



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Academics

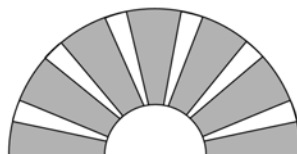
Set a good example

For your children who are learning to write, and for those who will be, let them see you writing.

Parents are both a model and a teacher. If children never see adults write, they gain an impression that writing happens only at school.

Here are some ways to encourage children in their early writing:

- Leave “notes” to your child on her high chair or pillow.
- Have your child visit a parent or grandparent at work where there is usually writing in progress.
- Have your child act out a story while you write down the words.
- Take walks looking for “writing” on mailboxes and signs.
- Finger paint with chocolate pudding or put food coloring in plain yogurt for a tasty day of writing fun. □



Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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Infants/Toddlers

Touch is important to your baby

One of a baby's earliest ways of learning is through her sense of touch. Long after she has gained control of her eyes and has begun to learn through them, she will continue to learn by holding, handling, and mouthing objects.

The world is full of many different “feels” when Baby comes in contact with them. The idea that some things are the “same” and others are “different” is one of the most basic of all early learning experiences.

One way to help her learn more about “same and different” is to give her many opportunities to experience all those interesting “feels.”

The active or the fussy baby never lacks the stimulation of being lifted and handled. However, the placid, “very good” baby may be deprived of stimulation that she needs simply because she makes no demands on her parents or caregivers.

All babies can benefit from gentle stimulation of their sense of touch. If a baby is placed on her stomach without clothing for a short time before her bath, she experiences sensations over her body's skin which she may otherwise miss.

Gently stroke and rub her back, arms, and legs with your hands. Pat her gently all over or tap her with your fingertips.

Rub her gently with something soft and velvety. A piece of soft corduroy is an excellent source of stimulation. After her bath, don't just pat her dry. Rub her arms, legs, tummy and back with a soft, terry cloth towel. Kiss her head, her hands, and her feet.

Play with her toes as you talk to her. Pat her feet together. Pat her hands together. Make a bubbling noise against the skin in the hollow of her neck or against her soft tummy.

A “ticklish” baby is often very sensitive to touch because she has not had enough stimulation of this sense.

If your baby is ticklish, begin using her own hands to rub and pat her body. As she learns to trust her own touch, you can gradually begin using your hand.

Remember that a light touch feels more “tickly” than a firmer one. A gentle but firm touch with the palm of your hand is less likely to “tickle” than feather-like stroking with fingertips. □

There are better forms of discipline than threats

After children do something wrong, their parents discipline them. Setting limits, providing natural consequences, time-out, and if-then statements (**if** you do **this**, **then that** will happen), are some disciplinary measures used by parents. These ways to discipline are effective if they are used properly.

Threats, on the other hand, are usually unplanned, harsh statements made to frighten and coerce a child into good behavior. There is often a physical aspect to a threat, such as, "I will spank you

if you don't stop whining."

A planned disciplinary measure is not threatening because it is expected and understood. For example, "If you whine, I will not be able to talk to you now."

When children or adults feel controlled by threats, they tend to resent the people using them.

If this plan has been explained to the child many times, she has learned that whining does not get attention. In this way, a child is not frightened into behaving. She can make a choice. □

Help your child find his place in the world

It's tough for three- and four-year-olds to be "in-between"—too young for some things and too old for others. It's not just that he isn't allowed to go places and do things—there are many activities and occasions when he is included. But there are also many things he simply can't do yet.

Your child needs your patient support when he gets overwhelmed by tasks that are too big for him. You can explain that everyone has trouble doing some things sometimes. Offer to help out if he wants. But don't take over. That would only increase his feelings of incompetence.

He needs reassurance and

encouragement to help him see things about himself that are special. Compliment him, for example, on how good he is at making other people feel happy, or what a good job he does in picking up all of his toys and putting them away.

Your youngster needs your help to see and develop his own special talents. For example, tell him how much you love to hear him sing his "made-up songs." You can remind him about how helpful he was to you yesterday when he set the table.

What gets rewarded, gets repeated. And your attention is a big reward to your child. □

Shy children

Many shy parents worry that their children will also be shy. You can avoid this by instilling a sense of self-pride in your children.

Recognize each child's individual integrity. Children who receive support when they attempt new things feel confident. One way to do this is by showing enthusiasm for small accomplishments.

Remembering to turn a television set off when leaving a room is no small task for a preschooler and deserves praise.

A pleasant smile in the morning from a sleepy child or a meal at which your toddler feeds herself should all be met with a positive comment. This makes children feel successful.

It is not necessary to force a child into social situations that make him or her uncomfortable. By all means encourage your children to play with friends and attend parties.

If they appear reluctant to socialize, try inviting one or two children to your home. A child who seems to be shy outside his home may flourish on his own turf.

By accepting children as they are, and providing them with comfortable opportunities in which to socialize, parents can provide a foundation from which their children can go into the world with confidence rather than with hesitation. □

Ways to keep your cool

There's no doubt that kids can do things that drive parents to distraction. Often we try to hold our anger in check, but somehow it just seems to slip through the barriers.

Even when we're angry with someone or something else, we may inadvertently vent frustrations on the little ones.

After all, they can't offer armed resistance, throw garbage on our lawn, or report us to the IRS. We forget, though, how much our anger hurts them.

In confrontations with children, it is the responsibility of the adult to maintain self-control, objectivity and a sense of humor.

It is also important that adults set an example free of hypocrisy and the "do as I say and not as I do" syndrome. How logical is it for mom or dad to scream at their child for screaming at a sibling or playmate? We must remember to view ourselves as our children view us.

There are many ways to keep from getting angry and to keep from exploding. Here are a few suggestions:

- **Humor.** One of the best ways to defuse a tense situation and relieve hostility is through the use of laughter. Humor works well with children and adolescents, but it will only work with adults who remember how to laugh. Once in a while it helps to laugh at yourself.

- **Control.** Wind a piece of masking tape around your wrist.

Make a mark on it every time you raise your voice or lose your temper. Keep a daily tally for a week. You may be amazed at the frequency of your outbursts.

Work at decreasing the number of marks as you become more conscious of your emotions.

- **Delay.** When you feel your self-control slipping, try the old technique of counting to ten—silently or aloud.

If you are busy counting, you're less likely to hear the whining of a toddler or the ping-pong of your nerves.

- **Distraction.** Make lists of things to do. Organize your silverware drawer, clean a closet, change a bed.

- **Compare.** Try to recall how you felt when your parents screamed at you. Your children feel the same way.

- **Fantasize.** Picture yourself cruising to a tropical island. No one feels like yelling when they're on a cruise. Or imagine that you just won a million dollars. Fantasize about what you would do with the money.

- **Analyze.** Above all, try to consider the reasons for your anger. Does the situation really merit your reaction? Establish, if you can, the roots of your anger and try to deal with the feelings at their source. Usually it is not our children with whom we feel angry. Sometimes it is ourselves.

Is it really the little ones who are pressuring you or does your life contain too much stress from

outside sources?

- **Get help.** If extra help would relieve pressure, find another pair of hands.

If finances are tight, there are often neighborhood youths available at a nominal fee, for instance. Babysitting co-ops let parents trade time with other parents at little or no charge.

Other parents of young children can provide tips for saving time and can also serve as excellent resources for help in structuring your daily routine.

Most importantly, don't put off giving your children the patience and attention they need. The cradle will soon be empty, but their hearts and lives will always be filled with the love you've given them. □

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