



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Behavior

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 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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Parenting

Grandparents are special friends for your children

Grandparents can make a child feel needed. Often, with their own children grown, grandparents feel a void in their lives. They need to hear the noises of children in the house again occasionally. They need a small hand to fill their own, or a few finger marks left on the refrigerator.

Grandchildren who fill this void can sense they are needed somehow. This adds an extra richness to the love children receive from grandparents.

What can parents do to give our children and parents the best opportunities to share a close relationship? The most important way to help our children get to know their grandparents is to let them spend time with them—time to visit them with you, and time for them to spend together alone.

If frequent visits are impossible, phone calls, e-mails and letters can help to keep the relationship alive and make the visits themselves less awkward.

There are times when all of us feel less than friendly toward our parents or to our spouse's parents. At these times it is natural for us to speak our minds. But when we do this to or in front of our children, we run the risk of making them

feel torn between their love for us and their love for the grandparents. This can be a miserable position for a child, and can make him feel guilty for the natural affection he feels for his grandparents.

Like any relationship, the one between your children and their grandparents is likely to have its rough moments. If children are encouraged to share their feelings with their parents, it can make it easier to detect what is causing problems and work together on finding solutions.

As parents, we can try to help our children to understand their grandparents' point of view and, if possible, help them find a way to communicate their feelings to their grandparents without hurting them.

Because no two grandparents or children are alike, every relationship will be unique, with its own qualities and problems. And there are bound to be instances where these or any other suggestions will not help.

Sometimes, though, just a little extra effort can help your children discover the magical friendship they can have with their grandparents. □

One language or two?

There are many parents who speak more than one language in their home, or who want their child to learn a second language.

The questions they ask most often are: When is the best time to start a second language? Won't the young child be confused by trying to learn two languages at the same time?

There is some experimental evidence that a child who is exposed to the influence of two languages before she arrives at a fair degree of understanding and proficiency in one language is sometimes delayed in language development.

This delay is not permanent but may be observed particularly when the child starts to talk around the second year.

There are differences in bilingualism based on time and circumstances under which two languages are acquired.

Some children may regularly hear two different languages spoken at home. This is known as compound bilingualism, when a child is exposed to both languages interchangeably.

Obviously such children have to learn two different words for every object. As a result of their initial confusion, their development of each language may be delayed, especially in the early stages.

Coordinate bilingualism means the child learns two languages, but the experiences are quite distinct. Essentially one language is spoken at home while the second language is

heard from peers and learned at school.

The consequence is often deficiency in the use of the second language. This does not mean, however, that children cannot learn two languages at the same time.



Parents who wish their child to learn a second language, or bilingual parents who speak two languages in the home should consider a workable strategy to simplify the introduction of two languages in early childhood.

One idea is to designate specific times or places where each language is to be spoken regularly. For example, one language can be spoken in the home during the daytime hours while the second is spoken in the evening.

This avoids the confusion of switching from one language to another during a given time period.

Learning a second language can continue and extend the rich cultural heritage from one's family as well as span the generations. □

Basic principles of effective parenting

Developing effective parenting skills is not easy. It is an endeavor that demands constant effort. But the effort is worthwhile because it will help a child become socially well adjusted ... and will also increase the joy of parenting.

Here are four basic principles that are worth repeating:

1. Be prepared. Try to anticipate problems, if possible. Many unpleasant situations could be avoided if appropriate preventive measures are taken.

For example, if you anticipate bad behavior from your child while shopping in the grocery store, be sure to talk with her about what is acceptable behavior before you leave for the store.

2. Be specific. Even though a parent knows what bad behavior is, a child may not. Therefore, be as specific as possible in describing these actions.

3. Be fair. As far as possible, make known to the child in advance what specific reward will be given for good behavior and what specific punishment will follow bad behavior.

4. Be consistent. Although a parent may be in a good mood one day and in a bad mood the next, children are not able to "read" these feelings. So it is important to maintain consistent behavior from one day to the next and from one situation to another. □

Playing together

For children, play is work. For them, it may not be as simple as it looks. In fact, there are several categories of play that can be observed when two or more preschool children are present.

