



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

## Is the object: hard or soft?

Here's a game that's easy to put together.

Collect a variety of objects around the house that are either hard or soft.

Examples: hard—rock, block, book, toy truck, button. Soft—tissue, cotton ball, eraser, scarf, sock.

First have kids divide the objects into two piles by identifying each one as hard or soft.

Then, to make the task more difficult, put them into a bag or box and identify them by feeling only, without looking, and saying whether they're hard or soft.

Finally, older kids can locate and identify a new set, perhaps a more difficult-to-identify set of objects and play another round.

□

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Music

## Music as education

Music is more than fun: It is education. As children listen to, dance to and make music with their own "instruments," they are learning these sorts of things:

**1. New vocabulary.** Many songs, particularly folk songs and nursery tunes, repeat refrains or words over and over again.

For example: "We swing our arms so gaily, gaily; we swing our arms so gaily, all on a Saturday night." This type of repetition strengthens associations between new words and their meanings.

**2. Time sense.** When swinging the arms, moving the body or tapping an "instrument" to music, children are exposed to time relations between musical notes. They become aware of order—this comes first, this comes next, and this comes last.

This kind of order is important in both understanding and using speech. It is also extremely important later in learning to read. This is demonstrated by what happens to a sentence when just one word is put into a different order:

"**Now**, I want to go."

"I want to go **now**."

**3. Counting.** Children can learn to count from such rhymes as "One Potato, Two Potato" and "One Little, Two Little, Three Little Indians."

**4. Self-control.** As children play and dance to music, it is necessary to really listen and pay attention to what the song says in order to carry out the actions.

When it says, "clap," "jump," or "stop," they must translate what they've heard into a physical movement and clap, jump, or stop.

Make music a family affair. Before the days of television, families created their own entertainment, and singing together was very popular.

Develop your own family songbook from current rhythms, folk-rock and old timers.

Make up your own set of instruments, too. Kids will prefer them to the "real thing!" □



## Remembering childhood

Remember the baby book you kept when your child was an infant? Maybe it's tucked away on the shelf in a closet or in a drawer.

Wherever it is, take it out. It will provide many hours of sharing, learning, and fun for you and your child.

A memory book is a particularly great resource for any special time you set aside to spend with your child, such as a rainy day or a story at bedtime. As he grows older, he will delight in hearing stories about himself at a time he can't remember.

If you never kept a baby book for your child, or if it's been a long time since you added any material, now is a good time to start a current memory book. Here are some of the things you could include:

**1. Photographs.** Take pictures of him—eating; sleeping; having fun with friends and family; enjoying favorite activities such as playing with favorite toys. Be sure to label the back of each photo with a short description and a date.

**2. Artistic creations.** Keep samples of your child's artwork in his memory book. Save early scribbles as well as his work with finger paints, crayons, water colors, collages, self-portraits and treasured colorings.

You don't need to save everything he does. Have him help you choose a few favorites. Remember to date them.

Use a small bulletin board to showcase his current creations; replace them with new ones when available, and put the others in his memory book. These special art works also make great unexpected gifts for grandparents, relatives and friends.



**3. Physical measurements.** Make a growth chart marked off in inches. Every few months, measure your child and make a notation on the chart of the date on which he reached that height. Alongside make a note of his weight on that date, if you have a scale.

**4. Stories and songs.** Write down stories that your child makes up, songs he composes, interesting or funny things he says, insights he has about life and people. Include some of his favorite stories, books and songs.

**5. Video recordings.** If you own a video camera, or have access to one, use it to record special events such as holidays, birthdays, and other significant happenings. Record him singing,

telling a favorite story, or talking on the telephone.

**6. Written record.** Keep a written record to go with the pictures, recordings, creative products, and other records of your child's development.

Make a few notes about what he likes to do at different age levels. Describe the skills he's learning. Note the things he likes and doesn't like. Be sure to record experiences he has particularly enjoyed.

With the collection of these kinds of materials and notes, you're creating a gift for your child more valuable than any toy or gift that money could ever buy. You're also helping him develop self-confidence by providing him with a record of his growth—a word-and-picture story of who he was, and who he has become.

As he grows older, it will become a special treasure not only for him but also for others, who will come to know and love him too. □

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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](http://www.growingchild.com)

## Tree stumps tell a story

If you come upon a dry tree stump, you and a crew of helpers can take a rubbing that will tell you the tree's history.

