



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Science & Nature

A birdseed bird

Here's a clever project that older kids can do themselves and younger kids can do with some supervision. Start with one piece of paper towel and about 2-3 tablespoons of birdseed.

Place the birdseed in the middle of the paper towel, pull the corners together and hold the birdseed closed securely in the paper towel with a rubber band. This process makes a ball. Next find a tall, narrow glass jar and fill it with water.

Place the paper towel with the birdseed ball on top of the jar with the ends of the paper towel sticking inside the jar in the water. The birdseed ball rests on top of the jar, not in the water.

Now, place the jar in a window or on a table where it will get some sunlight, wait a few days and see what happens. Once the birdseed sprouts, the birdseed ball and jar look like a bird with feathers on its head! Take a few minutes to talk about how it all happened. □

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Social Skills

Relatives

What do you do when favorite relatives come to visit and your children refuse to welcome them or treat them specially?

Often both you and the visitors may be hurt and upset by their refusal. But unless relatives live with the child or are seen regularly and often, there is no way for the children to know that these people are different from other strangers who come by from time to time.

It is very true that they will pick up some of your very strong positive feelings (and secret negative feelings, too, if you have them) but they will not necessarily transfer those feelings to themselves. They will treat the relatives like other visitors — hanging back and watching for a while before they decide how to react.

The worst thing you or the relatives can do is to try to force the children to hug or kiss the relatives or say they love them. That kind of pressure will almost always make the children more uncomfortable and stubborn.

The best thing is for everyone to relax, introduce children and relatives, and let the children find their own way to react with the relatives after a while. □

Parenting

Parents: Have confidence in yourself

We recognize that this is easier said than done. It is natural for you to worry if you are doing all you should for your child. After all, this is the most important job in your life and no one has prepared you for it.

Often the advice of “experts” may do more to create confusion and doubt than to help. And you may not agree with what you learned from the way you were treated as a child.

Nevertheless, you do have within you the necessary resources to help your child grow to be a happy, healthy, responsible adult.

Just try to remember how it felt to be a child, and try to treat your child as you would have liked to have been treated. Be as kind, understanding, patient and supportive as you can.

You make mistakes — that's a part of being human. But the more relaxed you are about yourself, the more you'll be able to learn from your mistakes, and the more successful parents you'll be able to be. □

Kids make great kitchen helpers

Want to keep the kids busy and still have dinner at a reasonable time?

Here's a list of tasks children can learn to do well at early ages.

- Shape meatballs.
- Mix muffin batter.
- Arrange packaged biscuit dough in the baking pan.
- Peel carrots and potatoes.
- Slice bananas.
- Arrange simple individual salads such as cottage cheese and fruit on a bed of lettuce leaves.
- Wash vegetables with a vegetable brush.
- Use a vegetable spinner to spin dry vegetables for salads and cold plates.
- Grease baking dishes.
- Arrange toppings on homemade pizza.
- Skewer assortments of foods for appetizers, snacks or desserts.
- Break and beat eggs for scrambled eggs or omelets.
- Make juice and other beverages from frozen or dry concentrate.
- Shape dough for drop cookies.
- Frost cakes or cookies.

For safety's sake, keep in mind the child's age and ability to handle knives and utensils, and monitor progress when using such items.

□

Different children = different discipline

Discipline wears many faces. To some it means punishment. To others it means teaching right from wrong. To still others, it means setting clear behavioral limits and making certain that the child knows and respects these limits.

But really what we are all saying is that discipline is the process by which we "civilize" our children and teach them to live within the constraints of our society.

There has been a lot written about how to discipline children, but this is a subject about which it is very difficult to generalize. Children's personalities differ widely and what works with one child may be a complete failure with another. As an individual child grows and develops, his responses change and the method of discipline or "civilizing" must also change if it is to be effective.

Parents who have more than one child usually become aware very early of the often very different personalities of their children. The shy, sensitive child will respond to verbal correction or even a stern look and because of a strong desire to please the parents, may need comfort and reassurance instead of punishment.

On the other hand, the vigorously active and impulsive child will let the verbal correction just go in one ear and out the other. Such a child must be strongly motivated before he will teach himself to control his impulsive behavior.

And don't think girls will always respond to verbal correction and explanation while boys

always require sterner measures. "T'ain't necessarily so!" The personality and not the sex of the individual child is the key to successful discipline.

The age and developmental level of a child is equally important. Behavior which might be expected of a two-year-old will be unacceptable in a 10-year-old. For instance, a very young child has few ways of expressing anger. It is a rare two-year-old who has not bitten another child who takes a favorite toy or interferes with some ongoing play activity.

Undesirable behavior? Yes, but not an earth-shaking calamity. Correct the behavior—but recognize that this is a very normal way for a two-year-old to express anger, frustration or aggression.

The same behavior in an eight- or ten-year-old would be cause for considerable concern because such behavior is not appropriate for these ages.

Discipline is not about punishment, but about education—education in the art of being human, of helping a child to understand that falls from grace are part of growing up and not a sign of being a bad or worthless person.

□

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.

Each child is unique

Every child, whether yours or someone else's, deserves to be appreciated for himself or herself.

Try not to compare children with each other. They are different people.

