



Growing Together[®]

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Pizza party!

There's no denying it—kids love pizza. You can make these mini-pizzas together. Serve them with grapes, melon balls, orange sections or peeled fruit, such as apple slices.

While you're eating, read the lively story of *Curious George and the Pizza* by H.L. Rey.

Afterwards, settle the children down for naptime with a quiet activity like drawing pictures of the little monkey on his big pizza adventure.

Here's how to make the pizza:

Toast whole wheat, English muffin or pita bread.

Spread with spaghetti sauce (from a jar).

Sprinkle with pre-shredded mozzarella cheese.

Broil until cheese bubbles.

Be careful with little ones—the cheese is very hot, so let it cool before they dig in! □

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Behavior

When children cry

Few things are more distressing than seeing a child cry. The natural response for parents and other adults is to hug the child and say: "Hush. Don't cry. Everything will be all right."

Yet this can be exactly the wrong response because these words don't allow children to possess their own emotions. The message they hear is: "Stop crying. There's nothing to cry about."

This makes the little one cry even more since her inner self needs to prove that there *is* something to cry about.

One mom suggested a better reaction in such a situation. Parents and other adults can respond to a crying child by saying, "It's okay to cry. I know it hurts (or that you feel badly). Cry until it stops hurting."

She said she found this reply worked better. When her children were given "permission" to cry, it was often all that was needed to stop the flow of tears. And even if it didn't, the children felt they had a right to their own emotions, the freedom to release them, and they were consoled.

In helping a child deal with a hurt, or hurt feelings, the importance of having a right to his or her own feelings cannot be overstressed. Even the youngest chil-

dren pick up unspoken ideas from parents and other adults. When they sense that what they are feeling needs to be suppressed, the message is also given that these emotions are unacceptable and unimportant.

Phrases from the past, such as "crying is for babies" and "be a big boy (or girl)" are, unfortunately, sometimes still used. Not only do they show little empathy for the child's problem, they also do nothing to encourage his or her self-esteem.

If children are to grow up seeing themselves as worthwhile people, they need to know at an early age that feelings are neither good or bad, they just *are*, as a result of something that's happened. What's necessary is to express them and deal with them.

So, when your little one is crying, whether it's because she fell as she was learning to walk or because he wasn't chosen to play in a game, stop for a moment before you begin to offer comfort.

Then remember that the best way we can help these children handle their emotions is to surround them with love and acceptance, and to tell them: "It's okay to cry until it stops hurting." □

Basic baby language

What do we mean by basic baby language? At an early age, around nine months old, we mean the sense a baby makes from what she sees and hears around her.

For example, we know she can follow some simple commands (“No”). She can respond to gestures of pat a cake, bye-bye, and similar words. We know she understands them, even though she doesn’t say them.

Language can also include the sounds that a baby makes as well as what she does with her hands, eyes, and other parts of her body.

How does a baby acquire language? Actually she has been developing language for most of her young life. She has been listening to the variety of sounds around her and paying attention to the speech of the most important people in her life—those who take care of her physical and emotional

needs. You, in turn, have been tailoring your speech to her development and to particular situations. For example, when you kiss or hug her, you also tell her in a special tone of voice, “I love you.” When you play dialogue games, you attract her attention and make her attentive to your voice.

With your encouragement she has gotten the idea of using her own hands and body to move, to get what she wants, to manipulate and explore objects—to learn about her world. And you have been interpreting her experiences by telling her in words what she is doing.

What is important to understand is that even though your baby may not yet be saying words, all of her experiences are contributing to her acquisition of language. □

Bad and good are serious words

Preschoolers are concerned about being called “bad.” This may be worse than any punishment they receive for their unacceptable behavior. When discipline is necessary, you can focus on what happened. Instead of telling your child that he is “bad,” you can explain why his behavior is unacceptable. For example, when he brings home a small toy that is not his, you might say, “Our family does not believe in taking things that are not ours.” Then you need to make these ideas very clear to the child:

- The act is bad; you are not.
- I don’t like the act, but I love you.

You will create a suspicion in your child that indeed he is bad if you talk on and on at length about the situation by asking, “Why? Why did you do it? What made you do it?”

Not only the length of your questioning and words you use but also your facial expression and tone of voice can make him think he is bad. So, monitor your face and voice during such sessions and keep your discussions short and simple. □

Raising kids who care and share

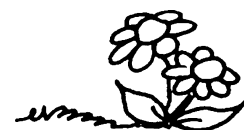
In their most formative early years, children learn right from wrong primarily by observing their parents and other adults. Youngsters are observant; they pick up the real messages and values and are much more concerned with what you do than what you say.

Obviously, if you want your children to practice honesty, be honest yourself.

If you want your children to be truthful, then don’t tell lies yourself. And if you want children to share and act compassionately, be a compassionate, sharing person yourself.

The opportunities for children to show sharing and caring are ample and easy to find. Children can be encouraged to:

- Take food to the home of a sick friend.
- Write a brief note of consolation to a sick classmate or friend.
- Visit a friend who is hospitalized.
- Donate a part of her or his allowance to a charitable institution or project.
- Volunteer some time to an organization which helps the needy.
- Assist an elderly or physically challenged person with shopping, gardening, or simple chores around the house. □



Influences on children's lives

There are many influences on a young child's life. It is important to give some thought to some of the most important ones.

