



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Art

Kids love 'slime'

What is "slime" for? Any kid can tell you it's to play with. Of course, most parents think slime is gross, and that's probably the truth!

Kids love to mess around with it anyway and sometimes play like they're "sculpting." Here's how to make your own slime:

Start with some water in a bowl or plastic container. Slowly add cornstarch, mixing it with your hand. Add enough cornstarch so that the slime looks wet when you're pouring it, but feels dry when it is touched. Children can do the mixing with some supervision.

Color can also be added. The best way is to add powdered tempera to the cornstarch before mixing. Or you can add food coloring to the water before mixing.

Is this stuff really art? Who knows, but the kids enjoy it enormously! □

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Social Skills

A guide to assigning chores

The main idea of assigning chores is to help children understand that living and working with groups of people involves work. Everyone in the group benefits from the work, and therefore everyone has an obligation to do some of it.

Putting a chore-sharing plan into action might seem to be quite a task in itself. Here are some easy and practical ways to get started.

1. **Use a chart.** Charts are a good way to introduce the idea of responsibility for jobs. They also serve as visual reminders so parents don't have to "nag."

Charts are especially effective for chores that are done on a daily basis.

Make the job consistent with the child's ability and provide a marker or special stickers to show that a job has been done.

Start with only two or three chores and add more as the child grows.

2. **Use a job jar.** This is a good method for jobs that have to be done only occasionally.

If you have an adult job jar, have one for your child, too.

Explain the idea: "Grownups have job jars, and you're going to have one, too. We put pieces of paper into the jar and they tell us which job we're going to do. Let's think of things you can do all by yourself."

It is important to brainstorm and accept the child's suggestions, but you can add some of your own.

Some ideas: Wipe fingerprints off the doors around the handles; clean the pet's water dish; pull weeds; pick up litter in the yard; sweep the porch.

When you have a list, print each item on a separate piece of paper and put them in your child's jar. When you go to your jar, send your child to hers, too. Doing one's share of the family's work builds positive self-esteem.

A child who says, "I swept the porch all by myself!" is one whose self-esteem has been enhanced by her discovery that she can complete such a job.

This warm glow of success also makes a child more willing to help people in other situations because she knows she is competent. □

In praise of fathers

Let's consider the role fathers play in the healthy development of their children.

Although different from that of mothers, a father's role is every bit as important to children's well being.

Whether or not fathers live with their children in our changing world, they matter in the present and future lives of their children.

Abundant research shows that the involvement of fathers with their children has important influences at every stage of child development.

At six months of age, babies of fathers who are involved, nurturing, and playful score higher on tests of mental and motor development, and are emotionally secure and confident enough to explore their surroundings.

Toddlers with involved fathers start school with higher levels of academic readiness, and show more patience to be able to handle the stresses and frustrations of schooling than do children with less involved fathers.

In the preschool years, children with involved fathers show greater ability to take initiative, a stronger sense of competence, and are more sociable and popular with other children than preschoolers with less involved dads.

Father involvement in children's school life increases the chances that a child will earn mostly A's by as much as 43 percent, and decreases by one-

third the likelihood that a child will have to repeat a grade.

Father involvement in adolescence reduces risks of juvenile delinquency, teen pregnancy, and drug use, while increasing the amount of education completed.

In a 26-year study of empathy and emotional stability that tracked young children into adulthood, paternal involvement was the single strongest parent-related factor.



Some experts theorize that one of the reasons for these important social and emotional influences of fathers lies in the differences in the way fathers play with their young children.

Fathers spend more of their one-on-one interaction with infants and preschoolers in stimulating, playful activity than do mothers.

From these interactions, children learn how to regulate their feelings and behavior.

Generally, fathers tend to promote independence and an outer orientation to the world.

Father involvement also has impact on both boys and girls, with sons of involved fathers showing fewer school and peer behavior problems and daughters showing stronger self-esteem than peers without the strong father connection.

Someone said that we live in the best of times for fathers and also the worst.

The best of times support the many fathers now taking active roles in their children's lives—waiting in the doctor's office with them, going to their soccer games, helping with homework in the kitchen, and talking sensitively with kids about their lives.

The worst part is when fathers are excluded from their children's lives, as custodial mothers try to win hollow victories at the expense of absent dads, with careless or vindictive comments that alienate their children from the fathers they so desperately need for their strong growth.