Each child has his or her own way of reacting to the things that happen. Each one has a particular rate of growth and his or her own pace of doing things.

Each child is drawn to different activities, things, and people.

It is natural to compare the times at which your first and

second child (or the neighbor's child) walked, talked, or was toilet trained.

It's understandable to wonder why your youngest is afraid of the water when your first child learned to swim quite young.

But it's important to let each child be himself or herself. Notice the things that make each child unique and encourage them to develop their own special talents.

Accept children's differences and you will help them to accept themselves and each other. □

Things different/things alike

"What's this?"

"What's that?"

When children ask "what?" questions, they are learning how to classify things, to see how things are alike and how they are different.

Why is classification important? Because without it, we wouldn't be able to tell aspirin from arsenic!

It's classification that tells a child how to think about the world, where to look for a crayon, and what kind of store sells food products.

It tells a child that she can expect to find bears in the animal crackers and jelly next to the peanut butter on the shelf.

How does a child learn classification? You help her.

Almost every minute of the day, she hears and sees you using the idea of same and different.

Talk about the different shapes of street signs or the different feels of fabrics or the different colors of vegetables and fruits.

Let everyday experiences be your classroom! □

Homemade equipment for throwing practice

You can make wonderful play equipment for children with materials which are reused or recycled. Here's an idea for throwing and target practice.

Fill different-size bags with beans or sand. Sew the end closed. For indoor play, foam balls are less likely to cause damage. As targets you can offer any of the following:

- An old sheet or spread. Cut out round holes and then hang the material on a clothesline or suspend it from a tree limb. The object is to throw the bags or ball through the holes.

- A box target can be made from the round cardboard cartons that ice cream comes in. Ice cream stores will usually give these away free. Remove the bottom of the box and place it on the ground or hang it from a tree limb or door jamb.

Reminder: Children must be able to see the holes to use them for targets. Outline each with a marking pen and keep them at an appropriate height and distance for youngsters' ages and skills. □

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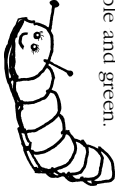

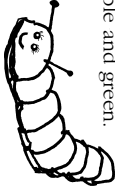
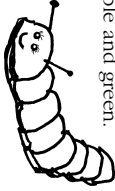
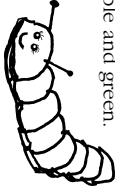
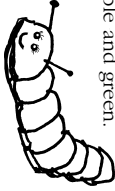
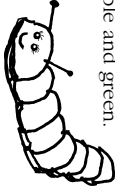
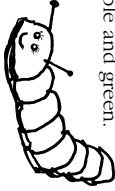
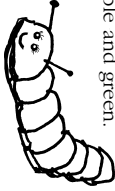
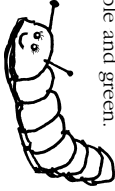
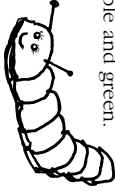
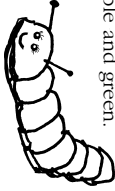
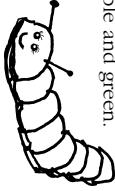
Growing Child also publishes: **Growing Child** (birth-six years), and **Growing Up** (grades K-12).

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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.

www.growingchild.com

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>6</p> <p>Send grandpa a card you've made yourself and tell him what you had for breakfast.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Find something purple in your house. Is it bigger than your shoe?</p> 	<p>1</p> <p>April Fool's Day</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Play a game of dominoes.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Put lotion on baby's hands and feet.</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>Count all the blue towels at your house. Write the total here: _____</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Put on some fast music and dance. This is great exercise.</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Color with a green crayon.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Who has the fewest teeth at your house?</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Draw a puppet face on a small paper sack. Give the puppet a name. Have it sing a song!</p>	<p>9</p> <p>What color is an orange?</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Give the baby some plastic bowls and containers to play with.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>In the bathtub, practice pouring water from one container to another.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Sing a song to the baby and include her or his name in the song.</p> 
<p>20</p> <p>Talk about the nutritious foods you like to eat.</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>Visit a neighbor.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>A sturdy easel is an excellent investment to promote creativity and a love of art.</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Draw a big map of your neighborhood. Mark where you live with a big X.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Drop different items and watch how they fall: a wooden block, a feather, a ball ...</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Blow through your lips and make a noise like a horse.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Cut up pieces of a sponge and use them to paint a picture.</p>
<p>27</p> <p>Tell your child a story about an adventure you had as a child.</p>	<p>28</p> <p>How many numbers are on a clock? Count them out loud.</p> 	<p>22</p> <p>Jump rope.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Draw a picture of a magic worm. Color it purple and green.</p> 	<p>24</p> <p>Find out everyone's favorite song. Sing one or two of them.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Go outside and look for bugs. Compare them. Are they small, medium or large size?</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>Go the library and look for a book about spring.</p>
<p>29</p> <p>Play with a push toy.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Create a paper placemat for each person. Draw and color a design on a regular-size piece of paper.</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Draw a picture of a magic worm. Color it purple and green.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Draw a picture of a magic worm. Color it purple and green.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Draw a picture of a magic worm. Color it purple and green.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Draw a picture of a magic worm. Color it purple and green.</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Draw a picture of a magic worm. Color it purple and green.</p> 
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