



# Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

## Social Skills

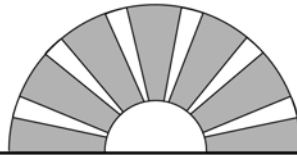
### Good manners start early—at home

The basics of good manners for children are:

- Respecting other people's property and privacy;
- Behaving well at the table;
- Not being rowdy in public;
- Not interrupting or contradicting;
- Not demanding one's way all the time.

Choose the manners that are most important to you and your family and concentrate on those.

If you start teaching manners consistently and with purpose in the preschool years, they should be a habit by the time a child enters school. □



## Child's Day

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## Parenting

### Encourage positive communication with teachers and childcare providers

A positive and successful relationship is based on clear and honest communication between parents and their child's teacher or childcare provider.

Ask questions about your child and discuss how he or she is adapting in the classroom.



Be approachable and make it possible for teachers and providers to talk to you about difficult topics such as discipline.

It's extremely important for parents to get to know their child's teacher or caregiver. And give them a chance to get to know you and your child.

Tell them about your family and your child's interests outside the classroom or childcare envi-

ronment.

Be familiar with what your child is doing on a daily basis so you can have meaningful conversations with your child as well.

Sharing problems from home gives teachers and providers the news and facts that are vital to how he or she cares for and relates to your child.

Let the teacher or caregiver know if your child has had a bad dream, or if he or she has been coughing all night and hasn't been sleeping well.

If there is major turmoil at home such as separation, divorce, sickness or death, tell them about that too.

Understand that a teacher may not be able to personally make contact with every parent at the beginning and end of each day.

Stay in touch and aware of what's going on by making a conscious effort to read the notices and messages that are sent home.

Good communication will benefit parents and teachers, but most of all, it will benefit the children. □

## Tips for better health and safety

**Prevent violence by setting good examples.** Hitting, slapping and spanking teaches children that it is acceptable to hit other people to solve problems. Non-physical forms of discipline work better in the long run. Remember that words can hurt too.

**Make sure your immunizations are up to date.** Review your child's immunization record with your pediatrician. Make sure your child is current on recommended immunizations.

**Provide your child with a tobacco-free environment.** Indoor air pollution from tobacco increases ear infections, chest infections, and even Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. If you smoke, consider quitting. Remember, the most important predictor of whether your children will grow up to be smokers is whether you smoke. Make your home a smoke-free zone.

**Read to your child every day.** Start by the age of 6 months. Reading to children shows them the importance of communication and motivates them to become readers. It also provides a context to discuss issues and learn what is on your child's mind.

**Practice "safety on wheels."** Make sure everyone in the car is buckled up for every ride, with children in the back seat in age-appropriate child safety seats. All bikers, skaters and skateboarders should wear helmets.

**Do a "childproofing" survey of your home.** A child's-eye view home survey should systematically go from room to room, removing all the "booby traps" that await the curious toddler or

preschooler. Think of poison, small objects, sharp edges, knives and firearms, and places to fall.

**Monitor your children's "media."** Monitor what your children see and hear on television, in movies, and in music. Children are affected by what they see and hear, particularly in these times of violent images. Talk to your children about "content." If you feel that a movie or TV program is inappropriate, redirect your child to more suitable programming.

**Pay attention to nutrition.** Nutrition makes a big difference in how kids grow, develop and learn. Good nutrition is a matter of balance. Provide foods from several food groups at each meal. Emphasize foods that are less processed, such as whole grain breads and cereals and fresh fruits and vegetables. Review your child's diet with your pediatrician for suggestions.

**Become more involved in your child's school and your child's education.** Visit your child's school. Become active in the parent-teacher organization. Volunteer in the classroom or for special projects. Be available to help with homework. If your child's education is important to you, it will be important to him.

**Make your children feel loved and important.** Kids develop a sense of self-worth early in life. They get it from their parents. Listen to what your children have to say. Assure them that they are loved and safe. Celebrate their individuality and tell them what makes them special and what you admire about them. □

Source: American Academy of Pediatrics

## "You're not old enough!"

What can parents do when a child isn't old enough to do many of the things other children do?

This is an especially difficult situation if the child has older brothers or sisters who are allowed privileges the younger child is denied.

For example, many young children want to go outside without supervision. They may even run away from home or slip out when parents aren't looking. Naturally, if this happens, parents are going to be upset and worried, perhaps angry.

What to do?

Be honest with your child about your feelings, but try, also, to let him know you understand his feelings.

"You wanted to go out by yourself like the big kids. You got mad when I wouldn't let you. So you went anyway. I understand how you feel, but I can't let you go out alone. I get very worried and upset that something might happen to you."

It's hard for children to understand that they will be allowed more privileges as they get older. In the meantime, parents can take some comfort in the fact that this situation won't last forever. □

## Getting ready for numbers

Long before a child deals with math concepts, she has the abilities required to deal with them. These abilities are gained through everyday activities: determining the difference between these things and those things; sorting objects which belong together; and putting objects in order.

To illustrate how children appreciate the order of things, look at Sally who is a little over three years old. She and her brother enjoy helping put away the dishes, flatware, pots, and pans.

In the beginning they would push the pots and pans into the cupboard only to discover that the cupboard door wouldn't close.

About that time their mother casually suggested, "Why not try to put the cookie trays on the bottom?" Accepting this advice,

they tried several times before the door closed.

Since cleanup is their chore, they have plenty of practice in sorting and stacking. It took only a week for them to solve the problem so they could announce, "The pans are in good today. They fit. The door closes!"

There was no mystery; they had used their knowledge of how parts of space fit together. That is, by trial and error they had learned which pans fit into which pots until finally, every item fit into the cupboard and the door closed.

Children develop a mathematical sense when they must share space, food, and other materials. The recipes involved in cooking and baking are also a good way to learn to solve mathematical challenges. □

## Games & Activities

### Are you my mummy?

When you find yourself in the middle of a rainy day and the kids are lobbying for "something to do," here's a simple activity that will keep them occupied and busy. The only ingredients are several rolls of inexpensive toilet tissue and several lively children.

First, divide the group into pairs—one is to be the mummy, the other is the "wrapper." The object is to completely wrap up the mummy from head to foot, leaving slits for eyes and nose, of course.

Once everyone is ready, start them off at the same time. The first pair finished (uses all the paper) wins.

What's the best method to wrap a mummy? The kids will have to decide if they want the mummy to twist and turn, or if the wrapper should move around and around the mummy.

It's not as easy as it sounds—you may want to take a "turn" yourself! □

## Me first!

Six-year-olds (and some fives) want to be first in everything. As a result, young siblings who require attention often threaten the child's feeling of "firstness."

Six may appear at times to be consumed by "Me first!" For example, her whole day may be spoiled if a younger sibling gets to the breakfast table before she does.

She can also be most jealous of the very sibling of whom she is most proud. She is also jealous of any attention or gift given a younger sibling by a guest, but is reassured by her position with some simple attention—an "I love you" smile, or an arm around the shoulder. The lecture approach ("You mustn't be jealous, that's not nice!") only aggravates the situation.

At this stage her intense awareness exceeds her ability to manage self and events, and she is terribly vulnerable. If her needs are met now, she can more easily discard her egocentric demands later on. □

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## Reward



### for referrals!

### Ask for details!