



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Science & Nature

Environmental pick-up

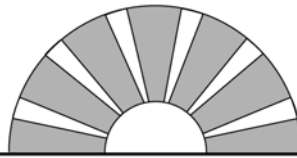
The next time your family is ready to take a walk, take along a litterbag.

As you stroll along, keep an eye out for litter and trash and pick it up.

This gives you a good opportunity to talk about our planet and what we can do as individuals to help preserve nature's resources.

Talk about the positive examples you see as you walk, such as containers for trash or recycling, as well as problems that need to be addressed such as litter and pollution.

Children who grow up aware and respectful of their world are in a much better position to help in its preservation. □



Child's Day

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Parenting

Television—an extra parent in your home

Is there an extra parent in your home? This parent doesn't help cook meals or help dress your children. It sits in your family room telling stories and showing all kinds of strange and interesting events to children.

Television can become a window on the world. It can broaden our children's knowledge and interests by introducing them to people, places and things they know nothing about.

The TV parent can become an excellent teacher that can impart and improve skills such as reading, spelling, and problem solving. It can aid in the development of attitudes and behavior patterns we want our children to have. If monitored by adults, the TV parent does offer programs that will help our children build sound, moral characters.

If we help point out to our youngsters that certain programs are trying to teach honesty, fair play, truthfulness and a sense of duty, they will remember the lessons longer because they can both see and hear as these qualities are demonstrated.

This TV parent can be so convincing that children might believe the things it tells and shows them. But since children

aren't experienced in the ways of the world, they can't always distinguish between real and make-believe. This can confuse and mislead. Children have been known to hurt not only themselves but also other people by imitating what they see on TV.

Many parents worry about the "hidden" message of television. They hear that some programs teach negative attitudes toward women, minorities, and other social groups. They are concerned about the commercials that push toys, junk food, and sugared products.

Especially worrisome is the mounting evidence of the relationship between television violence and the increase in violence in our schools and communities.

There is no need to go the extreme of forbidding any television viewing in your home. Rather you can decide to cut down on how much television your children watch.

Decide which kinds of programs they should watch and how often. If at all possible, watch some of the programs with them. This can frequently lead to family discussions of topics that might otherwise be neglected or postponed in day-to-day family life. □

Special people in a child's life

Children need people. A large part of their development involves being part of a world full of people. They need to see, listen to, and feel people as a natural part of the world around them.

The feeling that she is an important person, the feeling that someone cares about what happens to her—these are the feelings which give a child a strong self-image and a solid base for emotional development.

Parents and other special people—like grandparents, relatives, neighbors, friends, and caregivers—provide an atmosphere in which the young child learns she is important.

These special people notice

the child, talk to her, laugh with her when she is happy and show their concern when she falls and hurts herself.

They say “hello” to her in a special way because she “belongs” to them and they “belong” to her. In their interactions, they send a message to the child: “You matter. We care. You belong.” Long before she can understand specific words, the child gets this message.

But what can you do if there are no special people around?

One solution is to try for regular visits to your child's special people so that your child has a number of contacts with them. Such visits are extremely impor-

tant and well worth the time and effort they require.

Another practical solution is to find substitute “special people” among your own circle of friends. If you have several couples who are very special friends, you might ask some of them to play the role of aunts and uncles. Each time they are in your house, they would be especially aware of ways they could pay special attention to your child.

You might also have a relationship with one or two older couples who could serve as substitute grandparents. You may be pleasantly surprised at how delighted such older people would be to play the role. □

Learning about time

Time is something that cannot be seen or felt. Its passing is measured artificially by clocks and calendars.

Early mankind measured time only in the natural cycles of day and night and the rhythmic occurrence of the seasons. A journey was three days walk; an event took place during the last full moon.

Time during the day was measured by the passage of the sun. Longer periods were measured from the new moon to new moon, from season to season.

Now when many families live in cities, the cycle of seasons is less apparent. We use calendars instead of moon phases to measure off the months, and clocks to measure off the days.

Children measure their time by the events of their days which begin at waking up time and end with bedtime. Their day does not include twenty-four hours but only the hours between waking and sleeping.

To expand a child's concept of time, begin with answers to the question: “How long until _____?”

To answer questions like this, use a large calendar. Circle the date of the holiday, visit or special event that is anticipated. Mark off all days of the month that have already passed.

Hang the calendar within easy reach so that each night before she goes to bed the child can mark out the days remaining with an X.

As you do this, you are teaching duration of time over periods longer than one day, and the child can begin to learn the concept of how time progresses in steady, measured segments. □

