



Child's Day

Preschool · Kindergarten · Child Development Center

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

March 2004

Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Games & Activities

Household Hunt

Instead of searching for difficult, obscure items as in a scavenger hunt, draw up a list of simple things that can be found in and around your home.

The list might include a tennis shoe or a tennis ball, a feather, two crackers, a plastic glass, a paper napkin, and so on. Depending on the number of players, the kids can be organized as teams or individuals can have their own lists.

List items can be as difficult or as easy to find as necessary for the ages of the players. Make sure all items are safe for children to handle and avoid small items (such as buttons) which are not appropriate for children under three.

Set a time limit by using an egg timer or alarm clock that will announce the end of the game.

□

Developmental

How to help children learn independence

Even though the world may be full of real and imagined dangers, parents need to look for ways to help prepare and train children for the task of growing up and becoming independent.

- Boost self-confidence. Even toddlers can make decisions. Let a small child choose between two shirts she'll wear that day.
- Praise efforts and accomplishments, no matter how small.
- Talk regularly to her and really listen. Be interested no matter what she says.
- Teach her traffic safety by taking walks and letting her tell you when and where it is safe to cross.
- It is not enough to tell your child never to talk to strangers. If she can't talk to strangers, how can she grow up able to deal with all the normal and good contacts that come each day? Tell her instead that you must always know where she is, and that she must never go anywhere with a stranger.
- Teach her her full name, address, telephone number, and a relative's full name. □

Parenting

"I don't like you anymore!"

When parents make a decision their children don't like, youngsters can find many ways to express their displeasure. However, parents need not feel threatened when their children heartily protest.

Crying or yelling, "I don't like you anymore!" really means that the child doesn't like the restrictions placed on his freedom. We can all understand those feelings.

While it isn't easy sometimes to put up with children's protests, parents who look past the moment know that they will have to take unpopular stands sometimes.

Allowing children the right to be unhappy and to voice that unhappiness are necessary parts of learning how to deal with frustration.

Parents can accept their children's rights to dislike their decisions by saying, "I know you'd rather keep on playing, but you need a nap" or "I'm sorry you don't want to go to bed now, but it's time."

In using statements like these, the child's feelings are recognized while the decision stands. □

Playing together

For children, play is work. For them, it may not be as simple as it looks. In fact, there are several categories of play that can be observed when two or more preschool children are present.

Onlooker Play. In this situation, one child is a passive spectator as he watches another child play without participating in the activity. By means of onlooker play, a child may learn new behaviors or may muster up the courage to develop some new skill at a later date.

Onlooker play often enables a shy child, a younger child, or a child who is in unfamiliar surroundings, to adjust more easily to a new situation.

Parallel Play. This type of play may be observed when two or more children play in close proximity but independently of one another. Although playing alongside one another, each child is focused on his or her own activity.

Sometimes a child will alternate from parallel play to onlooker play, and then later imitate the play of the other child in resumed parallel play.

Associative Play. In this form of play, children as young as three years old share materials, while each one pursues his or her own goal. Two or more children, for example, may organize an activity around a common theme such as “going to the store.” But each child concentrates on his or her own “agenda” or “shopping list.”

In associative play, there is a

great deal of lending and borrowing—trucks, crayons, stuffed animals—but without any coordinated purpose of other direct social interaction. The children are more interested in exchanging materials than in performing any specific task.

Cooperative Play. This type of play generally emerges around four years of age and continues throughout the school years.

Cooperative play involves organized group activity. It may be as simple as collaborating in building a house of blocks or as complex as a structured game such as football, with specific rules which all must obey.

In cooperative play, children generally have an opportunity to expand their vocabulary. Facial expressions and vigorous gestures will often accompany their words. Cooperative play also helps children develop better social skills and enlarge their circle of friends.

Social Fantasy Play. Many preschool children enjoy combining cooperative play with pretend play to form what is called social fantasy play.

In this type of play, each child is assigned a specific fantasy role (firefighter, nurse, superhero) in a game with a specific fantasy theme (“A trip to the moon”).

Social fantasy play enables children to assume leadership roles, learn to better manage their own feelings, and, through role playing, be more understanding of others.

As young children progress from solitary play to cooperative

and social fantasy play, it is apparent that the functions of play are most important elements in their physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development.

In a true sense, a child’s play area is his or her best classroom. Play should indeed be the essential work of every young child.

□

Art

Crayon art

Kids can use crayons to make a bright, original work of art.

Start with a design on a small piece of paper. Color in the design using several different bright colors. Press down on the crayons without breaking them.

Once the design is finished, color the entire surface with a black crayon.



Then use a fingernail, toothpick, coin or other object to scratch through the black crayon layer, revealing the bright colors below. (Don’t use sharp objects with very young children.)

After some practice, kids can produce a masterpiece they’ll want to frame with construction paper and hang up! □

Do kids act up on purpose?

Do you ever wonder if your child is deliberately trying to upset you emotionally? Many parents are concerned that their child has developed the knack of “driving them bonkers.”

Here’s an example. Dad and 3-1/2 year old Nancy are learning about her new toy xylophone. Dad shows Nancy how to make different musical sounds and they take turns hitting the notes. They both laugh and smile a lot together.

Then it’s time for Dad to go do something else in the house. After he leaves, Nancy discovers she can use the xylophone mallet to make new and different sounds by hitting some pots and pans within her reach on the floor. She is fascinated with the variety of new noises she can make.

Soon Dad reappears and with great self-control, calmly asks her, please, to not make so much noise. But by now Nancy’s fascination with the sounds she can produce is far more compelling than her desire to please her dad.

The next time Dad appears, his face looks angry. In a loud voice he shouts: “Stop making so much noise!”

Dad leaves and for a few moments, Nancy hugs her favorite doll. Then her eye spots another pot she hasn’t noticed before. She starts to hit it, very softly at first, then more and more loudly. This is an experiment that holds her interest. What will the outcome be?

Will Dad reappear to give her his attention again? After all, any

attention—even negative attention like scolding—would be better, she knows, than no attention.

Will she locate still another pot—or object—that will make still another new sound?

Sure enough, Dad appears at the door again. We are not told the ending of this story. It could be a sad ending. Or it could be a reasonably happy one. That will depend more on Dad’s behavior than Nancy’s.

After all, as an adult, Dad has had more experience in living. He has had more opportunities to learn how to control his own behavior. And he can read articles and books that help him better understand Nancy’s behavior.

Nancy, on the other hand, isn’t old enough to study any books about the behavior of adults. She has to learn the hard way—by trial and error. Through trial and error she will learn about life, including the limits of tolerated behaviors that adults in her life will set.

Nancy is still just a small child, learning new skills every day from her encounters with people and objects. To demand absolute quiet behavior at this stage of her life would inhibit her desire to learn and to explore.

Inevitably some of her learning experiments in social relationships will have the appearance of willful, “bad” behavior. Those are the ones most demanding of a parent’s patience, understanding and love. □

Learning about big and little

There are many experiences in daily life that you can use to help preschool children learn the words and idea of size.

For example, when you’re doing the laundry, ask your child whose clothes are bigger—hers or yours?

Have her help to put all the big towels in one pile and the small ones in another, or in separating all the baby’s small clothes from her larger ones.

When you’re shopping, ask her to hand you the larger of two boxes or the smaller of two cans of a certain brand.

When putting her toys away on a shelf, have her try lining them up from the smallest to the largest, or put all the small ones on one shelf and the big ones on another in order of their size.

As you use the words, you introduce her to the ideas of long and short, thick and thin, heavy and light, and so on. □

\$200

Reward



for referrals!
Ask for details!