



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Row your boat

Here's a simple game that requires no equipment—but you will need an even number of participants—children and adults.

Everybody get a partner and sit on the floor facing each other with legs straight out in front. Put the soles of your feet together, if you can. If you can't (such as with a small child/adult combination) put the smaller person's legs on the inside of the larger person's.

Grasp hands and hold on tight. Now, as one person leans back, the other leans forward and vice versa. Do this in time while singing *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*.

The first time sing and “row” at a slow, easy pace. Repeat a second time, singing and rowing faster. Repeat a third time, singing and rowing as fast as you can.

This activity is very good for strengthening stomach muscles for children as well as adults. Best of all, it's fun for everybody! □

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Toys & Play

A treasure box for toddler

Here's an idea for a “toy” that just matches your toddler's curiosity.

Start with a cardboard box about 16 inches high or tall enough that she can just reach over the side when she is sitting or kneeling beside it.



Fill the box about half full with folded newspapers so toddler cannot tip the box over by pulling on one side.

Then put four or five small objects on top of the papers in the box.

Some of the objects should be new to her and all of them must be safe for her to handle and play with.

Don't call attention to the

box. Simply leave it in an area where she plays.

Before long, toddler will find the box and look inside to discover the contents.

This box will be her own fun box, a magic source of new things to play with.

When you get new toys, put them in the box so that she will “discover” them.

“New” toys may also mean something you've made or something safe that might be interesting for a toddler to investigate.

It's better to use fewer objects at a time and change them more often than to load her up with a confusing variety of things all at once.

This kind of activity encourages toddler to be curious—and teaches her to get into things.

So, in addition, it's important to take a trip around your living spaces to be sure once again that your house, garage and yard are toddler-proof and safe for this little one's investigations. □

Book review: *The Little Red Hen*

By Paul Galdone, Clarion Books, 2006 (Children ages 2-5 years)

Most parents are familiar with the story of the Little Red Hen, who ignored the laziness of her animal friends, and continued to do all the work necessary to grow, harvest, and then prepare the wheat for the bread she finally baked, and your children deserve the introduction of this story, complete with the wonderful illustrations of Paul Galdone.

Every child enjoys the predictability of the “Not I” responses of the animals who find too many other things to do rather than help. But they are sometimes surprised when the Little Red Hen turns the tables at the end of the story, pointing out that she alone did the work, so she alone will eat the bread.

A common complaint of preschool teachers is that children today have never been expected to help, and are quite unused to the idea that everyone in a community (or family) should have a contribution to make.

When teachers persist with the explanations that the classroom belongs to them all and they each have a role in keeping it tidy and attractive, children quickly come to enjoy the responsibilities and work together towards common goals.

Why is it that many of today’s children are not being asked to help with chores in their homes? Is it because today’s parents are just too busy with keeping up with their own lives that they don’t have the extra minutes it

would take to show a child how to sweep the floor? Or perhaps they feel they would just have to take the time to do the job again, properly? Is it because parents feel childhood should be care-free, with plenty of time later for the work in life?

Whatever the reason, we do children a grave disservice if we don’t offer them early opportunities to be involved in the tasks of daily living, whether that is picking up toys, putting away the silverware from the dishwasher, setting the table, or sorting the recyclables.

Very young children thrive on being able to imitate the behaviors of their parents, and this is really the best time to start participation in family jobs. Healthy self-esteem grows as children discover their own competence in carrying out the expected tasks. Willing attitudes develop as children get positive feedback for their efforts.

Beginning children’s participation in family responsibilities too late—say in the school years—makes more likely the “Not I” mindset that leads to nagging and family unpleasantness. Why not start instead with the smallest ones, who will happily toddle along behind busy parents?

Many parents find that establishing habits of work may be enhanced when children have visual reminders of their jobs, such as a chart that pictures the

expected task, and spaces for stickers when the job is completed.

Such a system also makes the child clearly in charge of completing the task, an important part of developing responsibility.

The Little Red Hen has a timeless message, and perhaps responsibility for jobs is an idea whose time has come in your household.

Academics

A start on telling time

When your child is hungry and impatient with the speed of mealtime preparations, point to the large hand of the clock and say to her, “We will have dinner when this big hand gets to the bottom (or the top) of the clock.”

As you say this, point to where the hand will be. Then make every effort to meet this prediction accurately.

If she is not familiar with the clock, you will need to explain that the hand does move, but too slowly for her to see it.

Don’t try to teach her hours and minutes at first. This is difficult even for some first graders to understand, though by kindergarten many children will understand the concept of hours. □

Someone will be watching you

What kind of example are you setting for your children?

Even if you are just experiencing the arrival of your first child, it is not too early to start thinking about the fact that somebody will soon be watching you, watching to see if your actions square with the way you tell them to behave.

Think about the behavior example for a child when a mother shopping for groceries breaks open a box of cookies, gives a handful to her nagging child, then returns the carton to the shelf.

Have you ever crossed the street against the light when there was no traffic? Haven't we all done it?

One grandfather thought about doing that while standing on a cold, windy street corner. Then up walked a young father and a small boy of two or three who had a firm clasp on his father's hand.

