



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Music

A timeless musical instrument

What is a musical instrument?
Anything that makes music.

Here's one you can make at home that has entertained children for generations: a harmonica.

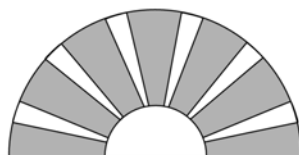
Take a large comb; cover it with waxed paper, then blow and hum at the same time with the mouth slightly open.

After kids get the hang of it, start out with some simple songs that everybody knows—"Old MacDonald;" "The Wheels on the Bus;" "This Old Man."

Organize a music program. Put together trios, quartets, and maybe even a band!

The sound is definitely distinctive and quite "brassy." But is it music?

You decide. □



Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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

April, 2003

Toys

Time to rotate toys

Eventually a child will have more toys than she can use, or more than there is room for. When this happens, she may drift from one toy to another for only brief and superficial play.

This is a sign that it is time to put some of the toys away for a while, leaving only current favorites available.

With a more limited selection, a child will learn to be resourceful and inventive in looking for new ways to play with each toy.

From time to time, switch toys from storage to playroom for an ever-changing variety.

A rainy day is a good time to exchange "old" toys for "new" ones.

If the child is old enough, let her help decide which toys to put away and which to bring out.

These periodic switches offer a good opportunity to examine the toys. If parts are missing, write to the manufacturer for replacements.

If repairs are needed, make them. If the toy is damaged beyond repair, discard it or salvage whatever may be reusable.

A "junk" box of old toy parts can be a treasure chest to an older child who likes to tinker with construction projects.

Be mindful of safety issues and dispose of parts that are broken or which have sharp edges or corners that could cut small hands.

Never throw away a usable toy, even though you think your child has surely outgrown it. Children play with toys in different ways at different ages. A feature that might not have been evident originally may offer pleasure a year or two later.

A child who is sick in bed or recovering from an illness often prefers a less challenging toy, one she played with earlier. And when a youngster isn't feeling good, it's always a pleasure to see an old, familiar toy.

In addition, it's always good to have a selection of toys for younger children, whether visitors to your home or your own children.

Save the good toys that your children particularly like. They may turn out to be your grandchildren's treasures! □

Shame and blame

A child will behave according to what he thinks he is. Therefore, if he is addressed in terms like, “You always...” and “You never...” and “You are such a...” he will surely develop an image of himself as a “so and so” and continue engaging in “such and such.”

When correcting a child it is much better to make a distinction in your mind between who he is and what he is doing. And it is necessary to behold children as innocent. We can assume that if they really knew better, really understood the value of another way to do something, they would do it.

Parents are called upon for

various responses to error. Sometimes a firm and vigorous stand is called for, such as when there is immediate danger of physical injury.

Sometimes a warning is called for the pointing out of a possible consequence.

Sometimes parents simply have to stand by and let their children discover consequences for themselves.

Sometimes reproof and explanation are appropriate. But the goodness of the child is never the issue; even behavior is not the issue; learning is.

In every instance something will be learned. If we view our

children as naughty, disturbed, or guilty of their misdeeds, they will learn to think of themselves as foolish, faulty, or shameful.

If we view them as innocent, or at least merely ignorant, they will gain understanding from their experiences, and they will continue to regard us as wise partners.

Write a no-fault clause into your family policy and apply it to yourself and your children. With no-fault assurance, even if you have to discipline your toddler, you will be able to do so with compassion and a sense of humor rather than fear or anger. You will be able to issue warnings without insult, and correct without humiliation. □

Raising a positive child

Raising children who are fun to be around is an art.

Three important parts of that art are speaking positively, encouraging skills, and conveying reasonable expectations.

- **Speaking positively.** Children reflect what they see and hear. If they are surrounded by criticism, pessimistic thoughts and unfriendly talk, they will learn to speak and act accordingly.

If they are surrounded by encouragement, praise, and positive thinking, they will learn to reflect those qualities.

- **Encouraging skills.** When children are praised for their efforts rather than their accomplishments, they learn that the process of learning is important and that mistakes are all right.

- **Reasonable expectations.** Children most often live up (or down) to the expectations their parents have for them.

Once you set an expectation, you will consciously convey that to your child. With positive encouragement and feedback, chances are those expectations will be met. □

Why are children rude?

If you have a preschooler in any kind of day care or child care arrangement, you may hear sometime that the child was “fresh, nasty, insulting, impudent, rude and argumentative.”

This happens to single parents raising their children alone. It happens to two-parent families where both parents work, and it happens to families where one parent is at home most of the time and the day care is only occasional.

Why?

It's because preschoolers feel that their parents—their mothers especially—are the only ones who have the right to correct them.

Mother and father have the right to “make me do things,” to talk to children about “bad things they've done,” and tell children what they can and can't do.

But they sometimes resist this mightily from anyone else.

When caregivers—or even close relatives—take on these rights, children react—and quickly. And this reaction is logical to a child. “They” are not the authority: mother and father are.

When this situation happens, don't chastise your child with an angry reaction. Try to keep your relationship intact. Even though a child grows away from parents a bit every day, the child needs to know parents are there a while longer.

While it doesn't seem right that a child should get by with such “smart backtalk,” punishment by the caregiver will not be logical to the children. They believe parents, the authorities, should give punishment.



Furthermore, the rude incident will have happened long before you return home. As far as a child is concerned, it never happened.

A conference with the caregiver to exchange information about your child's present behavior and needs may be helpful.

Remember, this is a temporary situation, and it will pass. □

MusiKids
is available at
Child's Day

Request a **free** trial session!

Cutting bread

There's a lot to be learned by cutting bread, plus there are some treats to eat:

Fingers of buttered toast at Sunday breakfast, or afternoon tea parties. Hearts cut from bread with a cookie cutter, toasted and spread with raspberry jelly. Peanut-butter people.

Sandwiches are nice, too, when they're cut into different ways than usual. Try tiny triangles, small squares, and skinny rectangles.

What are children learning? Talk about shapes and numbers while you're cutting. How many fingers of toast did you cut? How many fingers do you have?

Let your preschooler watch you cut one big square into four smaller squares. If she eats one, how many does she have left? And two eaten means the bread is half gone.

It's math on an edible level.

(Don't forget safety precautions with the knife.) □

\$200
Reward



for referrals!
Ask for details!