



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 her. Is there a favorite book she loves to hear? Take the opportunity to sit close and touch her.

- Tell her stories about herself when she was younger, and stories about yourself when you were her 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 her. Tell her at least two good reasons why. □

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Health & Safety

Avoiding medication mistakes

Giving medicine to child should be a simple thing to do. But sometimes mistakes can be dangerous, especially with over-the-counter medications.

Here are some precautions to follow when giving medications:

1. Follow directions.

If medicine is supposed to be given three times a day, give it three times a day, not twice today and three tomorrow and once the next day.

If your doctor says to give your child all of the antibiotic, do it. Don't discontinue the medication when the child appears to be getting better.

2. Don't share medications.

Don't give your three-year-old the medicine that was prescribed for his eight-year-old brother. Don't give your children medicine left over from your illness.

3. Give the correct dosage.

The only way to do this is with a calibrated spoon available from your drugstore. A household spoon will not give an accurate measurement for medicine.

Don't try to convert from teaspoons to ounces or vice versa unless you are absolutely sure you

are correct.

Don't give a very sick child a double dose in hopes she will get well faster.

Don't give over-the-counter medicine longer than the recommended number of days.

4. Don't combine medications.

Never try combining two or more medications, even over-the-counter ones, without consulting your doctor or pharmacist. Drug interactions can be deadly.

5. Be safe.

Always use the child-resistant bottle cap and put the medication out of the reach of children. Never let a child take his own medication without supervision!

6. If in doubt. DON'T.

Never give a medication if there is any doubt in your mind about its safety.

Never give medicine that looks old, discolored, or crumbly.

Never mix medicine with food or drink unless your doctor gives such instructions.

Read the labels of ALL medications and ask your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions—before you medicate. □

Early Reading

When the research on early brain development became public a few years ago, some people misinterpreted the research as meaning that reading sooner is better, in terms of explicit teaching.

All sorts of products were marketed to help make a young child smarter, including programs to teach early reading. Actually, even when my children were young, there was a psychologist who had a method of teaching babies to read—Americans are always in a hurry.

Unfortunately, this is not what early literacy specialists recommend. Rather, they suggest other methods of laying the foundations for later school success.

Continuity exists between all language experiences, from birth through the primary years, not a discontinuity of “now it’s time to learn to read.”

Experts in early literacy point out the need to offer children abundant experiences to help them develop the various components of literacy. Parents have a key role in encouraging spoken communication and in fostering pleasurable, adult-child interaction related to print.

It has long been recognized that children who come from homes in which communication and literacy are valued and demonstrated move more easily into reading and writing in school.

There are seven components of literacy that parents can support.

1. Vocabulary and language. As children learn to read,

they use their listening and speaking vocabularies to make sense of printed words. Most vocabulary is learned through everyday experiences and conversations. Researchers find that increasing children’s oral language skills can prevent the majority of reading problems.

2. Phonological awareness.

A continuum of skills in hearing and understanding the different patterns of spoken language is necessary for reading. Listening to sounds in the environment, developing the skills of rhyming and rhythms, and nonsense language games all promote this awareness.



3. Knowledge of print. Understanding the functions and forms of print comes when children are given materials for drawing and writing, and help make cards for family members and make shopping lists.

4. Knowledge of letters and words. Far more than learning to recite the ABCs or recognizing letters, this understanding allows children to match spoken to written words. Children develop this as they learn to recognize and

then print their names and look at alphabet books.

5. Comprehension of meaning. Children’s background knowledge helps them to understand the meaning of language. The more firsthand experiences that children have, the more they increase their understanding of the world.

6. Awareness of books. As children have books in their environments and are read aloud to, they discover the many purposes of written language, as well as learn the mechanics of using books—holding them right side up and turning pages.

7. Seeing literacy as a source of pleasure. Children who have had abundant, pleasurable experiences with books are highly motivated to learn to read for themselves. When activities involving books include fun, play, and positive relationships with parents, children develop positive attitudes towards reading and writing.

