



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Behavior

When kids fail

Most children can handle success—but how can parents help their children handle failure?

First, your child needs to know that you're on her side, that you accept her for what she is, win or lose. Your comments should reflect on what she's done, not on what she "is."

Second, don't be kind by being dishonest. Your child knows when she hasn't done well, when she has "failed."

When you acknowledge that you know this, too, but that it isn't the end of the world, your child has confidence in you to reflect an honest value to her.

Finally, let your child know every day and in many ways that you love her. A child needs a lot of hugging, even at times when her behavior is definitely "unhuggable."

As children try to find their place in the world, they look to their parents for guidance and support. Make sure you give your child the room she needs to learn and make mistakes, but also make sure he knows you're on her side — win or lose. □

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Infants & Toddlers

Explorers in diapers

Once a baby begins to creep, a whole new world of space exploration is open to him.

A baby is increasingly curious about everything he sees, hears, or touches. This curiosity is a precious thing. It leads Baby on exciting trips of discovery across the floor, behind chairs, under tables, and around the dog's bowl.

Sometimes it leads him into the dead end of a corner or behind a door. What to do now?

Perhaps Baby has never crept backward before, except by accident. Now he must shift into reverse to solve this problem.

If he has not been creeping long, he may not be able to do this easily. He may just keep trying to push his way ahead until he becomes frustrated and begins to cry.

If this should happen, of course you will go to his rescue—but make this a learning experience for him.

Comfort him with your voice and hand. Gently coax him backward until he is free. Then praise him for his bravery and his learning attempt.

A playpen makes a fine protected area for play. But if a baby is frequently confined to his playpen, he will soon lose some of his won-

derful curiosity.

The restricted space will not give him enough room to perfect his creeping and to learn the many things about himself that creeping will teach him.

Unless Baby can experience the various distances between objects, he will be slower to learn about judging distance and time.

These early lessons form part of the solid foundation for later learning at school.

If Baby is to explore safely, you must take a look around your house, at low cabinets and drawers, at the top of low tables, and at any containers that may be standing on the floor.

Remove all cleaning materials from lower and under-counter kitchen or storeroom cabinets—soaps, detergents, window or oven cleaner, cleansers, furniture polish, disinfectants, floor wax, bleach, other liquids—anything that Baby might break, pour over himself, put in his mouth, or swallow.

Replace these containers with safe, unbreakable objects such as pots, pans pie tins, lids, plastic bowls and the like.

Now, if Baby pulls open a cabinet door, he can explore and learn in safety. □

Reward vs. bribe

What's the difference between a reward and a bribe?

A reward is offered ahead of time, before a child is asked to do something.

For example, a child may be promised a reward if she helps her parent bag leaves. For the child, the reward reinforces the good behavior.

A bribe, on the other hand, is used to encourage a child to do something she has already refused to do.

A parent might offer a candy bar to the child who has refused to clean up her room, for example.

Bribes tend to teach a child that she can get what she wants by refusing to cooperate.

Fortunately, for many young children, the best reward for a job well done is an adult's praise.

The more attention and praise you dispense for good behavior, the more good behavior you'll see.

Save the rewards for special occasions. By thinking ahead, you can do away with bribes altogether. □

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How to help children feel good about themselves

Here are some simple ideas parents can use to help children feel good about themselves.

- Have confidence in your child. Trust in him to learn from his mistakes and to outgrow aggravating habits he may pick up as he grows.

He won't always slam the door or leave his shoes in the middle of the room.

- Pay more attention to her strengths than to her shortcomings.

You'll find you see more of whichever behavior you focus on most. So, thank her when she closes the door quietly.

- Be alert to and encourage your child's natural talents. Have patience with him in the areas in which he doesn't excel.

If he is good at printing, ask him to print a poster for the refrigerator door.

If he has trouble with numbers, tell him you'll help him with his homework.

- Try to give her the benefit of the doubt when you find your confidence in her lacking.

After all, wouldn't you like for her to have the same kind of confidence in you? □



Share your knowledge

Most adults, even those raised with a restricted access to nature, know something about nature.

It may be a simple story about why or how something works in nature that you've retained from your high school biology class or Scouting.

It may be a lesson or story told to you by a relative or friend when you were small.

Or it may be a folk tale such as the legend of Johnny Appleseed. Whatever it is, share it with your child.

As adults we tend to believe that we can't instruct children unless we are an "expert." But the stories children love most are those they hear from their parents, and their most favorite activities are those that they participate in with their parents.

So, go ahead. Tell your youngster about fireflies trying to attract a mate by blinking their lights.

Talk about the little acorns that could grow up to be great big oak trees.

Go to the library, check out a book and amaze the kids — and yourself — with simple explanations of where rain comes from, or how birds make a nest.

