



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Developmental

How to be successful

In order for a child to develop feelings of confidence in his ability to be successful, he needs practice at being successful.

Observe his present skills and interests. Then introduce him to activities that will spark his interest and stretch his skills, challenging him and assuring success.

Encourage him to stick with activities until he's done what he set out to do.

Try not to interrupt him from an involving activity. Perseverance is an important part of success. If he meets with difficulty, encourage him to "just try."

If you can suggest a way of simplifying the task, do so. But resist the temptation to take over and show him how by doing it for him.

That's a subtle way of telling him he can't do it and will undermine his confidence in his own ability. □

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Parenting

Playing favorites

No parent wants to admit that he or she has a favorite child. It sounds so unfair, like Cinderella's wicked stepmother who catered to the selfish sisters and overlooked the kind-hearted heroine.

As a result, most parents hide any secret fancies. This is especially true if they grew up in a family in which one of their siblings was an obvious favorite.



Yet it is normal to feel a special chemistry with one child. She may be just like Dad — she laughs at the same things or she knits her eyebrows the same way.

Or maybe Mom favors one child because he resembles Dad, whose personality complements her own.

While these feelings are understandable, acting upon them is not. Favoring one child over another hurts

everyone.

Naturally the less-favored one loses. He doesn't get the attention he desires and he feels as if he is competing with an unbeatable foe.

The favorite loses, too.

He may exaggerate whatever trait has earned his honor — "Aren't I being quiet, Mommy?" He may use his endearing qualities to advance his favored position.

Favorites also lose out in their sibling relationships. It is easy for them to become bullies while their brothers and sisters develop feelings of inferiority or hostility toward them.

And parents lose. They feel guilty for favoring one child and eventually must face the consequences of raising a self-important child.

They also forfeit the joy of a close relationship with the unfavored child.

One sure way to complicate the situation is to try to treat each child the same.

It works better to concentrate on distributing love and respect equally, instead of distributing punishments and possessions equally.

Children need to be accorded the same fairness and to be recognized for their uniqueness. □

Encourage writing for lifelong pleasure

A parent's private approach to writing as a pleasurable activity can have rewarding results.

Just as you began talking to an infant who could not repeat anything recognizable back to you, you provide similar exposure to the art of writing.

Build on children's natural curiosity and encourage them to explore the world of writing. Tots marvel at the magic they can make with markers, chalk or crayons.

Your reinforcement of such play will plant the seeds for writing to be an enjoyable activity. It says to your child that you value her attempts at

“grown-up” activity.

At first you may need to provide much direction and supervision — reminding your child to write only at her special place, not on walls, and correcting bad habits — “No, we don't pound the chalk into little bits.”

Sometimes you'll also have to fight an overwhelming sense that your child is just not getting the hang of this — “Oh, honey, you have scribbled on every page in this tablet in just five minutes.”

As the writing activities become habitual and comfortable to your child, it will become a natural recreation throughout her childhood

years.

At three, a child will be content with her crayon and tablet as she sits in the grocery cart, imitating you crossing off a list.

At four, the child who has been offered writing play as a toddler will insist on a pencil and paper to scribble on while in her stroller as you hike through the mall.

At five, the preschool youngster can't wait to begin her “writing work” in the car on a lap desk as you travel on your vacation. Each child will respond in her own unique way to your encouragement. □

Discipline

Shame and blame

A child will behave according to what she thinks she is.

Therefore, if she is addressed in terms like ... “You always ...” and “You never ...” and “You are such a ...” she will surely develop an image of herself as a “so and so” and continue engaging in “such and such.”

When correcting a child, it is much better to make a distinction in your mind between who she is and what she is doing.

It is necessary to behold children as innocent. We can assume that if they really knew better, really understood the value of another way, they would do it.

Parents are called upon for various responses to error. Sometimes

a firm and vigorous stand is called for, such as when there is immediate danger of physical injury.

Sometimes a warning is called for, the pointing out of a possible consequence.

Sometimes parents simply have to stand by and let their children discover consequences for themselves.

Sometimes reproof and explanation are appropriate. But the goodness of the child is never the issue; even behavior is not the issue; learning is the issue.

In every instance something will be learned. If we view our children as naughty, disturbed, or guilty of their misdeeds, they will learn to think of themselves as foolish, faulty,

or shameful.

If we view them as innocent, or at least merely ignorant, they will gain understanding from their experiences, and they will continue to regard us as wise partners.

Write a no-fault clause into your family policy and apply it to yourself and your children.

With no-fault assurance, even if you have to discipline your toddler, you will be able to do so with compassion and a sense of humor rather than fear or anger.