These seven components of early literacy are specifics that parents can provide in the early years, rather than explicit teaching to read. □

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.

'Tell me more'

Language is more than the words we use to communicate with one another—it is a shared experience where one person speaks and the other person listens.

Through active listening, you can give your child the message that she is important and that what she has to say is important to you.

First, you must listen to what she tells you—about her day, what she had to eat, what didn't work out, what was funny.

Then you can ask her questions that encourage her to tell you more.

Finally, you must be patient by waiting for her response to your questions—she may have difficulty finding the words she needs.

We've all had the experience of talking to a poor listener. Just because they're smaller doesn't mean children can be fooled—they know when they're not being heard.

When times are busy, schedules must be met, and there's no time to listen, say so. "I'm sorry, Sally, but we're in a rush right now. Let's remember to talk about this again before bedtime."

And remember to do it. Shared conversations keep the lines of communication open and active. □

Musical games

If you haven't played musical chairs lately, get out the music and chairs and give it a try.

First, place the chairs in a circle. There should be one less chair than number of people playing.

Next, start the music. When the music stops, the person without a chair to sit down on is out of the game.

One chair is removed and the music begins again ... and so on until only one person is left.

Another version is to space people throughout the room. When the music stops, the leader says a number and everyone must arrange themselves in groups of this number.

Those who are unable to form a group are out. The last two people left are the winners.

This game is best played with a larger number of players.

Still a third game requires a book for each person. When the music starts—slow and gentle music is best—each person walks about the room with a book balanced on his or her head.

When the music stops, players must go down on one knee. (This can be done very slowly—it isn't a race to see who is first.)

If the book falls, that person is eliminated.

Finally, the game can be played without any objects or chairs at all.

When the music stops, each player must sit on the floor. The last person to sit down is out. □

Talking is trading wishes

What people, even little people, wish for is part of what they are.

I wish to see jungles and lions in the sun; you wish to see Paris and great cathedrals. When we tell wishes, we share what we are.

Play a wishing game with your child to share a little more with him. Get a big catalog or magazine and say: What do you wish you could have? (And tell your wish, too. It's only fair to trade.)

Two things will be happening. First, you'll be finding what your child wishes for. That's reason enough.

Second, he'll be finding that people can wish (even if they're not allowed to whine), that everybody's got wishes, and yes, after all, they're okay, those wishes, even if they never come true.

It's comfy between people to wish together. □

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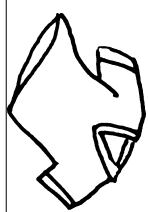




Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

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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>4</p> <p>Save the daily newspaper each year on your child's birthday to give to her when she's grown up.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Find something that bounces.</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>Talk about opposites and what they mean. Name some: Hot _____ Big _____ Long _____ Up _____</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Put the baby in a stroller and go for a walk.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>National Children's Day.</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Hard-boiled eggs, toast and jam for a snack.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Play with a ball outside.</p> 
<p>11</p> <p>Play hide and seek with a toy. (Hide a toy for someone to find.)</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Columbus Day.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Talk about something that frightened you.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Wear something orange.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>National Grouch Day. Don't be one!</p>	<p>16</p> <p>Practice saying the days of the week. What's today?</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Eat lunch with a friend.</p>
<p>18</p> <p>Go out for breakfast.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Find something that DOESN'T bounce.</p> 	<p>20</p> <p>Play copycat games: Make faces. Wave bye-bye. Hold up two fingers.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>What is Indian corn?</p>	<p>22</p> <p>What is your most favorite food to eat?</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>Can you jump a rope?</p>	<p>24</p> <p>United Nations Day.</p>
<p>25</p> <p>Mother-in-law Day. Do you have a mother-in-law? Who does have one?</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Do stretching exercises with someone.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Pat baby's hands together and repeat "Patty Cake."</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Find these numbers on a calendar and draw a circle around them: 7 20 13 29</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Check the batteries in your smoke alarm(s).</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Eat some applesauce.</p> 	<p>31</p> <p>Halloween.</p>