



Growing Together

Newsletter for
parents of preschool children

Developmental

'Show me how'

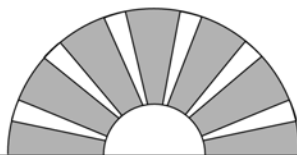
Many new tasks are above a child's ability level until you show her how to carry out the chore.

For example, you could tell your child to feed the cat, assuming she's seen you feed Fluffy dozens of times.



Or you could walk her through the task, pointing to the cat food bag, then showing her how to measure the food, and how to fill and carry the water bowl.

Most tasks can be broken down into simple steps. Children do not always learn by being told or by watching—they also learn by being instructed and given examples. □



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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Parenting

Parenting can be more fun

Some parents really enjoy the job of parenting. They bring as much vitality and creative energy to parenting as they bring to other things in life they enjoy doing. Here are some ways to make parenting more enjoyable:

1. Read books, newsletters, or magazine articles that keep you well informed about parenting issues. The better informed you are, the more confident you will be. Self-confidence is a key to success and enjoyment.

2. Search for new and innovative ways to deal with problems in the family that keep coming up. Discontinue old methods that have been unsuccessful in the past.

3. When you find a good solution for a certain problem, write it down. That will help you to remember your success. Your success will generate more success. And perhaps you can use the same or a similar solution for another problem.

4. Share your parenting experiences—good and bad—with other parents whose friendship and judgment you value. Knowing you are not the only parent who has problems can be a very consoling experience. And you

can learn from the experiences of other parents. Other parents also profit from hearing about what has worked—and not worked—for you as you've solved some of your problems.

5. Actively promote fun and humor in your family. For example, display a humorous cartoon or funny saying on the refrigerator door for all the family to enjoy.

6. Keep a journal. Briefly note funny incidents that occur in your home. Learn to laugh at yourself. Whenever you are feeling down, read your entries from last year to regain your sense of humor.

7. Share funny stories and pleasant experiences with other family members at meals or in quiet moments while you're talking. Remember and talk about entertaining and funny things that have happened in your family life.

8. Take pictures and/or videos of some fun activities you share as a family. The longer you keep these records, the more they will be enjoyed and appreciated.

Nobody ever said that parenting would be easy. But nobody ever said it couldn't be fun and enjoyable. So, have some fun and enjoy your experiences. □

Explaining disabilities to young children

Perhaps the most important part of talking to young children about disabilities is emphasizing that the person with a handicap is still a person, just like you and me. They have the same feelings, hopes, fears, and dreams.

Parents can prepare children for encounters with disabled people by talking about it in advance. Explain that there are people who have part of their body which doesn't work properly. Talk about the kinds of equipment disabled people use like canes, wheel chairs, hearing aids, or guide dogs.

You can explain to children that they should treat disabled people as they (children) would like to be treated, if they were disabled or not.

You can also provide experiences to help a child understand what it's like to be disabled. Try blindfolding a child and letting him walk around familiar surroundings to experience what it would be like not to see. Or put mittens on to see how hard it is to button buttons without full use of fingers.

Many disabled people are willing to answer questions, especially from children. Some of the questions they are likely to ask: How did she get that way? What happened to him? Who takes care of her? Who fixes his lunch? How does she take a bath?

If you lay the groundwork in advance, encountering a disabled person won't be uncomfortable or embarrassing for anyone. □

Learning to classify is an everyday job

"What's this?"

"What's that?"

When children ask "what?" questions, they are learning how to classify things, to see how things are alike and how they are different.

Why is classification important? Because without it, we wouldn't be able to tell aspirin from arsenic!

It's classification that tells a child how to think about the world, where to look for a crayon, what part of a catalog will have a picture of a bicycle. It tells a child

that she can expect to find bears in the animal crackers and jelly next to the peanut butter on the shelf.

How does a child learn classification? You can help her.

Almost every minute she's with you, she hears and sees you using the idea of same and different.