The little boy stared at the older man curiously, as young children do, while they waited for the light to change.

The grandfather was ready to dash across the street but was very conscious of this father and son.

What kind of example would he set for this young fellow by dashing across the street against the light?

It seemed important for him to stand there under that little boy's gaze and freeze, if he had to, rather than provoke the

question: "Why did that man run across the street?"

By our actions, we set examples for other people's children, too. Think about it.

Think about the example you set when you go faster than the speed limit and ask the family to watch out for the police.

Think about the example you set when you buckle the children into the car seats, then "forget" to buckle your own.



Think about the example you set when you criticize or yell at your own parents for something they've done, and then scold your own child for talking back to you.

Think about the example you set when you talk about "beating Uncle Sam" on your income taxes and then restrict privileges when your child tells a lie.

Think about the teenage years. Can you really expect your children not to feel there is a double standard if you try to convince them not to experiment with drugs if you drink and/or smoke heavily, and if you reach in the medicine cabinet for a pill every time you have a headache or trouble getting to sleep?

The next time you are tempted to take something or do something that you wouldn't normally do, remember, somebody is probably watching you.

Maybe your own child. □

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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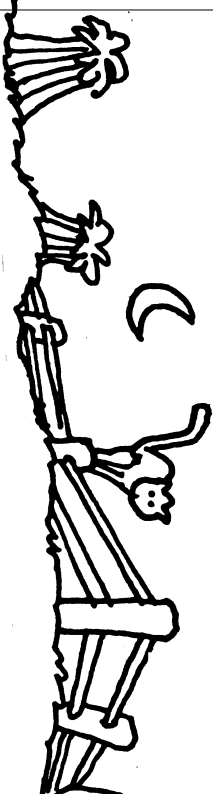
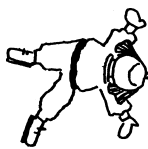
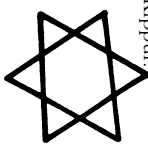




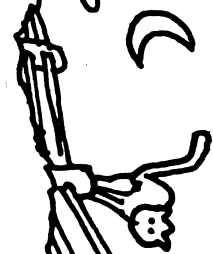
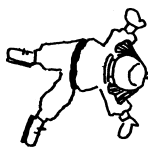


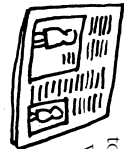


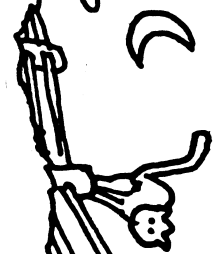
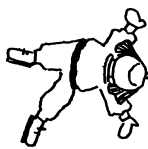


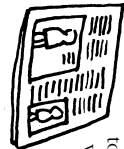

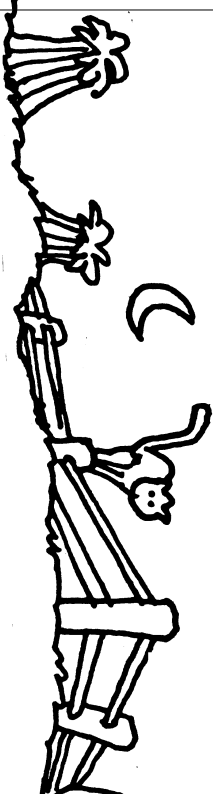

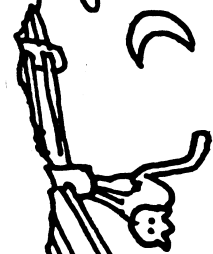



Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

Growing Together issues may be reproduced in part or in full by participating organizations.

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>5  Sing a "good morning" song.</p>	<p>6  Try a new and different meal sometime this month.</p>	<p>7  Talk about your favorite animal. How big is it? Where does it live? What color is it? Does it make sounds?</p>	<p>8  Yom Kippur.</p>	<p>9  Touch your toes four (4) times.</p>	<p>10  Look in a mirror at your eyebrows. Can you make them go up and down? Try it.</p>	<p>11  Is it warm enough for a weiner roast outside?</p>
<p>12  Read the comics together.</p>	<p>13  Columbus Day.</p>	<p>14  Play some upbeat music and dance!</p>	<p>15  Have a race rolling oranges.</p>	<p>16  Dress up in old clothes.</p>	<p>17  Look in the newspaper for something special to do this weekend.</p>	<p>18  Play "Follow the Leader."</p>
<p>19  Look at a picture book.</p>	<p>20  What can you do with an empty cardboard box?</p>	<p>21  Put a blanket on your back and pretend you're a turtle.</p>	<p>22  Play stare-down. See who laughs first.</p>	<p>23  Give somebody five (5) kisses.</p>	<p>24  Make funny noises with your mouth—can you make someone laugh?</p>	<p>25  Make green jello™ and talk about each step.</p>
<p>26  What is your favorite bedtime story?</p>	<p>27  Name five (5) vegetables that are green.</p>	<p>28  What is your middle name?</p>	<p>29  Draw a picture of someone who lives at your house.</p>	<p>30  How much do you weigh?</p>	<p>31  Halloween</p>	