



Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

A scavenger hunt?

Here's a way to entertain several children and keep them busy at the same time.

First, make up a short list of items that are easy to find outside. The list might include a short stick, three pebbles, two pine cones, a bird's feather, four different leaves, and so on. Then give each participant a paper bag to fill with treasures.

This exercise cultivates patience and an eye for detail, plus it reinforces counting, simple word recognition, and an appreciation for beauty.

When the children return, let them dump out their bags and talk about beautiful or unusual pieces and where they found them.

Finally, use the items for arts and crafts by painting the pine cones, gluing together collages, and stringing up mobiles.

Your list can be adapted for older or younger children and kids can be organized into teams or pairs. □

Parenting

Hang on!

Most parents know what it is to worry about how well their children are doing. Most parents also know how good it is to enjoy and savor their children's growing up experiences.

In every child's growing up there are ups and downs. One day you think she'll surely be President. The next day you think you'll be lucky if she manages to stay out of jail! These swings between good and bad feelings about your child are all part of the business of being a parent.

Being a parent is a truly great experience, but at times it can cause you great exasperation! Be assured that such wild swings in feelings are perfectly normal. Like most other parents, you probably also wonder sometimes if you're doing the right thing.

In fact, it may encourage you to know that:

(1) Almost every parent has felt what you are feeling now;

(2) There are so many good things about your child's growth and development which can give you pleasure; and

(3) One or two problems now won't affect your child forever.

You can get from this stage in your lives to the next stage by: (1) Living with your child's developmental problems from day to day; (2) Enjoying her, laughing with her, holding her close when the dark moments close in upon both of you; and (3) Simply getting through the ordinary routines of each day.

If you ever feel being a parent is getting too difficult for you, talk to a close friend or other parents who can share their experiences.

Whatever you do, don't mentally bit your fingernails or waste your emotional energy in wondering if you are a "perfect parent," whatever that may mean. Do not constantly ask yourself, "Is she doing all right?"

Don't pressure your child into performing at ever-higher levels. Do not make her feel that you love her only if she performs well. She should know that you love her because she is your child.

Above all, let your child know in a hundred different ways that you love her. The knowledge that she matters, that she is loved for herself alone is the greatest gift you can give your child. □

Dealing with stressful situations

In order for children to learn how to deal with stressful situations, they need practice now when they have your help and support.

Your behavior in stressful situations will affect your child's reactions. If you are able to remain calm, despite feeling upset, this will give your child a feeling of security.

This is especially important in very frightening situations such as a car accident or a natural disaster such as a bad storm or an earthquake.

It is also important in the case of more routine problems such as when your youngster has made a mistake and is afraid of disappointing or angering you.

Naturally you will have your own feelings to contend with, and you should be honest with your child about them.

Let her know, for example, that you feel frightened, too, in a bad thunderstorm, or that you feel sad about leaving behinds friends and favorite things when you move.

This lets your child know that it's okay to have feelings like fear and sadness. It helps her feel more comfortable about such feelings in herself. Try to teach your child by your example to put these feelings into words rather than becoming immobilized by them.

Your child depends on you for comfort, reassurance, and stability, especially in stressful times. □

Encouraging good communication skills

In previous generations, people didn't have to worry about good communication skills because they had time to talk to one another. With so many changes in today's fast-paced world, many things can interfere with good interaction between parent and child.

Here are some ways to encourage good communication with your child.

- **Be an attentive listener.** When your child has something important to tell you, give him your undivided attention. Even if the topic seems trivial to you, it may be very important to him.

- **Be patient.** Even though you may want to interrupt what your child is telling you, be patient. Let him finish what he has to say.

- **Paraphrase.** It's helpful to repeat to your child, in your own words, what you think you heard him say. This will avoid misunderstandings and will give him an opportunity to clarify what he wants to tell you.

- **Be sensitive to your child's body language.** Pay attention not only to your child's words but also to his body language, such as nervous behavior or facial expression.

- **Focus on one topic.** When you have something important to say to your child, focus on only one issue at a time. It's better to convey a clear message on one topic than to confuse your child by addressing several issues at one time.

- **Be brief.** Keep your mes-

sage as short as possible because young children have a rather limited attention span.

- **Keep your message simple.** Use simple words—one or two syllable words, if possible—which your child will understand. Use no more than 9 or 10 words in a sentence.

- **Deal with the here and now.** The concepts of time which young children have are different from those of adults. Young children tend to live in the present rather than in the past or future. Reopening old wounds from the past only gets in the way of what you want to communicate right now.

- **Be aware of your own body language.** When talking to your child, be aware of the non-verbal messages your body may be communicating. Use good eye contact, for example, to convey your message. Young children pay more attention to your facial expression and to the emotional tone of your voice than to the actual words you use. □

\$200

Reward



for referrals!
Ask for details!