1. Understand and accept yourself. Because you have such an important influence on your child, it is vital that you know yourself. It is a quality you can develop through self-understanding and self-acceptance.

You can develop self-understanding by asking yourself questions like: "What makes me react or feel the way I do?" "What things make me happy?" "How do I react to other people?"

Self-acceptance requires a realistic view of what you can and cannot do. Perhaps you've had an important goal that you now know you can never reach. If you can accept the fact that you will never attain this goal, you can face other people, including your child, with respect for yourself and without the feeling that your child must do what you never could.

If you and your spouse have self-understanding and self-acceptance, your child will probably have these characteristics, too. Your understanding and acceptance of yourself can influence your child to try to understand and accept himself.

2. Understand your influences on your child. Have you ever noticed your child's reaction to your happiness? Your sadness? Your anger? Children tend to display the same mood or disposition you feel. In fact, they may learn your behavior by imitating what you do or how you react to things.

3. Understand children in general. A knowledge and understanding of child development helps you to have standards or criteria with which to understand your own child. For example, you cannot determine whether your child is developing at a normal rate unless you know what can be expected of a child his age.

4. Understand the uniqueness of your own child. He has specific desires, interests, and abilities as well as problems and difficulties. Each child has a unique personality, so try to understand each child as an individual. What one child means by his actions may be entirely different than what another child means by the same actions.



5. Sibling influence. Brothers and sisters often play a big part in influencing a child. They may be companions while playing but rivals for your attention and love. Little brothers and sisters sometimes become troublesome to an older child.

The interaction and sharing between brothers and sisters is an important aspect of the learning process. Such relationships help your child develop basic attitudes

toward himself and toward other people.

5. Environmental influences. People outside the home also have an important influence on children. Teachers, relatives, and children in your neighborhood can help your child learn how to get along with others. Of course, television, radio, computers, telephones and other means of communication present opportunities for your child to see and hear many types of behavior.

The physical, mental and social development of a child is all affected by the environment in which he lives. A home that provides a child with such things as educational toys and interesting music helps to stimulate his development.

A simple toy made from objects in your home, for example, may have helped your child learn about sounds, learn how to hold an object, or learn how metal feels. Your interrelationships as husband and wife, brother and sister, parents and children strongly influence the types of relationships your child will seek outside the home. □

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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

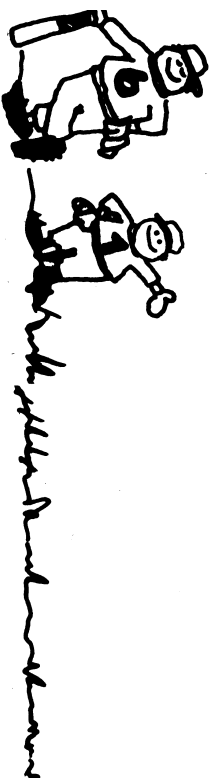
Wednesday


Thursday

Friday


Saturday

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Month
 Baby Safety Month
 College Savings Month
 National Biscuit Month
 National Piano Month



1 Talk about friends—who they are; how to be a friend; how to treat friends.


2 Take turns humming a song and guessing its title.


3 Labor Day.


4 Make a straight line with a piece of string. Try to walk it. Make a squiggly line. Try to walk it.
 National Newspaper Carrier Day.

5 Sit in a different place for dinner.


6 Count the baby's fingers and toes -- out loud.

7 Put together a box of old clothes, hats, etc. for dress-up play.

8 Find a hat to wear and go for a walk.


9 Throw a Frisbee™.

10 National Grandparents' Day.


11 Find a hill to climb.

12 First of Ramadan.

13 Rosh Hashanah

14 What shape is an orange? Find three more objects that have the same shape.


15 Gather some rocks. Line them up by size.

16 Make a pretend car out of a large cardboard box.

17 Show the baby how to build a tower with four blocks. Talk about what you're doing.

18 Draw a picture of a really fantastic bug.


19 Read "Millions of Cats" by Wanda Gag.

20 Put several toys in a bag. Pull them out one at a time. Can you tell what they are before you see them?


21 Show the baby how a stuffed animal can sing and dance.

22 Yom Kippur.

International Eat-an-Apple Day

24 Show (and read) a board book to the baby.


25 Count your toys as you put them away.

26 Don't throw out those cardboard boxes! Think of ways to adapt them as toys.

27 Practice pouring and measuring using salt or rice.

28 Sort toy cars by color.


29 Hold someone's hand.

23 Fall begins.
 How many jumping jacks can you do?
 30

24 Show (and read) a board book to the baby.
 National Punctuation Day.

25 Count your toys as you put them away.

26 Don't throw out those cardboard boxes! Think of ways to adapt them as toys.

27 Practice pouring and measuring using salt or rice.

28 Sort toy cars by color.


29 Hold someone's hand.