



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Developmental

Helping children feel good about themselves

The simple ideas that follow can help parents relate to children in ways that will help children feel good about themselves.

- Have confidence in your child. Trust in him to learn from his mistakes and to outgrow any aggravating habits he may pick up as he's growing.
- Pay more attention to his strengths than to his "shortcomings." You'll find you'll see more of whichever one you focus on.
- Be alert to and encourage your child's natural talents. Have patience with him in the areas in which he doesn't excel.
- Have faith in his willingness and desire to do things because he loves you and wants to please you rather than because he's afraid of displeasing you or being punished.
- Always try to give him the benefit of the doubt when you find your confidence in him lacking. □

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Academics

Becoming aware of numbers and sizes

Here's a little game to play that involves objects and numbers. First, find two shoe boxes, coffee cans or other containers that have larger openings and thus are easy to fill and empty.

Then gather up a larger number of toys and safe, durable objects in a wide range of sizes. Both you and your child take a container and pile the objects between you. Then take turns selecting an object and putting it in your own container.

The object of the game is to fill one's container with as many objects as possible. When the containers are filled, compare the number of objects in each. Pour out the contents and arrange the objects in two straight lines, so that your

objects line up with each other's. Count each object out loud as you point to it as this gives him experience in hearing counting.

The purpose of this game is to show your child that there is a relationship between the size of the objects and the number that can be placed in the container—the smaller the object, the more that can be put in the container.

Don't give away the winning method by selecting only the very smallest objects. Try to be just slightly better than he is and see if he finds his way to the correct method as he gains experience.

As your child begins to grasp the principle, you can anchor his understanding by using new containers and new objects. □

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 a tennis ball; a feather; two marbles; a cracker; three buttons; one tee shirt, and so on.

Depending in the number of players, the kids can be organized as teams or individuals can have their own list. 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 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! □

Ten annoying behaviors that show your child is okay

As you are raising your children, here's one thing that no one prepares you for: There are behaviors that are both annoying and nerve-wracking to live through that are part of perfectly normal child development. Let's bring them out in the open so that you don't have to worry in private that you have a weird kid. In fact, it is time to start worrying if none of these things happen.

1. Before the first birthday, your sociable little darling suddenly begins to scream when confronting an unfamiliar face—which may include Grandma if she hasn't visited recently. All this shows is that true attachment to parents has occurred—hurrah!

2. About 18 months, your child lives to dump—anything, anywhere. Dumping food or the sugar bowl is every bit as much fun as dumping blocks—even more so is the satisfying howl from the nearest parent. Physical exploration leads to understanding.

3. By two years, your child yells "Me! Mine!" when asked to share a toy with a visiting playmate. While this doesn't make for smooth play dates, it is about as normal as you can get.

4. When you send your two-and-a-half-year-old to wash his hands before dinner, it takes a full half hour and the bathroom resembles the aftermath of a cyclone. Water play takes precedence over cleanliness or obedience any time.

5. Around age three, you can count on her spilling milk at the lunch table every single day. I vividly remember despairing that we were raising a complete klutz. But just consider the number of things that

are competing for her attention at mealtimes.

6. When your child is about three and a half, you can bet that most of his or her waking hours will be spent in character and costume as "Spiderman!" or "Wonder Woman!" There's just something about those powerful images that captivate the imagination of someone who has little power beyond choosing a breakfast cereal.

7. Don't be shocked when you discover your child—about age four—exploring bodies with a friend or two. This doesn't indicate deviant interests but a perfectly normal curiosity about other children's anatomy.

8. Somewhere around age four and a half, you will wonder if your child is heading for a career in competitive sports or politics. Children at this age become preoccupied with "winning," being the "biggest" and the "best," even competing on whose dad is the strongest. Not a problem—how else do you begin to figure out where you measure up in relation to others?

9. The five-year-old who is sweetly amenable to most adult suggestions becomes a virtual tyrant when there are younger children nearby to boss around. Again, it's not too difficult to figure out. About this time, children have to comply with adult guidelines for behavior in school and at home. It's natural to want to exercise a bit of authority over someone younger.

10. When your school ager comes home after a long school day, don't be surprised to hear a muttered, "You're not the boss of me" when you make a simple request.

It's kind of the equivalent of getting out from under the control of the supervisor at work.

