



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Social Skills

'Bad' and 'good' are serious words

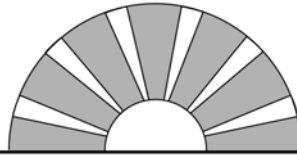
Preschoolers are very concerned about being called "bad." If, for example, you say, "Our family doesn't believe in taking things that are not ours," remember to make these ideas very clear:

- The act is bad; you are not.
- I don't like the act (what you did) but I love you.

You will create a suspicion in your child that indeed he **is** bad if you run on at length about the situation by asking, "Why did you take the little car that isn't yours? What made you do it? Why?"

Not only the length of your questioning and the words you use but also your facial expression and tone of voice can make him think he **is** bad.

So, monitor your face and voice during such sessions, and keep the sessions short and simple. □



Child's Day

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Language

Give children words

The ability to understand words, both written and spoken, is highly valued in our culture. We need to be able to speak and to read to succeed in almost everything we try to do in life.

Since children learn new words by hearing them and by seeing them, parents and caregivers can do much to add to children's vocabularies.



For very young children, this can be done by naming objects that they see and come in contact with every day. Identifying and naming objects does sound a lot like talking to oneself, but it is a worthwhile endeavor.

For example, "This is your *shoe*, and I'm going to put it on your *foot*." "Let's put these *blocks* away in this *can*."

Children need to hear the same words over and over, and this can seem tiresome until you get in the habit of maintaining a one-sided running conversation!

When many children begin to talk, they may not pronounce words correctly. Instead of always correcting them, you can simply repeat the word in a sentence, using the correct pronunciation. Once you learn how to talk, it's hard to remember how hard it was in the beginning!

Older children love to hear big words, even though they might not understand what they mean. So, don't be afraid to introduce new and fascinating-sounding words in your conversations. "This sandwich isn't big, it's *stupendous*!" "This ball will roll faster as it gains *momentum*."

Teaching children to be curious about their world—and the words that tell them about their world—can start them on a journey of discovery of their own. □

Baby-proofing your home

As soon as a baby is able to move, she starts exploring. Her movements and explorations are extremely important for her future development and learning. And where does much of this moving, exploring and learning take place? The home where you live.

Your home is, in one sense, a laboratory of children development where one very special baby—your baby—is going to conduct thousands of experiments, discovering the world about her.

We urge you, right now, to take a careful look at your home. Try to see it as a laboratory where your baby will conduct her own special experiments—and then try to make it the best possible laboratory you can.

From the baby's point of view, perhaps the best place to start is at the bottom—the floor.

Try this experiment: Lie down on the floor and see how your rooms look from your baby's point of view. Lie on your back and look around. You'll be surprised at the different things you see and feel. Is the floor nice and warm or are there drafts?

Roll over on your stomach and take another look. Is there room to move and crawl about without tripping over wires and furniture legs—and are there things to look at?

Raise your head from this lying down position and look at the objects within reach. Everything down there is fair game for an exploring baby. Any object you do not want her to grab,

taste, bang, drop, throw, or otherwise explore is best put away—or at least put up high—for now.

That's called "baby-proofing"—and it's as necessary for her own safety as for the safety of your prized china doll collection.

After you have taken away all of the breakable, dangerous, or non-touchable items from baby's reach, turn your thoughts to the kind of things you do want her to be able to touch and explore.

Early exploration of common objects is extremely important for future learning. Provide many different opportunities for baby to see, handle, taste, smell and hear. Do not hem her in by keeping her in the playpen too long. Let her move on the floor. Help her get acquainted with the fascinating world about her. □

Developmental

Kids love puzzles!

Puzzles have always had a fascination and appeal for young and old alike.

A child's first puzzle should be a simple one-piece-per-object one (for example, an apple, a banana, and a pear that fit into one puzzle).

Very soon the child will progress to more complex puzzles in which parts must be put together to form a whole.

There are many things a child can learn while working with a puzzle, such as recognizing shape,

size and color. She can also learn new vocabulary words.



As your child takes pieces out or places them in a puzzle, she is developing eye-hand coordination skills. And she begins to see how colors and shapes match.

She will also become more aware of the relationships of ob-

jects in space (for example, the head is at the top, the feet are at the bottom of the body).

Most puzzles will indicate the age range for which they are appropriate. Public libraries generally have a good supply of puzzles appropriate for different age groups.

This activity is not only a good learning experience; it will also provide your child with many hours of fun. □

Providing emotional support

Beyond satisfying a toddler's basic physical needs—such as good nutrition and providing a healthy, safe environment—her most important need as a toddler is for a dependable, affectionate relationship with at least one significant adult in her life.

This relationship provides her with the essential element of stability she needs as she moves onward toward higher stages of intellectual, emotional and social development. It is the secure anchor she needs as she experi-

ences waves of sometimes baffling new experiences.

When Toddler can count on the faithful love of someone special—whether in success or in failure, in accomplishment or adversity—her feelings of trust and positive self-esteem are nourished and developed.

On the other hand, children who fail to develop this important bond become apprehensive and mistrustful of themselves and of others.

One of the great challenges of good parenting is in letting your child know she is loved without being either overly protective of her or overly intrusive into her own private world.

It involves being sensitive and responsive to her inner emotional needs rather than imposing affection on her in ways she does not want.

This demands insight, flexibility and self-control on the part of the parent and, at times may seem almost impossible to accomplish.

Let's face it: It is impossible to be a perfect parent all the time. A more realistic goal is just to strive to be a good parent most—or at least, part—of the time.

Striving to be a good parent involves trying to find a balance—a happy medium—between letting your child go in order to experience independence and holding on to her with affection whenever she needs your emotional support.

Games & Activities

Plan a family clean-up time

Young children can learn responsibility and cooperation by pitching in to help clean up the place they live.

Set aside a certain period of time—an hour perhaps—when everybody pitches in to clean up, pick up, and put away the objects and clutter at your house.

Explain that everybody has a job and carefully describe what each job involves.

Try to match the job with the child's abilities and capabilities. For example, two-year-olds love to put things into other things, and you can utilize this interest by having them pick up and put away toys, trash and clutter.

Three- and four-year-olds can clear the table, dry dishes, and vacuum the middle of a room and dust.

Five-year-olds can pick up junk, fold clothes, sort laundry and wash low windows. (The trick may be getting them to do it.)

When the time period is up, everybody can join in to help finish up jobs that need a little more time. And then everybody can head out together for a treat! □

\$200
Reward



for referrals!

Ask for details!