



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Behavior

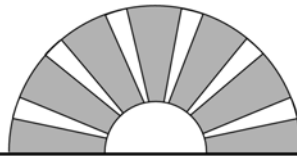
'His piece is bigger!'

There's nothing like one piece of cake or one popsicle to start a full-scale battle between siblings over who got the biggest piece.

Since treats don't really fall under the "need" category, parents can solve the dilemma by this method: one child divides the item and the other child gets first choice. Both children quickly learn to cut equal pieces.

One mother handles the problem this way: "I just take a bite out of the bigger piece," she says. Sometimes an outrageous or humorous response works far better than seriousness.

Another parent offers an alternative treat: two pieces of candy for one popsicle, for instance. □



Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

2525 Wallingwood Drive # 100 • Austin, Texas 78746
Phone: (512) 327-3274 • FAX (512) 327-3281

July, 2002

Parenting

Helping around the house

How do you get a child to do what he or she is capable of doing? Motivating any child of any age to do anything hinges on praise. You cannot over-praise a child. And praise comes in many forms.

Saying "You've been a big help!" is better than nothing. But saying, "That refrigerator shines! You pulled out the shelves and wiped the trim!" is much more ego stroking.

Such specific praise serves the purpose of clarification. The child knows why you are happy and is likely to repeat noticed actions.

Clarification means letting a child know what he or she is expected to do, and what will happen if that expectation isn't filled.

Charts with gold stars or stickers are also excellent praise vehicles. The most hardened lazy-bones will do things for tiny bits of paper that a week of yelling won't produce. A chart posted in the kitchen might read:

1. All dishes washed, dried, and put away.
2. The floor swept and spills wiped up.
3. The sink cleaned out with cleanser.

If the dish-doer checks each point with a pencil attached to the chart, no leeway is left for a difference of opinion about what "finished" means. An unchecked chart and an unfinished job can mean no television, no overnight friends, or whatever punishment fits your family.

While a chart or list works for older children, younger ones need a job to be demonstrated several times. Instead of saying, "Clean the bathroom," take a six-year-old into the bathroom and show him how to wipe in, around, and behind the toilet.

Show him what else needs to be cleaned and how to do it. After the demonstration, let him do the job while you watch. At that point, when you say, "clean the bathroom," you know his definition of clean is the same as yours.

Demonstrating, praising and following through take incredible amounts of time. Many parents are too exhausted at the end of the workday to struggle, so they just do the jobs themselves. But if you expend extra energy now, you'll save a bunch later and have a happier, cleaner home as well.

As always, try to match your child's age, abilities and readiness skills with the jobs you assign. □

Hidden hazards of placing babies in adult beds

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association (JPMA) has launched a national safety campaign aimed at reducing deaths associated with placing babies in adult beds. CPSC data shows that from 1999 through 2001 at least 180 children under the age of two died after being placed in adult beds.

“Many parents may be unaware of the hidden dangers associated with placing babies in adult beds,” said Acting CPSC Chairman Thomas Moore. “We are warning parents that simply pushing an adult bed against a wall or lining the edges of a bed with pillows won’t protect their babies. In fact, these practices place infants in danger of suffocation and entrapment.”

The CPSC data shows that babies placed in adult beds are at risk of dying from several hidden hazards including:

- Entrapment between the bed and wall, or between the bed and another object.
- Entrapment involving headboards, footboards or bed frames.
- Soft bedding-related hazards (such as suffocation on a pillow).
- Falls (sometimes into a pile of clothing or plastic, resulting in suffocation).
- Overlaying of the baby by another child or adult in the bed.

The CPSC recommends the following safety tips to ensure that babies less than 24 months sleep safely:

- Don’t place a baby to sleep in an adult bed.

Hidden hazard: The baby could become entrapped between the bed and wall, or in headboards, footboards, bedframes. Babies could also fall and suffocate in soft bedding.

- Place babies to sleep on their backs in a crib that meets current safety standards and has a firm, tight-fitting mattress. If you use a portable crib or playpen, make sure it meets current safety standards.

- Use only the mattress or pad provided by the manufacturer.

- Babies should be placed to sleep on their backs, not their stomachs.

Hidden hazard: According to the Back to Sleep Campaign, “Babies sleeping on their stomachs seem to be more likely to succumb to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome).”

- Don’t place a baby to sleep on soft bedding.

Hidden hazard: The baby could suffocate. Do not use soft bedding such as pillows and thick quilts and comforters for infants under 12 months old. □

Social Skills

Relatives

What do you do when favorite relatives come to visit and your children refuse to welcome them or treat them specially?

Often both you and the visitors may be hurt and upset by the children’s actions. But unless relatives live with the child or are seen regularly and often, there is no way for the children to know that these people are different from other strangers who come

by from time to time.

It is true that they will pick up some of your very strong positive feelings (and secret negative feelings, too, if you have them) but they will not necessarily transfer those feelings to themselves.

They will treat the relatives like other visitors—hanging back and watching for a while before they decide how to react.

The worst thing you or the relatives can do is to try to force the children to kiss the relatives, submit to a hug, or say they love them. That kind of pressure will almost always make children more uncomfortable and stubborn.

The best thing is for everyone to relax and let the children find their own way to react with the relatives after a while. □

