



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Academics

Every-day learning

A child's daily life is full of potential learning activities. Meal-times, for example, are excellent opportunities for learning.

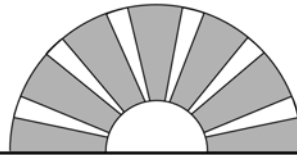
As children help set the table, they learn to put one glass, one plate, one napkin, and so on, for each person. This is an important beginning math skill called one-to-one correspondence.

As children pour themselves something to drink from a small pitcher, they learn how to gauge how much is enough—another math lesson, in quantity.

Pouring, serving themselves, and eating with a fork or spoon improves coordination with their hands.

Talking about the size of food portions, the colors, shapes and textures of foods helps children increase their vocabulary and thinking skills.

Daily routines are a great source of learning experiences—and conversation with you! □



Child's Day

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Games & Activities

Tips for photographing children

You don't need expensive high-tech equipment to get good pictures of children. Any camera in working order will give good results.

Have your camera loaded and out where you can grab it at a moment's notice. The best shots are those where your child is engaged in an activity. She won't wait for you to rummage through the closet for the camera.

Here are some tips for better photos:

- Get well acquainted with your camera. Read the instructions carefully.
- Use your camera so frequently that your child is unaware of it and acts naturally.
- Get pictures of different moods. A pout can be as cute as a smile.
- Clear away any clutter that does not contribute to the shot. Everything in the picture should draw attention to the child.
- Frame pictures vertically as well as horizontally.
- To dramatize growth, photograph the baby in the same

chair every few months. First she'll be lying in it, then sitting in it, then climbing over it!

- Try to take your outdoor shots on a hazy day or stay in the shadows. The softer light will create a more subtle picture and your child will be less apt to squint or close her eyes.

- For basic outdoor shooting, 100-speed film is usually your best bet. For indoor picture taking, use 100-speed film with a flash attachment. Use 400-speed film if using natural light coming through a window.

- When shopping for a photo album, be sure to purchase one made with non-acidic materials like 100 percent rag paper so the chemicals will not damage your prints.

Arrange the photos in sequence and store the album away from heat and humidity.

When your child is old enough, consider buying her a sturdy camera of her own. That way she can experience first-hand the thrill of capturing a moment forever. □

Kids make great kitchen helpers

Want to keep the kids busy and still have dinner at a reasonable time? Here's a list of tasks children can learn to do well at early ages.

- Shape meatballs.
- Mix muffin batter.
- Arrange packaged biscuit dough in the baking pan.
- Peel carrots and potatoes.
- Slice bananas.
- Arrange simple individual salads such as cottage cheese and fruits on a bed of lettuce leaves.
- Wash vegetables with a vegetable brush.
- Use a vegetable spinner to spin dry vegetables for salads and cold plates.
- Grease baking dishes.
- Arrange toppings on homemade pizza.
- Skewer assortments of foods for appetizers, snacks or desserts.
- Break and beat eggs for scrambled eggs or omelets.
- Make juice and other beverages from frozen or dry concentrates.
- Shape dough for drop cookies.
- Frost cakes or cookies.

For safety's sake, keep in mind the child's ability to handle knives and utensils, and monitor progress when using such items. □

Learning to be fair

On the first day of school, 15-month-old Elizabeth's father sat down with her older brother to help him unwrap and sort his new school supplies.

Though she'd been settled at a nearby table with her own new crayons and a coloring book, she quickly abandoned them for her brother's more intriguing loot (and Daddy's attention).

After removing item after item from her inquisitive hands, her father finally put both Elizabeth and her crayons in her high chair. Within seconds, she dissolved into hysteria, screaming, kicking and flinging her new things to the floor.

Despite their bright colors, she didn't want them . . . she wanted what her brother had!

Elizabeth's father had choices. He could have:

- Given in and turned Elizabeth loose among her brother's new things;
- Handed her one of her

brother's new notebooks and markers to scribble with, or

- Explained again that those were her brother's school supplies, but that she could play with the empty packages.

Small children have to grasp the concept of me/mine before they can understand you/yours.

It's unrealistic to expect a toddler to willingly share a toy, much less relinquish the spotlight and attentions of those around her to an older brother or sister. This will evolve over time as she develops into a social being.

Eventually she'll be able to see situations from a point of view other than her own and even begin to take others' feelings into account as she starts to understand what fairness is all about.

Until that time, however, continual parental guidance will be needed for there's bound to be rough sailing each time it's not her turn for a treat! □

Bookshelf

Let's read together!

Here are two classics by Wanda Gag that are worth a trip to the library. **The ABC Bunny** (Coward, 1933) is a classic. The large black and white alphabet illustrations capture a child's imagination, as does the cheery bunny.

In **Millions of Cats** (Coward, 1928) a little old man and a little old woman hope to find one little cat who can live with them. (Both books are available in newer, paperback versions.)

Wanda Gag was recognized as an outstanding U.S. artist in the late twenties and her ventures into children's literature are noteworthy. She is the children's artist/author who established the concept of the complete picture storybook in the U.S. □

Tree stumps tell a story

If you come upon a dry tree stump, you and a crew of helpers can take a rubbing that will tell you the tree's history.

What you need:

Shelf paper, computer printout paper, or other paper big enough to stretch across the trunk.

Thumb tacks.

Charcoal (from an art supply store) or crayons.

What to do:

Stretch the paper across the stump. Hold it securely in place with thumbtacks.

Use the side of a piece of crayon or charcoal to rub across the paper. Rub in just one direction.

Soon the tree rings and other marks on the stump will appear on the paper.

What this tells you:

The number of rings tells you how old the tree was when it was cut down. If you know when the tree was cut down, you can figure out when it began to grow. Then you can find the year of your helpers' births on the tree's rings.

Look at the rings. Are some wider than others? The wide ones show years when there was lots of rain. The narrow rings show dry years.

Did the tree grow evenly in all directions? If it grew more on one side than the other, can you see any reasons for it? □

Helping brain development

There is increasing evidence that a young child's environment plays an important part in brain development.

Providing a child with appropriate developmental activities and experiences can lead to an increase in brain cell connections.



By so doing, the child is not only using existing brain cells but these increased connections can actually reshape the brain and enhance the brain's power to learn and remember new material.

Here is a short checklist to serve as a reminder of what parents can do for their child's brain development.

- Provide opportunities for your child to explore and gather information both in your home and outside the home.
- Give your child many new opportunities to develop new skills, such as sorting, putting things in order, comparing, and discovering relationships, such as cause and effect.

- If your child doesn't know how to get started on a new task, you can provide some guided rehearsal, but have him become actively involved as soon as possible. He will learn better as an active participant than as an observer.

- Don't push if your child's behavior indicates that a task is too difficult. Back off to a simpler task at which your child can experience success.

- Avoid disapproval, mockery, or teasing if your child makes a mistake.

- Talk to your child in simple language to explain new words and concepts.

- Give praise and encouragement for good effort and celebrate new accomplishments. □

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