See? Your child is really just as normal as all the others of the same age. And you'll both live through it. □

Social Skills

Learning to share

An important skill children need to master is how to share with friends. Here are some tips:

- When friends come to play, help your child put away the special toys she doesn't want to share.
- Explain to your child beforehand that sharing a toy doesn't mean the friend can take it home.
- Help your child select "share toys" that won't break or get used up.
- Buy or collect toys that are good for sharing, such as construction sets and outdoor play equipment.
- Model sharing. You might say to your child, "This apple is good. Would you like some of mine?"
- Ask your kids to share and then say, "Thank you for being such a good sharer."
- Play games that require turn-taking.
- Most importantly, remember that a child's understanding of "sharing" begins to be more clear around three years old. □

Ways to keep your cool

There's no doubt that kids can do things that drive parents to distraction. Often we try to hold our anger in check, but somehow it just seems to slip through the barriers.

Even when we're angry with someone or something else, we may inadvertently vent frustrations on the little ones.

After all, they can't offer armed resistance, throw garbage on our lawn, or report us to the IRS. We forget, though, how much our anger hurts them.

In confrontation with children, it is the responsibility of the adult to maintain self-control, objectivity and a sense of humor.

It is also important that adults set an example free of hypocrisy and the "do as I say and not as I do" syndrome. How logical is it for mom or dad to scream at their child for screaming at a sibling or playmate? We must remember to view ourselves as our children view us.

There are many ways to keep from getting angry and to keep from exploding. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Humor.** One of the best ways to defuse a tense situation and relieve hostility is through the use of laughter. Humor works well with children and adolescents, but it will only work with adults who remember how to laugh. Once in a while it helps to laugh at yourself.

- **Control.** Wind a piece of masking tape around your wrist. Make a mark on it every time you raise your voice or lose your

temper. Keep a daily tally for a week. You may be amazed at the number of marks on your tape. Work at decreasing the number as you become more conscious of your emotions.

- **Delay.** When you feel your self-control slipping, try the old technique of counting to ten—silently or aloud. If you are busy counting, you're less likely to hear the whining of a toddler or the ping-pong of your nerves.

- **Distraction.** Make lists of things to do. Organize your silverware drawer, clean a closet, or change a bed.

- **Compare.** Try to recall how you felt when your parents yelled at you. Your children feel the same way.

- **Fantasize.** Picture yourself cruising to a tropical island. No one feels like yelling when they're on a cruise. Or imagine that you just won a million dollars. Fantasize about what you would do with the money.

- **Analyze.** Above all, try to consider the reasons for your anger. Does the situation really merit your reaction?

Establish, if you can, the roots of your anger and try to deal with the feelings at their source.

Is it really the little ones who are pressuring you or does your life contain too much stress from outside sources?

Usually it is not our children with whom we feel angry. Sometimes it is ourselves.

- **Get help.** If extra help would relieve pressure, find an-

other pair of hands.

If finances are tight, there are often neighborhood youths available at a nominal fee, for instance. Babysitting co-ops let parents trade time with other parents at little or no charge.

Other parents of young children can provide tips for saving time and can also serve as excellent resources for help in structuring your daily routine.

Most importantly, don't put off giving your children the patience and attention they need. The cradle will soon be empty, but their hearts and lives will always be filled with the love you've given them. □

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.

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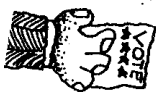



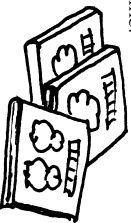

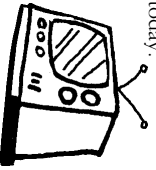



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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns "he" and "she" are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>2</p> <p>Go for a walk and look for birds' nests in trees.</p> 	<p>3</p> <p>Use a magnifying glass to look at some leaves.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Election Day.</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Make noises through a paper towel tube.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>At breakfast, talk about what you plan to do today.</p> 	<p>7</p> <p>Learn a new song.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Plant some flower bulbs for next spring.</p> 
<p>9</p> <p>Close your eyes and try to guess what something is by holding, feeling, touching it.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Organize some jar lids from largest to smallest.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Veterans Day.</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Read a story by A. A. Milne.</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>Name the objects in the living room.</p> <p>chair couch table</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Count your socks (the ones you're NOT wearing).</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Donate canned goods to a local food pantry and explain why to your children.</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Visit an elderly friend or relative.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Listen to each other's heartbeat.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>No TV today.</p> 	<p>19</p> <p>Can you: Leap like a frog? Wiggle like a snake? Jump like a kangaroo? Growl like a tiger?</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Sing a funny song to the baby.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Talk about the safest way to cross the street. Remember to always look both ways first.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Attend a local basketball game.</p> 
<p>23</p> <p>Take a walk and look for birds.</p> <p>30</p> <p>Draw a picture using brown, red yellow and green colors.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Count your fingers and toes.</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Play with a toy that connects together in some way.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Trace your hand to draw a turkey.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Thanksgiving.</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Count your teeth.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Roll a pine cone in peanut butter and put it out for the birds.</p>