Let us all resolve to celebrate the powerful and positive impact that fathers have on their children's healthy development, and to support all dads in this task. □

Children can learn from making mistakes

Sometimes you know your preschooler is following a course of action that may lead to failure and disappointment.

It's hard at these times to stand back and let her follow her own course anyway. But unless what she's doing is dangerous to herself or others, don't interfere.

When you try to protect her from the experience of failing, you communicate a lack of faith in her ability to handle it.

She'll learn to cope with failure and disappointment by finding out through experience that she can live through it.

Making mistakes and falling short of your hopes and expectations is part of life.

With your support and lack of interference, your child can learn to take this part of life in stride rather than be destroyed by it. □

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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

Can you say 'No' to your child?

There will be many occasions when your child will make unreasonable requests or demands and you'll find yourself saying "no."

This is not bad. We live in a world of rules and limits. Children whose parents never say "no" quickly become over gratified and, later on, may become easily frustrated.

Many parents who cannot say "no" choose to reason with their children, offering words of justification and logic for their decisions.

In turn, the children may react by crying or yelling because they prefer a "no" response to a lecture.

Of course, there are parents who really believe that it is not healthy emotionally to say "no" because it may stunt their children's creativity and spontaneity.

These parents bask in their children's impulsive, engaging personalities while ignoring their lack of cooperation, selfishness and bad manners.

Finally there are parents who have never been able to say "no" to themselves — to their eating, drinking, or better buying habits.

How can they say "no" to their children?

Setting limits, which means saying "no", is a form of discipline. Saying "no" will not mean loss of love. □

Clothing strings can be dangerous on the playground

Clothing strings, loose clothing, and stringed items placed around the neck can catch on playground equipment and strangle children. The U.S. Product Safety commission reports such items as strangulation hazards when they become caught on playground equipment, especially slides and swings.

These items include strings on clothing (such as hoods and attached mittens), loose clothing (such as scarves and ponchos), and other items (such as jump ropes) placed around the neck.

These items can catch on protrusions, gaps, open-ended hooks, and other parts of playground equipment.










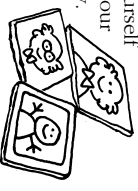
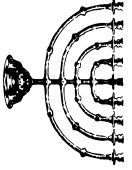
The best solution is to avoid dressing children in loose clothing or clothing with strings if they will be on playground equipment.

To view recommended guidelines for drawstrings, go to: www.cpsc.gov/CPSCPUB/PUBS/208.pdf □

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.

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	<p>1</p> <p>Mix yogurt with crunchy cereal for a tasty snack.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Name the parts of your hand and arm: finger, knuckle, thumb, wrist, elbow, shoulder.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Dr. Suess' birthday! Read one of his many books.</p>	<p>4</p> <p>Read a nursery rhyme. Emphasize the words that rhyme.</p> 	<p>5</p> <p>Look at what you're wearing today. Name the colors.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Sing a song together that everyone knows.</p> 
<p>7</p> <p>Color this page yellow, blue and green.</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Can you wink? Take turns: right eye, left eye.</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Count the plants in your house.</p> 	<p>10</p> <p>Put together a puzzle.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Toddlers will enjoy banging together two aluminum pie pans.</p>	<p>12</p> <p>Sit near a window and enjoy the warmth of the sun.</p> 	<p>13</p> <p>Look at a thermometer. What is the temperature today? Is it warm, medium or cold?</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Look for the number 5 on this page.</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Find four things that are yellow.</p> 	<p>16</p> <p>Look for different kinds of fruit at the grocery store.</p>	<p>17</p> <p>St. Patrick's Day. Draw a shamrock. Wear something green.</p> 	<p>18</p> <p>Put on some music and pretend you're in a marching band playing a trombone.</p>	<p>19</p> <p>Look in the newspaper for something special to do this weekend.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Spring begins.</p> 
<p>21</p> <p>What does a tugboat do? Look it up.</p> 	<p>22</p> <p>Look at a map and talk about places where people you know live.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Sing the "Happy Birthday" song.</p>	<p>24</p> <p>What is your favorite color? Find 4 things that color.</p>	<p>25</p> <p>Play "Follow the leader."</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Look at photos of yourself and your family.</p> 	<p>27</p> <p>Is it windy enough to fly a kite?</p>
<p>28</p> <p>Palm Sunday.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>How much do you weigh? What about Dad? The dog? A book?</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Passover.</p> 	<p>31</p> <p>Go outside and look for something new that is growing—green buds or grass.</p>	