



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Art

Celebrate autumn

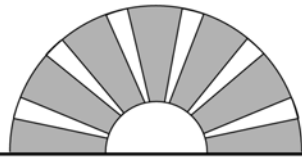
There are several ways to bring the outdoor look indoors and celebrate a new season. First have the children collect items from outside—leaves, acorns, nuts, cattails, pine cones, gourds, Indian corn, and dried grasses. These items can be displayed inside by:

1. Cutting out tree branches from brown construction paper. The branches can be taped to a wall or tablecloth and then the items taped to the branches.

2. Bringing inside a small tree limb with a few branches which can be leaned against a wall, hung from the ceiling with a piece of yarn, or stood upright in a jar with a clay insert. Remove any remaining leaves. Each article can then be hung from the branches with a piece of yarn.

3. Design a tabletop display by arranging the items in a wooden bowl or tray.

4. Cattails and tall, dried grasses can be arranged in an umbrella stand. □



Child's Day

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Developmental

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 also 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 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 when 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. □

Raising responsible kids

Children need adults to care for them. In the beginning, parents must do everything for them. But as they grow, adults need to teach them, and then let go so they can grow.

Allowing children to try, perhaps to fail, and then try again is one way to help them grow. Here are some others:

- **Experiment a little.** Much of a child's self-esteem comes from her belief that a parent values her ideas and goals.

Allow your child to experiment—with blocks, playthings, arts and crafts, recyclables—even if it means making a mess every now and then. Little fingers learn to manipulate items, turning whims into reality. What a great start for creativity and an I-can-do-it attitude!

- **Answer questions.** Children who can do many tasks well usually understand the workings

of the tools they use. Someone has answered their questions along the way.

Be a parent who answers a child's countless questions. Explain, explain, explain. If she knows how the toilet works, for instance, she'll be more likely to use it correctly.

- **Let her try.** As you work with your child on a task, stop and ask yourself: "Could she try this?" For instance, as you wrap a gift for a friend's party, allow your child to choose the gift tag, peel off the price label, or hold the paper down as you tape.

Monitor yourself. Could your child be helping here instead of just watching you do it?

- **Don't interfere.** When your child is trying to plant a seed in the back yard and all appears to be a disaster, don't take over the project. More important than a perfectly planted seed is the feel-

ing of accomplishment, of having done a task on her own.

- **Admit mistakes.** When a parent admits his or her own failures, a child realizes that everyone struggles to do things correctly. Adults know failure is a part of success. Teach your child to overcome frustration by acknowledging setbacks as you encounter them.

"Uh-oh. I put three cups of sugar in this cake." Now you have a chance to show calm in the face of adversity. Show her how you try to solve the problem by talking about your problem-solving technique: "Maybe I should just increase the recipe."

While children mature at different rates, most are helped (or harmed) by what parents do and say. By our very words and actions we may encourage or discourage our children to take on increasing responsibilities. □

Academics

Getting ready for math

To help preschoolers get ready for math, give them practice by using number, size and quantity words. Use these words yourself, and ask your child questions so that he has to use them in his answers. For example, at mealtime ask your child if he wants a **lot** or a **little less** than this.

Cut an apple in half and say, "Here's **one half** for you and **one half** for me."

Ask him **how many** pieces he wants, if he wants a **big** piece or a **little** piece.

Show him a picture of himself and others. Ask, "Who is the **tallest** in this picture? Who is the **shortest**?"

Let him help in the kitchen. Show him how to measure **two tablespoons**, mix in **one-half cup**, and so on.

Give him the measuring cups

and spoons and a pan of dried beans to experiment with to see how many **teaspoons in a table-spoon**, how many **half cups in a cup**.

Have him help set the table and count out the napkins, spoons, forks, knives, and place mats.

Practice like this helps children become familiar with words that count and measure, an essential part of beginning math. □

'Stranger Anxiety'

Stranger anxiety can occur in babies before or after the eighth month, but it most commonly occurs then. It is related to a change in the baby's relationship to her parents.

The infant who a few weeks ago was perfectly willing to have a new babysitter feed her may now protest whenever an unfamiliar person wants to pick her up.

This suggests that having her needs satisfied was more important to her a few weeks ago than the person who satisfied them.

But things are different now. She wants her mother or father to feed her because their presence is satisfying and pleasant.

When she is left at naptime or bedtime, she may cry with anguish or anger. Even the presence of strangers during this period is enough to cause distress.

The infant's new attachment to her parents is like a first love affair. She wants exclusive rights, particularly to her mother.

At this stage of attachment, the parent's disappearance or absence is experienced by the baby as a loss. She may fear that when her mother or father goes away, they'll not come back.

Not all babies respond to stranger anxiety in the same way. For some it appears to be mild, for others it is intense.

Fortunately, it will be over soon as the baby moves on to a new stage of development. Meanwhile, her temporary anxiety is the price the infant—and the parent—pays for an attachment to a loved person. □

Learning games

Fun learning games can teach a variety of skills. Here are two games that can help preschoolers improve observation skills, perceive relationships, and develop language.

Both of these games can be played again and again in more complex forms over the next several years.

I Spy

The purpose of this game is to get a child to identify objects from your description of their characteristics.

Select materials for which your child already knows the name: plate, ring, cotton ball, can, comb, for example.

Once you know that your child is familiar with each of the items you've chosen, tell her: "I'm going to say 'I spy something.' Then I'll describe an object on the table. I want you to find the object and tell me its name."

Examples: "I spy something round and hard." (plate) "I spy something round that you can wear on your finger." (ring)

As a child's vocabulary expands, the descriptions can become more complex. For example: "I spy something oval made of brown leather." (football)

Which Ones Go Together?

The purpose of this game is not only to teach language but also to help your child identify relationships and associations.

Select pairs of household items that have something in common but which also have basic differences: apple and orange; glass and cup; brush and comb; fork

and spoon; pen and pencil; glove and mitten.

Then arrange six or more of these pairs of items in haphazard order on the table. Select one item at a time (for example, the apple) and say: "Find the one that is like this one."

When the child makes the correct selection, you can ask, "How are the apple and the orange alike?" Your child may answer: "You can eat them both." Then you can ask, "How are they different?" She may reply, "They taste different."

If your child has difficulty with either of these two games, you can give her the answers. Later in the game you can return to the item she missed to see if he understood the answer.

When your child has become familiar with the rules of these games, you can allow her to play the role of the adult and choose the items for "I Spy."

You may need to help her select the pairs of items for "Which Ones Go Together." Nevertheless, she will have fun seeing if you can answer her questions. □

\$200

Reward



for referrals!
Ask for details!