### What you need:

- Shelf paper, computer print-out paper, or other paper big enough to stretch across the trunk.
- Thumbtacks.
- Charcoal (from an art supply store) or crayon.

### What to do:

- Stretch the paper across the stump. Hold it securely in place with thumbtacks.
- Use the side of a piece of crayon or charcoal to rub across the paper. Rub in just one direction.
- Soon the tree rings and other marks on the stump will appear on the paper.

### What this tells you:

The number of rings tells you how old the tree was when it was cut down.

If you know when the tree was cut down, you can figure out when it began to grow.

Then you can find the year of your helpers' births on the tree rings.

Look at the rings. Are some wider than others? The wide ones show years when there was lots of rain. The narrow rings show dry years.

Did the tree grow evenly in all directions? If it grew more on one side than the other, can you see any reasons for it? □

## Behavior

### Making mistakes

A child who is constantly called names and criticized for doing the wrong thing will have difficulty acquiring self-confidence in her ability to act correctly. She may misbehave simply to get attention.

Children need to learn that making mistakes is a natural part of living and learning. When a child does something wrong, a parent can explain why it was wrong.

If the mistake was unintentional, it is important to let the child know that everyone makes mistakes and that mistakes should not prevent trying again. □

## Learning to classify is an everyday job

"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; what part of a store will feature bicycles.

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.

Let her help you sort socks and silverware. Talk about the different shapes of street signs or the different feels of fabrics.

Let everyday experiences be your classroom! □

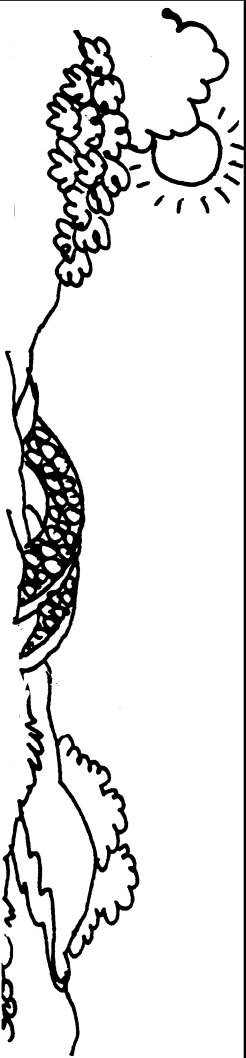







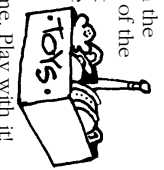

## Something New!

"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](http://www.GrowingChild.com/FreeGrandmaSays)

and enter your e-mail address.

# August, 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
<p>2</p> <p>Fix a paper bag lunch for everyone. Go to the park for a picnic.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>National Watermelon Day. Eat some!</p> 	<p>4</p> <p>Wear a striped shirt tomorrow. Count the stripes today.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>How much do you weigh? How can you find out?</p> 	<p>6</p> <p>Wiggle Your Toes Day. Try it.</p>	<p>7</p> <p>The next time you take a walk, take some gloves and a bag to pick up litter.</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Francis Scott Key, born 1779</p>  <p>National Mustard Day</p>
<p>9</p> <p>Eat dinner outside in the evening.</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Find something that is gold-colored. Jewelry doesn't count.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Paint a picture using cotton swabs. (Adult supervision suggested.)</p> 	<p>12</p> <p>Look for pictures of flowers in books or magazines.</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Left Hander's Day. Color a picture using your left hand.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Comb your hair in a "different" look.</p> 	<p>15</p> <p>Go to the park. Count the steps on the slide. Count the swings. Then take a ride on the swings.</p>
<p>16</p> <p>Make some bean bags. Fill some old socks with beans and sew them shut.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>Celery sticks for a snack.* Can you spell a word with eight sticks?</p> <p>*Not for kids under two</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Make a new kind of sandwich. Give it a name.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Play with some magnets—what do they "stick" to?</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Put fruit juice in ice cube trays and freeze for a yummy treat.</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>Make a pair of binoculars using toilet paper rolls taped together.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>First of Ramadan</p>
<p>23</p> <p>Where is your belly button?</p> <p>Play "Show and Tell."</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Check out a DVD from the library.</p> <p>What does it mean to "share"?</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Look in the bottom of the toy box and see what toy is lonesome. Play with it!</p> 	<p>26</p> <p>National Dog Day.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>What color are your clothes today?</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Read a story about bedtime before bedtime.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Hold someone's hand each time you cross the street.</p> 
<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>					