You can also choose another idea from the zillions of topics available. Put together your own experiment and learn as you go, along with the kids.

Not only are you learning something yourself, you're imparting knowledge, presenting a positive role model of teaching, and perhaps introducing a budding scientist to the fascinating world of nature. □

Magic Rocks

Here's a game that requires only two things: some open floor space and a good imagination.

Everyone—children and adults alike—begins by crouching down on the floor, curled up in a small ball, face hidden. Each person becomes a “Magic Rock.”

When everyone is in the “rock” position, chant the magic words:

“Magic rocks, magic rocks, turn into a _____.”

Fill in the blank with your choice of animal, insect, sea creature, machine or whatever.

As the last word is spoken, everyone becomes that object or animal. They slither, crawl, scamper, hop, flap, roll, run or whatever action is necessary to act the part to the best of their ability.

Don't forget sounds. Whether real or imagined, each thing should make its own noise.

After about 30 seconds, the leader calls, “Magic Rocks!” and everyone becomes a rock again.

Each player can take a turn being leader and filling in the blank. Repeat the entire process as many times as you like or have time for.

This game can be a great way for children to experience improvisation at an early, wonderfully creative time in their lives.

By taking control of the last two or three choices, you can have the “Magic Rocks” turn into quiet things.

That might be a snoring bear, a purring kitten, or a lazy turtle. And so you can end the game on a tranquil note. □

Good behavior at the grocery store

Probably most parents can tell a story or two about something embarrassing or maddening that happened while shopping with the kids.

There are ways to avoid bad behavior and unacceptable language (theirs *and* yours). Here are a few:

- **Go over the rules before going into the store.**



For example: “Please stay by the cart. No running. No begging. No yelling. You can select one acceptable snack before we leave, IF you follow the rules.”

- Kids who are old enough can help find items on the shelf by identifying the label.

- **Hum a favorite song. Have your child guess its name.**

- **Ask your child to look for a package with a B on it, or one that has a picture of the package's or can's contents, or a product in a box as you move up and down the aisles.**

- **For kids too young to walk, bring a bag of small toys and tie it to the cart with a very short string (for safety).**

Include some healthy snacks.

- **Have the children help you select a new item** — breakfast cereal, fruit or vegetable.

- **Ask questions about the items you put in the basket.** What is the name of this vegetable? What color is this box?

How many cans are in the cart now? Whose picture is on this container? Who likes to eat this vegetable at our house?

- **If a child is out of control, remove her from the scene.** Go to the car or rest room and wait until she is calmed down. When she is able to control herself, return to the store.

- **Kids who are tired or hungry belong at home, not at the grocery store.** Find a sitter instead.

- **Reward positive behavior with your attention.** Say “thank you” when your child is helpful and make positive remarks about her good behavior.

What gets rewarded — gets repeated. □

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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FreeGrandmaSays

and enter your e-mail address.

September, 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>5</p> <p>Tell your fellow family members what you like about them.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>Draw a picture of a great big boat</p> 	<p>7</p> <p>Can you find four different blue things in your room?</p>	<p>8</p> <p>Look up at the sky tonight and sing: "Twinkle, twinkle little star!"</p> 	<p>9</p> <p>Roll a ball back and forth.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>Play with a toy telephone. Call a friend, or a parent, or your grandparents.</p>	<p>11</p> <p>Can you make the tick-tock sound with your tongue?</p> 
<p>12</p> <p>How many eggs are in the refrigerator?</p> <p>3</p>	<p>13</p> <p>Take a ride in a wagon.</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Play some upbeat music and dance!</p> <p>Grandparents' Day</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Make a special picture to put on the fridge.</p>	<p>16</p> <p>What do you call a baby sheep?</p> 	<p>17</p> <p>Sit in someone else's place at dinner tonight.</p>	<p>18</p> <p>Donate non-perishable food or paper products to a local food bank.</p>
<p>19</p> <p>What fits into what? What bowls, pans, cups do you have that nest inside of each other.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Plan a menu for tomorrow with youngster's help.</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Make something with your blocks.</p> 	<p>22</p> <p>Have a birthday party for a pet.</p>	<p>23</p> <p>Take a walk and count all the red cars you see.</p> <p>First day of autumn</p>	<p>24</p> <p>Can you play tic-tac-toe?</p>	<p>25</p> <p>What is red, white and blue?</p>
<p>26</p> <p>Eat lunch outside.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Play music with a steady beat and clap your hands.</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Find four rocks. Line them up by size.</p>	<p>29</p> <p>Draw a picture of someone who lives at your house.</p> <p>Rosh Hashanah</p>	<p>30</p> <p>What month comes after September?</p>	