That's why it is important for him to understand how you can love **him** but not his behavior.

"I love you, Tim, but I don't like your behavior right now. Do not push your brother—he's smaller than you are and he could get hurt."

To your child, you are the most important person in his world. Your love is the best gift you can give him—today and tomorrow—so be generous. □

## Learning—one step at a time

As children grow gradually, so grow their abilities to handle increasingly complex tasks.

Parents can help this process by maintaining reasonable expectations of the child's present abilities ... but also anticipate growth and expect just a bit more from the child.

For example, when your child is attempting a new task alone and becomes frustrated, don't rescue her right away.

Instead gently remind her of the next step in the task. Speak sparingly but offer your encouragement. A word or two may be the only clues she needs to finish the job.

Another way to encourage growth is to teach in steps. You can begin a task for the child and then hand over the project.

For example, you can set out the pitcher, sugar, measuring cup, spoon and drink packet, and then have the child take over and make the fruit punch.

Tasks should be geared toward the child's age, remembering that children are not little adults ... but they do want to learn new tasks geared to their level. □

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# November 2019

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



Over the river, and through the wood, to Grandfather's house we go;  
the horse knows the way to carry the sleigh through the white and drifted snow.  
Over the river, and through the wood, trot fast, my dapple-gray!  
Spring over the ground like a hunting-hound! For 'tis Thanksgiving Day

Excerpted from Lydia Maria Child.

1

Keep a weather chart for this month. Use your own weather symbols.

sunny rain cloudy

2

Make a picture to send to Grandpa.



3

Sing a lullaby to baby before bedtime.



4

Count your socks. How many do you have? How many pairs?

5

Election Day



6

Draw a map of your bedroom. Now try a harder map: The kitchen. The bathroom. The garage.

7

Count all the stairsteps in/ at your house.

8

Learn how to make microwave applesauce—with supervision, please



9

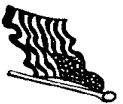
Cheese bites for a snack today. Maybe some crackers, too. And juice.

10

Talk about something you did yesterday.

11

Veterans Day



12

Close your eyes. Stick out your tongue. Stand on one foot. For a minute or two. Kinda wobbly, right?

13

Play a card game . . .

GO FISH!

14

Go shopping for a new houseplant.



15

Dip straws in water colors. Gently blow into the straws and colors onto paper to create your own masterpiece.

16

Hug a friend today.



17

Grilled cheese for lunch. And some



18

Draw a picture of your pet or a friend's pet.

19

Can you wink? Practice with each eye.

20

Ask Dad to read you one of your favorite books.



21

Look for things in the kitchen that are blue.

22

Write your name with a red marker.

BEN  
CAROLYN  
SUSAN  
DUNCAN

23

Take a walk around the block with someone.

24

Crawl slowly down a hallway with someone else.

25

Make up a story about a dragon who wears a red sweater.



26

Draw a Thanksgiving picture to post on the fridge.

27

Do you have the phone number of the local poison control center posted by your telephone?

28

Thanksgiving Day. What are you thankful for?

29

Jump rope. Mom and Dad, too!

30

Can you find five (5) rectangular shapes in the bedroom?