Onlooker Play. In this situation one child is a passive spectator as he watches another child play without participating in the activity. By means of onlooker play, a child may learn new behaviors or may muster up the courage to develop some new skill at a later time.

Onlooker play often enables a shy child, a younger child, or a child who is in unfamiliar surroundings to adjust more easily to a new situation.

Parallel Play. This type of play may be observed when two or more children play in close proximity but independently of one another. Although playing alongside one another, each child is focused on his or her own activity.

Sometimes a child will alternate from parallel play to onlooker play, and then later imitate the play of the other child in resumed parallel play.

Associative Play. In this form of play, children as young as three share materials, while each one pursues his or her own goal.

Two or more children, for example, may organize an activity around a common theme such as “going to the store.” But each child concentrates on his or her own “agenda” or “shopping list.”

In associative play, there is a great deal of lending and borrowing—crayons, trucks, stuffed ani-

mals—but without any coordinated purpose or other direct social interaction. The children are more interested in exchanging materials than in performing any specific task.



Cooperative play. This type of play generally emerges around four years of age and continues throughout the school years.

Cooperative play involves organized group activity. It may be as simple as collaborating in building a house of blocks or as complex as a structured game such as football, with specific rules which all must obey.

In cooperative play, children generally have an opportunity to expand their vocabulary. Facial expressions and vigorous gestures will often accompany their words. Cooperative play also helps children develop better social skills and enlarge their circle of friends.

Social Fantasy Play. Many preschool children enjoy combining cooperative play with pretend play to form what is called social fantasy play.

In this type of play, each child is assigned a specific fantasy role (firefighter, nurse, pilot, super-

hero) in a game with a specific fantasy theme (“A ride on a rocket ship”).

Social fantasy play enables children to assume leadership roles, learn to better manage their own feelings, and, through role-playing, be more understanding of others.

As young children progress from solitary play to cooperative and social fantasy play, it is apparent that the functions of play are important elements in their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

In a true sense, a child’s play area is his best classroom. Play should indeed be the essential work of every young 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:

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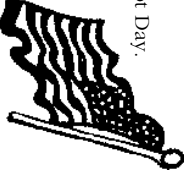






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Articles in **Growing Together** refer to both boys and girls. For simplicity, the pronouns “he” and “she” are used interchangeably unless otherwise noted.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>7</p> <p>National Grandparents Day.</p> 	<p>1</p> <p>Labor Day. Go camping.</p> 	<p>2</p> <p>First of Ramadan.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Talk about something an animal can do that people cannot do.</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>Look in the mirror with shampoo on your head.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Go outside and touch: a tree, a flower, the sidewalk. How many ways are they different?</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Go for a walk and look for 4-door cars.</p> 
<p>14</p> <p>Paint some rocks with cotton swabs. (Adult supervision, please.)</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Help sort socks by color.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Find a great big paper sack and draw a great big rainbow on it.</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Lay objects (such as a small ruler or bowl lid) on a piece of paper and trace around them.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Patriot Day.</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Go outside after dark and look at the stars.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Use empty shoe boxes to make a train.</p>
<p>21</p> <p>Have a picnic!</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Read a story written by A.A. Milne.</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Talk to each other through a paper towel tube ... quietly.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Wear something purple today.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Practice saying the days of the week.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Give your child a safe scrap of wood to paint.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Take an old white sock and draw a face on it with markers: a dandy hand puppet! Give it a name.</p> 
<p>28</p> <p>Plan a wiener roast with some friends.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Autumn begins.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Touch the bottoms of your feet.</p> 	<p>24</p> <p>Play with a flashlight. Use the words on, off, light and dark.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Count the bites you take at lunch.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Johnny Applesseed's birthday, 1791. What was Johnny's favorite fruit?</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>Go to the library and look for a Beatrix Potter book.</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Rosh Hashanah.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Talk about emergency #911: why and how to use it.</p> 