



# Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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

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## Growing Together

Newsletter for  
parents of preschool children

### Social Skills

### Learning from mistakes

A child who is constantly called names and criticized for doing the wrong thing will have difficulty acquiring self-confidence in his ability to act correctly. In fact, he may misbehave simply to get attention.

Children need to learn that making mistakes is a natural part of living and learning. When a child does something wrong, a parent can explain why it was wrong and suggest some alternative behaviors.

If the mistake was unintentional, it is important to let the child know that everyone makes mistakes and that mistakes should not prevent trying again.

An even better example is for parents and other adults to apologize when they've made a mistake or done the wrong thing. □

### Developmental

### A more independent youngster

Around a child's second birthday, one can observe a shift from a dependent toddler to a more independent preschool youngster. Since this phase continues for several months, it is worth discussing in more detail.

Parents who have an understanding of the changes that occur in their child will be better prepared to handle the behavior that they may see. This change to a more independent youngster is brought about by several changes, such as: (1) increased movement skills, (2) improved language ability, and (3) newly emerging social skills.

Youngster's movement skills now let her explore new territories. Just being able to run more easily or to climb stairs one at a time allows her to experience the delight of discovering things on her own.

At the same time her improved language ability provides her with new opportunities to express her own thoughts and to talk more with other people. As a preschooler begins to play with other children her age—at first alongside them in "parallel" play and later in face-to-face play—her newly emerging social skills also help her to make the transition

from dependence to independence.

Often a child's striving for independence can be very trying for parents. She may insist on doing things for herself—like dressing—even though the adults in her life are quite sure they can do the same things for her more efficiently and more neatly!

It is also hard on parents when a preschooler constantly seems to want to "test the limits." It is often at this stage that she may suddenly decide to give up her afternoon nap. It is obvious that some adjustments in family living need to be made to take into consideration these developmental changes in behavior.

Go along with her where you can. Encourage independence by giving her choices, when possible: "Do you want to wear the red shirt or the blue one?" In some cases, you must insist on your decision as an adult and a parent. Explain why your decision must be followed, but be prepared to insist, even if the result is fireworks!

Children don't stay two years old forever, and this, too, will pass. In the meantime, your child learns that independence is fine, but it does have limits. □



## Hurry up!

Your youngster dawdles and you think you'll never finish a day in 24 hours. When you press him to hurry up or cooperate better, he becomes unmanageable. How to cope? There are several approaches.

- Make it a habit to talk about what will happen next. "Pretty soon we're going to Granny's. We'll leave in five minutes." "As soon as we finish putting away the dishes, we'll go to the grocery store."
- Entice him away. "I'm going to show you some magic when we get to the kitchen." Then reward him with the demonstration of something simple like a string game or something he's interested in.
- Offer him a choice. For a 2-year-old, for example: "Do you want to walk or shall I carry you?" Of course, abide by his decision.

In addition to avoiding a confrontation, there is some important learning in these approaches. Each time you alert your child to anticipate an event, his ability to organize time increases. And the vocabulary associated with time—"pretty soon," "five minutes"—will mean something to him.

Also, he will appreciate the fact that you respect him by treating him with courtesy, and that you honor his choice. □

## Positive conversations

Positive conversations that can change a child's behavior begin with the words:

I like the way you are...

I believe in you.

I know you can...

I love you, but I don't like...

I will help you. We will do this together.

You are so (smart, sweet, strong) that I think you can do better.

Most of the time, you do this really well. Can you try harder today?

I am so proud of you because...

Let's use our quiet voices. You are making a little too much noise.

I am disappointed with what you did. I know you can do better.

Are you being a good helper?

Are you doing your best?

I need you to...

I told Daddy (Mother) what a good job you did yesterday. Let's see how you do today. □

## Get rid of that grudge!

When you can't forgive someone, there can be a ripple effect that negatively affects your family and friends.

Writing to advice columnist Dear Abby, a woman says: "I have something to say to the millions of families whose lives are affected by divorce. An unforgiving person who has not let go of animosities can poison an entire family and ruin holidays and family get-togethers for everyone. I know. I was that person."

The writer explains that she could not forgive her former husband and his new wife, and her children suffered for her continuing bitterness. "One day after a particularly harsh outburst, I suddenly understood the pained reaction on my children's faces. I prayed for strength to change my ways so I could stop hurting those I love most in the world."

Although it was difficult for her to extend forgiveness, she did so and says: "I have peace in my heart, and my children are happy. They are free to enjoy both homes."

Forgiveness is a priceless gift that you can give to yourself and your family. □

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