Let her help you sort socks and silverware.

Talk about the different shapes of street signs or the different feels of fabrics.

Let everyday experiences be your classroom! □

'Fraidy-cat' kids just need a little understanding

You can't expect a child to stop being afraid of something just because you say there is nothing to be afraid of.

No matter how confident a child is, she may be afraid of new and strange situations. An unknown relative who snatches her up for a hug may reduce her to tears. A large, noisy, although friendly dog may panic her.

These fears, although they may seem trivial to you, are entirely sensible and realistic from her point of view. She wants to explore new things gradually, on

her own terms and in her own good time.

To help your child be brave, begin by seeing her worries and fears for what they are—questions. Will this hurt? What is this? What should I do?

Talk to her calmly. Don't force her to hug Aunt Mary or pet the nice doggie. Give her a chance to recover her balance, and plenty of opportunities to experience new things, slowly and gently, with lots of explanations and answers. □

Avoiding bedtime uproar

Around the age of two years, many children suddenly begin to object to going to bed. Until now, going to bed was accepted willingly or at least without much objection. Now, suddenly, Toddler begins to resist! He hangs back. He clings. He wants this or that. He may even have a temper tantrum.

Why this sudden reluctance to go to bed? Toddler is tired. He is sleepy. Why is he fighting sleep in this way?

Toddler has learned that objects and people do not just vanish when they are out of sight. As he develops his "conservation of objects," he also develops a feeling of security about these objects and a strong feeling of possession. If he goes into another room, leaving his favorite toy behind, he knows that it will be there when he comes back.

But sleep is different! Suddenly Toddler becomes aware of sleep as different from waking, and he is afraid of what might happen to his familiar world while he sleeps. So he clings to the security of the known, the security of what he can see and touch.

At this stage of development a bedtime routine will pay off in terms of family calm and toddler behavior. Just what this routine includes depends, of course, on the lifestyle of your particular family.

Some children want to say "good night" to favorite toys or give a good night kiss to every member of the family, including

Spot and Fluffy.

Sometimes a small glowing nightlight is reassuring. You can make a game of Toddler blowing out the lamp or overhead light.

Toddler is learning fast. He is trying to organize and understand his world. Following a familiar ritual reassures him about the stability of this world. It gives him a feeling of security and prepares him for the separation from his daytime world that sleep will bring.

You may say that you are just not a person who follows a routine. You don't like to do the same things in the same way every day—you need the freedom of flexibility. Perhaps you find your security in this very freedom.

A two-year-old, however, is not ready for that kind of freedom. He must feel that his world, as he knows it, is stable and will be the same tomorrow as it has been today. He must feel secure if he is to explore his world further.

Toddler needs reassurance that his world will be here when he awakens in the morning. A bedtime ritual serves to provide this reassurance and to move him along familiar paths toward sleep.

A realistic bedtime hour, flexible within reason, should be established. Often this can be cued to a regular TV program, after supper quiet playtime or a special cuddle with a picture book.

This leads naturally into the ritual of getting ready for bed and for sleep—and reduces bedtime uproar to a minimum. □

Attention-getters

Here are some ideas to help calm down an active child, to involve a fretful one, and to teach some listening skills at the same time.

1. **Loud or soft.** Tell your child, "When I make a quiet (or soft) sound, raise your hand."

"When I make a loud sound, clap your hands."

Before you start, whisper these directions to the child. This forces him to carefully pay attention. It may be necessary to repeat the instructions.

Examples of quiet sounds—tap a pencil on paper; snap fingers; click tongue. Loud sounds: drop something on the floor; shut the door; stomp your feet.

2. **What's making this sound?** Have your child face you but use a blindfold to prevent him from seeing the soundmakers.

Examples of sounds to guess: tearing paper; rattling keys; knocking on the table; blowing nose; opening a door or drawer; whistling; sneezing.

Once the rules of the game are understood, allow your child to play leader and **you** do the guessing! □

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