



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Discipline

Reward vs. bribe

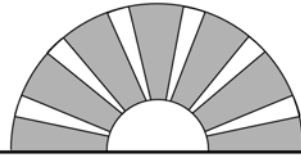
What's the difference between a reward and a bribe?

A reward is offered ahead of time, before a child is asked to do something. For example, a child may be promised a reward if she helps her parents bag leaves. For the child the reward reinforces her good behavior.

A bribe, on the other hand, is used to encourage a child to do something she has already refused to do. A parent might offer a candy bar to the child who has refused to clean up her room, for example. Bribes tend to teach a child that she can get what she wants by refusing to cooperate.

Fortunately, for many young children the best reward for a job well done is an adult's praise. The more attention and praise you dispense for good behavior, the more good behavior you'll see.

Save the rewards for special occasions. By thinking ahead, you can do away with bribes altogether. □



Child's Day

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Social Skills

Teaching cooperation

Why do some children seem willing to cooperate while others do not? In fact, children *learn* to be cooperative and helpful. They do not become that way automatically. They have to learn to work with others by sharing materials and information. Children have to learn how to make someone else's work or play easier. This learning takes place slowly, but the foundations can be laid early in life.

Here are some things parents and caregivers can do that will set the stage for the development of cooperation:

1. Be a model. This is one of the best ways to teach cooperation because children imitate the actions of people who are important to them. If young children see parents and other adults cooperating with others, they will be more willing to do the same. When a parent helps a neighbor move an air conditioner, or takes a casserole to the new family next door, he or she is setting an example that is seen by children and recorded for future reference.

2. Provide other models of good behavior. Children are exposed to lots of models other than parents, including television, movies, books, recordings, and videogames. Make an effort to screen these media and choose

those that show good friendships, unselfish giving, or acts of kindness.

3. Give suggestions and reasons. One of the reasons adults sometimes fail to help is that they do not know what to do or how to do it.

Don't expect a child to automatically know how to do anything without specific, concrete suggestions. For example, tell a 5-year-old: "Joan, push the door and hold it open for Mrs. Stanley. She's having trouble doing that and pulling the grocery cart, too."

A 4-year-old is more likely to help if you say: "I want you to help me set the table because I have to finish the salad. Here are the plates. Put a napkin, a knife and a fork next to each plate—like this." Giving reasons along with suggestions helps children understand why another person needs their help and makes them more willing to cooperate.

4. Assign age-appropriate but real responsibilities. We usually get what we expect from children and they need to know that we expect them to take an active part in the work of the family. Parents can convey expectations of cooperation and helpfulness not by preaching but by giving children real chores. □

Your special family album

As children grow up, they gradually understand complicated and difficult concepts. But it seems family relationships—especially those that span generations—remain an unsolvable mystery.

Children have great difficulty seeing Mom or Dad as anything but parents.

Grandma is just Grandma. The idea that she is Mom's mother ... and that Mom was once a little girl! ... is almost inconceivable. Dad is Dad. How could he have ever been a little boy with a daddy of his own?

Children love to hear stories that begin, "Once when I was a little girl/boy..." These stories are like a fairy tale to a child and are a great source of information. Nevertheless, the child is unable to understand the way the family tree works.

Here's where the family album comes in. Your family photographs are probably kept in albums. Your children will love to look at those pictures with you and hear the names and stories of the people in the pictures.

Photograph albums aren't something available for children

to play with, however. So, how about making a family album on a wall in the child's room? Or in a hallway where the pictures can be looked at and talked about frequently?

Include pictures of yourselves as babies with your parents, as well as pictures of your children as babies, other family members and friends, and pictures of special occasions to be remembered.

Once displayed on the wall, your children can look at the pictures and ask questions or talk about them as often as they like.



Toys & Play

Kitchen play

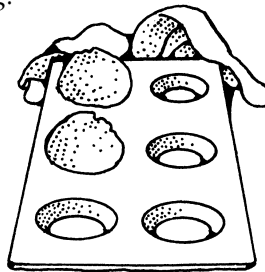
Do you worry what Toddler is doing while you are busy in the kitchen? Do you feel that you must keep him in a playpen to keep him out of trouble while you put away groceries or clean up the kitchen?

How about arranging things for safe play in the kitchen instead?

First, be sure **ALL** potentially harmful substances—cleaning compounds, detergents, metal polish, furniture polish, **anything** your child might swallow—are out of reach. Knives and other sharp objects should also be unreachable; handles of pots on the stove should be turned in.

Now just look around your

kitchen and you'll find any number of safe things for play and learning.



- A cardboard carton turned on its side makes a house or a cave; on its bottom it can be a car or a boat or just a comfy place to crawl into and count one's treasures.

- Give Toddler a shelf or cupboard space of his own. A collection of lightweight packages or

cans will fill up his pantry nicely.

- A round cereal box or empty coffee can rolls almost like a ball. Paper towel or bathroom tissue rolls are fun to look through.

- A salad basket or a small plastic pail will serve to carry objects from here to there.

- Measuring cups and spoons fit together and come apart endlessly and in many combinations.

- Small cardboard boxes make good hiding places for small toys and fit inside larger boxes.

And so it goes. All sorts of simple, everyday objects make for safe and exciting play in the kitchen while Dad or Mom work.



Learning kindness

Children don't learn kindness by accident. They learn it by the teaching they receive, the way they see others interact, and by practicing gentle treatment of others.

Teaching children to think of others takes very little effort. There are plenty of opportunities in an average day to instruct youngsters how to be nice.

For example, while waiting in line at the post office, you can explain that you wait your turn because others are in front of you.

You can teach children how to answer politely when someone asks them a question. You

can even pose quizzes for them when situations arise: What would be helpful for that man on crutches?

The first and often most challenging place to teach children to be kind is at home. Daily interactions with siblings can be used as learning situations.

Encourage little ones to express anger in ways that don't hurt anyone and to find solutions to problems that are fair to everyone.

Although family members will always have times of disagreement, they can begin to think of how other people feel. Kids who are raised in an "anything goes"

atmosphere cannot be expected to know how to play nicely with other children.

Even more powerful than teaching is modeling. If you are rude to others, your children will quickly learn to be discourteous also. If you are rude to sales people because you aren't waited on promptly, or mutter obscenities at fellow drivers, your children will learn to treat others with contempt.

Young people treat others the way they are treated. How many times do we thank toddlers for helping, or ask that they walk faster instead of demanding it?

Children need to be listened to and taken seriously, even if their ideas seem a bit trivial to us. By respecting children's points of view and really listening to what they have to say, we help them learn how to react to others.

When children are treated with love and respect in the home, they will be much more likely to be kind to friends away from home. □

Parenting

Characteristics of a good parent

Margaret Mead, the noted anthropologist who studied children, parents, and methods of child raising among many races of people, was asked what she thought were the characteristics of a good mother.

She replied with a short list of what she considered "valuable capacities for a mother to have." These capacities would be equally valuable for fathers.

- To treat each child as an individual person; to realize that children are not adjuncts or helpers to their parents but are individuals in their own right.

- To set a child's feet on her or his own path and allow her or him to follow it, yet to be there when that path seems hard to follow.

- To be willing to listen, and listen, and listen.

- To be brave enough to show disapproval when one feels that something is wrong, even though by doing so one may be risking rejection by the child.

- To stand up for one's own beliefs and so make one's respect for a child worth having and keeping. □

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