You will be able to issue warnings without insult and correct without humiliation. □

Characteristics of a good parent

Margaret Mead was a noted anthropologist who studied children, parents, and methods of child raising among many races of people.

When asked what she thought were the characteristics of a good mother, she replied with a short list of what she considered “valuable capacities for a mother to have.” These capacities would be equally valuable for fathers!

Here’s her list:

- “To treat each child as an individual person; to realize that children are not adjuncts to their parents but are individuals in their own right.



- “To set a child’s feet on her own path and allow her to follow it, yet to be there when that path seems hard to follow.

- “To be willing to listen, and listen, and listen.

- “To be brave enough to show disapproval when one feels that something is wrong, even though by doing so one may be risking rejection by the child.

- “To stand up for one’s own beliefs and so make one’s respect for a child worth having and keeping.” □

Healthy eating without fuss

Nutritionists tell us that if children are consistently presented with items from the major food groups, they will choose a healthy diet.

This doesn’t mean they will eat the same amount or even a balanced diet each day.

Teething, colds or a slow growth period can cause a lackluster appetite, and it’s quite common for a child to temporarily reject meat or go on a banana binge.

It does mean that given the chance (and an absence of prodding and tension), kids can develop reasonable eating habits.

Make it easier for your child to enjoy eating by trying some of the following:

- Sidestep potential conflicts by substituting “likes” for “dislikes” whenever possible. If Becky hates roast beef but loves hamburger, why fight it? They have the same nutritional characteristics.

Lean on fruit during a “down-on-vegetables” phase or offer cheese instead of eggs.

- Take advantage of your child’s “hungry time.” In one family, the oldest son awakened ravenous each morning and could easily consume almost a day’s supply of nutrition at breakfast.

His parents supplied vast quantities of oatmeal, fruit, eggs, and toast — and ignored his “pickiness” during the rest of the day.

- Change the setting. A “bored-with-food” tot may regain her appetite with a bang if allowed to picnic in the park or back porch or eat in a tent (a sheet thrown over a card table) or on a tray while reading or

building blocks.

Where is it written that food must always be consumed at a table?

- Once your child is more agreeable about food, let him or her help you in the kitchen.

You’d be surprised what kids will eat if they can help make it themselves.

Two-year-olds may “hate” salads but let them tear greens for a taco and they soon change their minds.

Slightly older children can shape dough for cookies, slice bananas, (with supervision) or assemble cheese sandwiches for toasting.

Expect some spilled milk and flour-coated floors, but keep a happy, encouraging attitude and children will soon associate “food” with “fun.” □

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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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

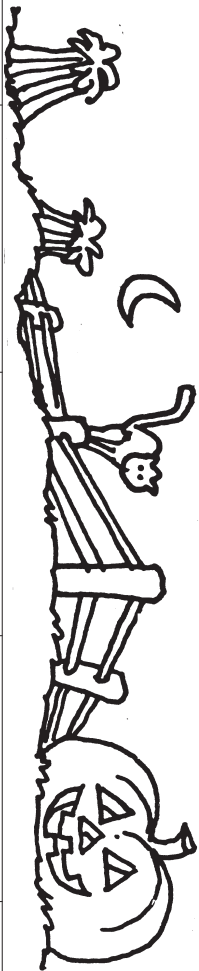
Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday



1 2 3 4

2
What direction is the sky?
What color it is—most often?

3

Find your telephone number and address in the telephone book.
712-9495

4

What color is:
Your hair:
Your eyes:
Your tonsils.

5

Take a big cardboard box outside. What can you do with it? (Paint it, play in it ...)

6

Practice looking both ways before you cross the street.



7

Go for a walk and look for orange leaves.

8

Make funny faces with a friend and try to imitate each other.

9

What season is this?
spring —
summer —
fall —
winter —

10

French toast for breakfast!

11

Columbus Day.

12

Talk about things that make you happy.



13

Draw a picture that shows what the weather is like today.

14

Make a noise like a:
dog
duck
snake
turtle

15

Use a soft brush on Baby's hair.

16

Go outside and kick around a soccer ball.



17

Take a walk outside. Where is your shadow?

18

Sing a lullaby before you go to bed.



19

Wear bright colors today. Compare them with the colors outdoors in nature.

20

Practice pouring an object from one plastic cup to another.

21

Find four white circle shapes in the house.



22

Give Baby different kinds of material to feel and examine.

23

Look for things outside that are BIG and little.

24

Look for butterflies.

31

Look outside for squirrels. What are they doing? Why?

25

What new children's books does your library have?

26

Do you have the phone number of the local poison control center posted by your telephone?



27

Take:
5 steps forward
5 steps backward
5 steps to the left
5 steps to the right

28

How tall are you?

29

Take a nap in the afternoon.

